

## **Birmingham City Council**

### **SEN & Inclusion: Draft Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This Council values the contribution that every child and young person can make to our city and welcomes diversity of culture, religion and intellectual style.
- 1.2 Through its services, and particularly the Education Service, the Council seeks to raise achievement, remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access for all children and young people.
- 1.3 We believe that all children and young persons should:
- have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which enables them to be included successfully in a life-long learning process leading to significant achievement in educational progress
  - be included as valued, respected and equal members of the learning community with other children or young people of the same age
  - attend a local early years setting or school, in accordance with the SEN and Disability Act 2001
- 1.4 In seeking further to develop local inclusive education the SEN Division sets out four principles to guide practice:
- 1.4.1 **Children first** - our prime focus is helping Birmingham children to raise achievement and overcome barriers to learning and we must meet their needs in a manner which continues to provide excellent quality of educational opportunity.
- 1.4.2 **Recognition of the value of existing skills** - we have staff in our special sector who have considerable skill and expertise. This is highly valued and we do not wish to lose this expertise. Our aim is to increase and develop ways in which this can be shared with mainstream colleagues.
- 1.4.3 **Planning together** -if we are to achieve creative and effective use of resources then we must plan together. This will involve close consultation with parents, carers, teachers from the mainstream and special sectors, governors. Social Services, Health and with children and young people themselves.
- 1.4.4 **Flexibility of resources** - individual children have individual needs and this demands flexibility of provision. At the same time we must ensure rigorous monitoring of resources if we are to achieve better value for money.

- 1.5 As part of its Strategic Plan for Inclusion, the City Council identifies four priority actions:
  - 1.5.1 To work with all schools and early years settings to increase the opportunities for developing inclusive practice
  - 1.5.2 To establish new roles for special schools in order to support the inclusion of pupils into local mainstream schools
  - 1.5.3 To work towards all services in Education, Social Services, Health and Voluntary Sector working in partnership with parents/carers to develop inclusive practice
  - 1.5.4 To extend inclusive networks, focusing on the development of inclusive community provision and supporting the community in taking a responsibility in this.
- 1.6 The City Council, in its commitment to inclusive education, seeks to ensure that provision is made according to need and that all schools meet at least the minimum standards for access (see Standards for Inclusive Education), are part of our educational community and represent part of the City's provision.

This is reflected, for example, in the Asset Management Plan which, in assessing the suitability of existing premises, looks at how well premises match with curriculum delivery and disabled access in the drive to raise educational standards.

The Education Service, through the SEN Division Business Plan, seeks to increase the number and percentage of children and young people educated within inclusive provision. Correspondingly, Annexe 2 of the Strategic Plan for Inclusion, sets out a framework for the future of special schools in Birmingham, which has been devised in consultation with special school headteachers. Each school is currently working on a plan of how it will move towards increased inclusion over the next five years. Five new co-location partnerships have been developed between special and mainstream schools.

The Inclusion Consultancy Team has been instrumental in establishing area inclusion networks, now involving one third of all schools, focusing on sharing good practice in providing for children with special needs.

- 1.7 The challenge facing us is to find a way to use our educational resources to secure the best educational outcomes for all our children and young people. We are committed to the principle that decisions about how resources are used, for meeting special needs, should be made as close to the teaching and learning context as possible.

We are also committed to challenging the dependence of schools on the Education Service and to seeking to foster a spirit of partnership with schools,

that helps them to accept their share of the responsibility for making provision for pupils with barriers to learning. As means of securing provision for pupils, we are seeking to move away from the process of statutory assessment towards funding schools in anticipation of the needs that they will meet. We seek to delegate money to schools, to include a wider range of needs than before, in ways that are equitable, transparent and accountable. It is also our policy to delegate money in such a way as to enable schools to plan ahead for their special educational provision and to make earlier and more preventive arrangements.

The SEN Division is responding to calls from schools to ensure moderation of the arrangements made by schools to meet special needs and is planning to issue guidance on this in response to the new SEN Code of Practice.

- 1.8 As part of helping schools and early years settings to develop the capability of forward planning, the Education Service seeks to extend the use of CRISP (criteria for special provision) profiles and geographical mapping. It is our policy to ensure that, consistent with data protection and individual confidentiality, information about special educational needs, provision and good practice is shared as widely as possible to promote success for all.

We are also committed to using all available data intelligently, to ensure that future developments match local need. CRISP provides a possible means of, not only determining the level of funding for pupils requiring additional support, but also describing the provision that pupils can expect from their school, at school action and action plus.

