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# Removing Barriers to Achievement

## The Government's Strategy for SEN



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## Foreword

Education is the key to a better future for all our children, and I am committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. But for children with special educational needs and disabilities, too many barriers can stand in the way of the right education and support. And too often, the help they receive depends on where they live rather than on their own needs.

*Removing Barriers to Achievement* sets out the Government's vision for giving children with special educational needs and disabilities the opportunity to succeed. Building on the proposals for the reform of children's services in *Every Child Matters*, it sets a new agenda for improvement and action at national and local level.

All children, wherever they are educated, need to be able to learn, play and develop alongside each other within their local community of schools. Parents must be able to have confidence that their children's needs will be met quickly and effectively throughout their education and as they move into adult life. And those working in schools, early years settings and other frontline services need the skills, confidence and support to do a vital job well.

This strategy contains a programme of sustained action. It reaffirms our commitment to partnership working between local authorities, early years settings, schools, the health service and the voluntary sector and incorporates our strategy for improving childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities. It is by working together that we can unlock the potential of the many children who may have difficulty learning, but whose life chances depend on a good education.



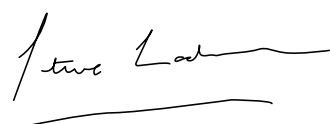
**The Rt Hon Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills**

I believe that young people with learning difficulties and disabilities have a right to lead rewarding and independent lives. The SEN Strategy reflects a shared commitment across Government to improving the opportunities for further education, training and work that will help make this principle a reality.



**Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People**

Support for children, young people and families from health and social services often plays a crucial role in enabling children with SEN and disabilities to access education. The work we are doing to link the implementation of the SEN Strategy and the Children's National Service Framework will help to ensure that they can make the most of their education and achieve their potential.



**Dr Stephen Ladyman, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health**



# Introduction

All children have the right to a good education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. All teachers should expect to teach children with special educational needs (SEN) and all schools should play their part in educating children from their local community, whatever their background or ability. We must reflect this in the way we train our teachers, in the way we fund our schools, and in the way we judge their achievements. This strategy, promised in the Green Paper on the reform of children's services, *Every Child Matters*<sup>1</sup>, sets out the Government's proposals for achieving this vision.

<sup>1</sup> *Every Child Matters*, published by the Department for Education and Skills in September 2003. Priced publication [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## Where we are

The 1997 Green Paper *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs*<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent *Programme of Action*<sup>3</sup> published in October 1998 made a commitment to improving the statutory framework and procedures for SEN, building on experience and best practice. This commitment was taken forward through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the publication of a new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice<sup>4</sup>.

However, the Audit Commission's report *Special Educational Needs – a mainstream issue*<sup>5</sup> (2002) highlighted a number of continuing challenges:

- too many children wait for too long to have their needs met
- children who should be able to be taught in mainstream settings are sometimes turned away and many staff feel ill equipped to meet the wide range of pupil needs in today's classrooms
- many special schools feel uncertain of their future role
- families face unacceptable variations in the level of support available from their school, local authority or local health services.

## Where we want to be

Over the past three decades, successive Governments have built up and refined the statutory framework for children with SEN. This strategy aims to personalise learning for all children, to make education more innovative and responsive to the diverse needs of individual children, so reducing our reliance on separate SEN structures and processes and raising the achievement of the many children – nearly one in six – who are considered to have SEN.

We have never been so well placed to deliver such a wide-ranging strategy to transform the lives and life chances of these children. The reform of children's services set out by *Every Child Matters*, with its focus on early intervention, preventative work, and integrated services for children through Children's Trusts, will deliver real and lasting benefits to children with SEN and their families. And our commitment to reducing child poverty, investing in early years education and childcare and targeting support at areas of social and economic deprivation will enable us to address the underlying causes of many children's difficulties in school.

