

## **SEN and Inclusion Policy Statement**

### **Introduction**

“Inclusion is far more than just about the location of a child’s school placement. Inclusion is about engendering a sense of community and belonging and encouraging mainstream and special schools and others to come together to support each other and pupils with special educational needs.

Inclusive schools and local education authorities have:

- a. an inclusive ethos;
- b. a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils;
- c. systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation; and
- d. high expectations and suitable targets for all children." <sup>1</sup>

The Code of Practice (2001) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, provide a new opportunity for this Council to set out its policy for special educational needs and inclusion. Since the previous policy was issued, in 1996, many changes have taken place in legislation and practice. These include: a strengthening of the right to education in mainstream for children with statements of SEN; the provision of parent partnership services and disagreement resolution; legal protection from discrimination in all aspects of school life for pupils with a disability; and an emphasis in schools on a graduated response to meeting special educational needs. A coherent response to these changes requires partnership between children, parents / carers, schools and early education settings, multi-disciplinary services, voluntary agencies and statutory services. Birmingham Education Service has a key role in helping to develop within this wider partnership a common vision of the future for children with special educational needs in this City and the plans to achieve that vision.

### **Basic Principles**

The DfES in Special Educational Needs: A guide for parents and carers <sup>2</sup> sets out as basic principles that:

- All children with special educational needs should have their needs met
- The special educational needs of children are normally met in mainstream early education settings or schools
- The views of parents / carers should be taken into account and the wishes of children should be listened to
- Parents / carers have a vital role in supporting their children’s education
- Children with special educational needs should get a broad, balanced and relevant education, including the foundation stage curriculum or the National Curriculum.

This Council supports these principles and, in seeking further to develop local effective inclusive education, adds to them :

- The contribution that every child and young person can make to our city is valued and diversity of culture, religion and intellectual style is welcomed.
- We have staff in our special sector with considerable, highly valued skill and expertise. Our aim is to develop and increase ways in which this can be shared with mainstream colleagues.

## **Key Objectives**

The City Council has the following key objectives for its Special Educational Needs Policy:

### **Achievement:**

To raise achievement, remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access for all children and young people, paying particular attention to groups identified as being educationally at risk

### **Communication:**

To promote inclusive education in all schools and early education settings by extending Inclusive Networks, focusing on the development of inclusive community provision and supporting the community in taking a responsibility in this

### **Resources:**

To develop a system for funding and provision that

- is matched to levels of need,
- is transparent in how it is derived,
- is managed as close as possible to the teaching and learning context
- reduces the dependence of schools on the LEA
- promotes accountability of use and outcome and
- is balanced in its proportion of special and non-special educational expenditure

### **Training:**

To build on existing expertise and enhance professional development of all staff working with children with special educational needs and to establish new roles for special schools in supporting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into local mainstream schools

### **Partnership:**

To work in partnership with children and their parents/carers, social services, health and voluntary organisations agencies, community groups, schools, early years settings and services to develop inclusive practice in raising achievement for people with special educational needs within life-long learning.

## **Policy into Practice:**

### **Achievement:**

We believe that all children and young persons can learn and should have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, designed to meet their needs, which enables them to be included successfully in a life-long learning process leading to significant educational progress. For many children with special educational needs, progress will be measurable in comparison with targets for their age group. Progress for some children will be recognised against individual targets across some, if not all, curriculum areas. Successful learning outcomes should be available to all children and apply not only to educational but also to social and behavioural targets too.

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 children in public care, boys and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Through the Behaviour Support Plan, the Department seeks a consistent and co-ordinated approach towards inclusive provision adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils 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.

### **We will:**

- develop and disseminate, in partnership with early education settings and with schools, good practice in measuring outcomes, as part of securing value for money.
- continue with work currently being undertaken to establish statistical measures of pupil progress in relation to special needs.
- continue to monitor and respond to measures of pupil learning for pupils in groups identified as being educationally at risk.
- maintain support for the inter-agency steering group for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

### **Communication:**

The City Council seeks to promote preventative policies and inclusive practice. Information about special educational needs, provision and good practice should be shared as widely as possible to promote inclusion and success for all.