- 1.9 The shift away from statements will require a counterbalancing focus on accountability, if parents/carers are to be satisfied that their child's needs will be properly met. The Education Service is committed to developing measures of value for money for special educational provision and of outcomes for pupils across the range of special educational needs. Our primary focus is that children are achieving success and that schools are equitably funded to meet children's needs. An example is work currently being undertaken to establish statistical measures of pupil progress in relation to special needs. Another is the development of a protocol, used between link advisers and schools, to help schools to monitor and evaluate how they are using their allocated SEN budget.
- 1.10 Among the groups of children, for which monitoring of achievement is a priority, are those identified as vulnerable, such as children in public care and children with discontinuous education. Raising awareness of the needs of these children is important.

The City Council Best Value Performance Plan sets targets for and monitors progress towards improving the performance of under-achieving groups, including looked after children, boys and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Through the Behaviour Support Plan, the Education Service seeks a consistent and co-ordinated approach towards a continuum of inclusive support and is working with Social Services on 'Quality Protects' plans for young people in public care.

The SEN Division continues to be represented on the inter-agency steering group for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

- 1.11 As with all areas of special need, the Education Service seeks to promote preventive policies and inclusive practice. Consistent with these principles, all support services have increased the balance of time spent on preventive work with schools.

Additionally, the Education Service has encouraged the development and use of Framework for Intervention within its schools. Further strands, to promote social inclusion and access, are our monitoring of attendance targets and exclusion rates (including figures for ethnic minorities) and a continuing focus on anti-bullying developments. Again, the City Council Best Value Performance Plan monitors the levels of exclusions and unauthorised absences.

- 1.12 Birmingham is a Learning City, with a commitment to lifelong learning. As means of securing access to continuing learning opportunities for young people with special needs, the Education Service is committed to working with the Lifelong Learning Team, to ensure the extension of inclusive education across all phases of learning.

At school age, part of the Education Service's emphasis on inclusion takes the form of partnership between schools, SEN support services and Birmingham Advisory Support Service, in targeted need for school improvement. The Education Service's response to the new SEN Code and the SEN and Disability Act will include promotion of partnerships to plan for the professional development of school staff and others involved in implementation of these changes.

At the early years stage the SEN Division works closely with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, to promote inclusive practice through Success for Everyone and to establish area SENCOs to support early years settings.

- 1.13 Across the range of its activities, in pursuit of achievement and inclusion for children and young people with special educational needs, the Education Service will continue to promote partnerships with children and young people, parents / carers, schools, early education providers, support services, voluntary organisations, City Departments and community representatives.

An example of how this translates into action within the SEN area has been

the establishment of the Parent Partnership Service. This service works with a wide range of community, voluntary and statutory services, to ensure that parents / carers are involved in the assessment procedures and provision for their children with special needs.

With guidance from the SEN Toolkit, services in the SEN Division, in partnership with others, will promote good practice to encourage children with special needs to participate fully in their school and community and in the processes of assessment, recording and reporting in relation to their educational needs and progress.

1.14 The City Council recognises the continuous evolution of special educational practice, particularly in responding to the new SEN Code of Practice, the Special educational Needs and Disability Act and the new Code of Practice (Schools). Accordingly, the new SEN Handbook, which replaces the existing Handbook, will be available as an electronic reference and capable of being up-dated regularly. Through the SEN Division, schools and others affected by changes to procedures and practices emanating from the new SEN Code, will be consulted as these are introduced. They will include Birmingham arrangements for:

- Supporting pupils with SEN through Early Years Action, Early Years Action Plus, School Action and Action Plus.
- Collecting evidence to support a request for resources additional to that which schools can ordinarily provide
- Setting out the arrangements that schools can normally be expected to meet from their own budget and the arrangements and funding for additional provision
- The role of SEN support services in working with early education settings and schools to make arrangements to meet special needs and in providing training, advice and support for staff working with children with special educational needs
- Organising the assessment, making, maintaining and review of SEN statements
- Monitoring the admission to Birmingham schools, changing needs and changing provision for pupils with SEN
- Auditing, planning, monitoring, reviewing and securing value for money for provision for children with Special Educational Needs
- Establishing conciliation arrangements for dealing with disputes before parents / carers seek the intervention of the SEN Tribunal

1.15 In summary, the City Council has the following key objectives for its Special Educational Needs Policy:

1.15.1 To raise achievement for all children with special educational needs, paying particular attention to groups identified as being educationally at risk

1.15.2 To promote inclusive education in all schools and early education settings

1.15.3 To develop a system for funding and provision that is:

- matched to levels of need,
- transparent in how it is derived,
- managed as close as possible to the teaching and learning context
- challenging to the dependence of schools on the LEA and
- promotes accountability of use and outcome

1.15.4 To build on existing expertise and enhance professional development of all staff working with children with special educational needs

1.15.5 To encourage the use of partnerships with voluntary organisations, community groups, schools, services and, especially, with children and their parents / carers in raising achievement for people with special educational needs within life-long learning.