

## **Children with Special Educational Needs 2012: An Analysis Introduction**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Improving outcomes for children and young people is key to the ambitious vision for reform set out in *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* (<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Green-Paper-SEN.pdf>) which included wide ranging proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people who are disabled or have special educational needs and a draft Bill has been presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education for pre-legislative scrutiny.

The information in this publication supports this vision as it will help teachers, parents, school governing bodies, Local Authorities and those they work with to assess the quality and efficiency of the provision they make with a view to improving those outcomes.

#### **What are special educational needs?**

Pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most pupils of the same age. One in every five pupils has a special educational need; about 1.6 million. This is a large and very important group of young learners.

Pupils with special educational needs are currently<sup>1</sup> classified into three distinct levels of provision of need: School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of special educational needs:

- School Action – where extra or different help is given, from that provided as part of the school’s usual curriculum.
- School Action Plus – where the class teacher and the SENCO<sup>2</sup> receive advice or support from outside specialists (a specialist teacher, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist or other health professionals).
- Statement – a pupil has a statement of special educational needs when a formal assessment has been made. A document setting out the child’s needs and the extra help they should receive is in place.

Pupils with special educational needs may need extra help because of their type of need. These are listed in the Glossary and include: profound and multiple learning difficulty; behaviour, emotional and social difficulty; and speech, language and communication needs.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* proposes replacing assessments and statements of special educational need with a single assessment process and combined Education, Health and Care plans. The proposal is that School Action and School Action Plus will be replaced by a single school-based special educational needs category.

<sup>2</sup> A SENCO (or special educational needs coordinator) is a member of staff at school who has responsibility for coordinating special educational need provision within that school (see the Glossary for the full definition).

## **Children with Special Educational Needs 2012: An Analysis Introduction**

### **What is in this publication?**

This is an annual publication which draws together data from a number of key public data sets and supports the Government's commitment to make information publicly available in a transparent way. It presents information at national and local levels about the characteristics and attainment of pupils with special educational needs.

### **The publication**

This publication presents national level data and information by local authority is available in the additional tables on the publication webpage. Major breakdowns are available for all key areas on level of provision for special educational need and primary type of need.

**Chapter 1** provides a basic breakdown of the prevalence and characteristics of pupils with special educational needs, by their school type, gender, age, ethnic origin, free school meal eligibility and whether they had been classified as a looked after child, as well as local authority indicators on the timeliness of statements of special educational needs.

**Chapter 2** compares the attainment of pupils with special educational needs at Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, and 4, with attainment by the characteristics in Chapter 1, as well as the gap in attainment between pupils with special educational needs and their peers at Key Stages 2 and 4.

**Chapter 3** looks at pupils with special educational needs making the expected progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

**Chapter 4** looks at the attainment of 19 year olds with special educational needs and progression to Higher Education of pupils with special educational needs and their peers.

**Chapter 5** compares the absence and exclusion data for pupils with special educational needs.

### **What changes have been made to this year's publication?**

The following changes have been made to this year's publication:

- **General:** Greater emphasis has been placed on links to other Departmental publications to allow easier accessibility to related statistics on the issues in this publication.
- **Characteristics and prevalence (Chapter 1):** Updates to figures only.
- **Attainment (Chapter 2):** Detail has been added on attainment at Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and at Key Stage 1 by primary type of special educational need, and special educational needs breakdowns on gender, free school meal eligibility and ethnicity. At Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 information on first language variation on special educational needs is no longer included as it has not been published by the Department.
- **Progression (Chapter 3):** Information on progression between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been reintroduced after its removal last year due to a change

## **Children with Special Educational Needs 2012: An Analysis Introduction**

in methodology. At Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, the time series has been removed due to a change in methodology and so direct comparisons are no longer possible.

- Attainment by 19 and Higher Education (Chapter 4): All information on activities by age for the cohort of young people has been removed as we no longer collect this information.
- Absence and exclusion (Chapter 5): Information on persistent absentees by school type has been added. Information on permanent exclusions by primary type of special educational need and reasons for permanent exclusions are also included.
- Web Tables: Local Authority figures covering the issues in this publication have been reintroduced for the 2012 publication.

### **Further feedback**

The Department thanks respondents for feedback received in response to previous publications. Your views have influenced the changes made to this year's publication. In a similar spirit, we would welcome views again on this publication, in terms of:

1. What would you like to see included in future publications (time series, different analysis etc.)?
2. Was it easy to read and understand? If not, what did you find difficult or unclear?
3. Were the graphs and charts clear? If not, how could they be improved?
4. Was the content informative, interesting and well-presented?
5. What information did you find the least useful?
6. Any other comments.

Please send your comments to [Andrew.Brook@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Brook@education.gsi.gov.uk).

It would be helpful if you could also tell us why you are interested in pupils with special educational needs and agree that we can consult you about future editions of this publication. We will not use your contact details for any other purpose.

### **Legal information**

On 1 January 2009 the Special Educational Needs (Information) Act 2008 came into effect. This requires the Secretary of State for Education to publish information about pupils in England, with special educational needs, each calendar year, in order to help improve the well-being of these pupils.

This information was published for the first time, under the Act on 8 October 2009 at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000851/index.shtml>, for the second time on 19 October 2010 at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STA/t000965/index.shtml> and for the third time on 19 October 2011 at <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001032/index.shtml>. This is the fourth annual publication under the Act.

## **Children with Special Educational Needs 2012: An Analysis Introduction**

### **Statistical note**

The Special Educational Needs (Information) Act 2008 required the Secretary of State to publish information about pupils in England with special educational needs every calendar year. This annual statistical publication was designed by statisticians in collaboration with policy officials to meet this requirement. It provides commentary and analysis that aid interpretation and formats for the presentation of the statistics in graphs and tables that enhance clarity, interpretability and consistency. It draws on a range of statistics, most of which have been previously published, some of them as National Statistics.

### **Enquiries**

Enquiries about the figures contained in this publication should be addressed to:

Andy Brook  
Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children's Analysis Team  
Department for Education  
1F Area I, Mowden Hall  
Staindrop Road  
Darlington  
DL3 9BG  
Telephone: 01325 735408  
Email: [Andrew.Brook@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Brook@education.gsi.gov.uk)

Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at:

Press Office Newsdesk  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT  
Telephone: 020 7925 6789