Raising awareness of the needs of vulnerable children, in particular children in public care and children with discontinuous education, is a priority.

**We will:**

- help all schools meet at least the minimum standards for access (see Standards for Inclusive Education<sup>3</sup>) and thus remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access to all its educational sites
- use the City's Asset Management Plan to reflect priorities identified by a recent Access Audit
- increase the number and percentage of children and young people educated within inclusive provision
- develop a framework for the future of special schools in Birmingham devised in consultation with special school head teachers (Annexe 2 of the Strategic Plan for Inclusion<sup>4</sup>)
- ensure each special school develops a plan for moving towards increased inclusion over the next five years
- promote and sustain co-location partnerships, currently five, between special and mainstream schools
- support area inclusion networks, currently involving one third of all schools, focusing on sharing good practice in providing for children with special needs

**Resources:**

The needs of individual children are different 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.

**We will:**

seek ways of funding SEN that:

- ensure decisions about how resources are used for meeting special needs should be made as close to the teaching and learning context as possible
- promote equity, transparency and accountability for how funding is derived, how it is allocated and how it is spent
- show how money for SEN forms a part of money available to schools and is not from a separate source
- clarify which part of provision schools should fund from their own budget and which part comes from the budget held back by the Education Department (see CRISP<sup>5</sup>)
- provide for children's needs quickly and obviate the need for statements whenever possible
- enable schools to plan ahead for their special educational provision and to make earlier and more preventive arrangements
- are subject to moderation procedures that promote equity as well as inter-disciplinary work
- promote a protocol used between link advisers and schools, to help schools to monitor and evaluate how they are using their allocated SEN budget.

### **Training:**

Staff in our special sector, mainstream schools and support services have considerable skill and expertise. We do not wish to lose this highly valued expertise.

### **We will:**

- increase and develop ways in which expertise can be shared between schools and in particular will seek to ensure this is used to support the process of inclusion
  
- provide training in the local implementation of recent legislation and guidance, particularly SENDA and the SEN Code of Practice. This 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
  - \* 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

### **Partnership:**

If we are to achieve creative and effective mainstream provision 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. We must continue our emphasis on preventive policies and inclusive practice.

### **We will:**

- seek to extend the use of CRISP (criteria for special provision) profiles and geographical mapping as part of helping schools and early years settings to plan ahead.

- Seek to use all available data to ensure that future developments match local need.
- Continue to increase the balance of time all support services spend on preventive work with schools.
- Continue to encourage the development and use of Framework for Intervention<sup>6</sup> within Birmingham schools
- promote social inclusion and access through our monitoring of attendance targets and exclusion rates (including figures for ethnic minorities) and a continuing focus on anti-bullying developments
- work with the Lifelong Learning Team to ensure the extension of inclusive education across all phases of learning
- work closely with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership to promote inclusive practice through area SENCOs and Success for Everyone to support early years settings.
- support the collaboration of the Parent Partnership Service 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.
- make the new SEN Handbook, which replaces the existing Handbook, available as an electronic reference and capable of being up-dated regularly, recognising the continuous evolution of special educational practice.
- Consult with schools and others affected by changes to procedures and practices emanating from the new SEN Code, as these are introduced.

## Monitoring this policy

The City Council is required by the Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities) (England) Regulations 2001 to review and update this policy and development plans on a regular basis. Consistent with the development of this SEN policy in consultation with schools and other partners, similar processes will be used to keep them under review.

### We will:

- Report regularly to schools and other partners on our progress towards the targets set out in this policy

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs. DfES/0774/2001

<sup>2</sup> Special Educational Needs (SEN) *A guide for parents and carers*. DfES 2001  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/sen/parents](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen/parents)

<sup>3</sup> Standards for Inclusive Education – Success for Everyone: Birmingham City Council SEN Division 2002

<sup>4</sup> Strategic Plan for Inclusion: Birmingham City Council SEN Division: Inclusion Consultancy Team 2002

<sup>5</sup> Criteria for Special Provision (CRISP) Birmingham City Council SEN Division: CRISP Team 1999

<sup>6</sup> Framework for Intervention: Birmingham City Council Education Department 1998