<sup>2</sup> *Excellence for all Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs* published by the Department for Education and Employment in 1997

<sup>3</sup> *Meeting Special Educational Needs: A programme of Action* published by the Department for Education and Employment in 1998

<sup>4</sup> *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfES/581/2001) published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen)

<sup>5</sup> *Special Educational Needs: a mainstream issue* published their Audit Commission in 2002 [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)



This strategy follows discussion with a wide range of practitioners and policy makers in schools, local authorities, the health service and the voluntary sector as well as children and young people. It sets out the Government's vision for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities. It provides clear national leadership supported by an ambitious programme of sustained action and review, nationally and locally, over a number of years, in four key areas:

- **Early intervention** – to ensure that children who have difficulties learning receive the help they need as soon as possible and that parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities have access to suitable childcare (Chapter 1)
- **Removing barriers to learning** – by embedding inclusive practice in every school and early years setting (Chapter 2)
- **Raising expectations and achievement** – by developing teachers' skills and strategies for meeting the needs of children with SEN and sharpening our focus on the progress children make (Chapter 3)
- **Delivering improvements in partnership** – taking a hands-on approach to improvement so that parents can be confident that their child will get the education they need (Chapter 4).

We want all children, wherever they are educated, to have a good education that enables them to achieve to the full and provides a firm foundation for adult life. We want all pupils to have regular opportunities to learn, play and develop alongside each other, within their local community of schools, with shared responsibility and a partnership approach to their support.

We want parents to have confidence that their children's needs will be met effectively in school without feeling that the only way to achieve this is through a statement. In time, through action at local and national level to build the skills and capacity of schools to meet diverse pupil needs, we would expect only those children with the most severe and complex needs, requiring support from more than one specialist agency, to need the protection a statement provides.

We are committed to working in partnership to help all in the education service to deliver this vision, to unlock the potential of the many children who may have difficulty learning, but whose life chances depend on a good education.







## Chapter 1:

# Early intervention

### Where we are

Early intervention is the cornerstone of our strategy. *Every Child Matters* recognised the lasting benefits of early intervention – providing a sound foundation for future learning and development. It enables some children to catch up with their classmates and for those who need support on a continuing basis it means that help is available as early as possible, reducing the risk of long-term underachievement and disaffection.

However, there are a number of factors that get in the way, including poor co-ordination between education, health and social care leading to gaps in support, shortfalls in the availability of childcare for disabled children, difficulties in refocusing funding to support earlier intervention and too much bureaucracy.

## Where we want to be

We want to see:

- health, education and social care organised around the needs of children and their families, with better information-sharing and assessments leading to early intervention
- parents having access to good quality childcare and early years provision in their local community
- schools with the skills and resources to enable them to take prompt action to help children who are falling behind their classmates
- teachers and early years staff spending more time supporting early intervention and less time on SEN-related paper work.

## Action we will take

We will build on the proposals for early intervention and integration of children's services set out in *Every Child Matters*, and in particular we will:

- ensure that the principles for working with babies, very young children and their families established by the Early Support Pilot Programme become integral to practice nationally
- implement a new strategy for childcare for children with SEN and disabilities, promoting an integrated approach to early education and childcare and improving information for parents
- encourage local authorities to extend SEN advice and support services to early years settings to develop the skills and awareness of staff in the Foundation Stage
- work with voluntary sector organisations, including Mencap, on a feasibility study for establishing a National Early Intervention Centre of Excellence to raise awareness of effective approaches and promote improvements in practice
- promote further delegation of SEN funding to schools to support early intervention and effective management of resources, through practical guidance, expert advice and support
- cut bureaucracy on SEN by helping schools and early years settings to focus on the essentials and make better use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), enabling staff to spend more time working with pupils.

## Improving support for children with special needs from birth

- 1.1 Children develop and learn from the moment they are born. The first few years are a crucial developmental phase, which do much to shape a child's life chances. The role of parents in supporting their child's learning in the early years, more than any other phase, is absolutely critical.
- 1.2 All new parents face a steep learning curve. For parents of children born with special needs, there are even more unknowns and a bewildering array of services to negotiate. Repeated assessments and form-filling, telling the same story time and again, ferrying their child from service to service, all add to the pressure on parents.
- 1.3 A number of Government initiatives provide a valuable platform for addressing these issues:
  - ***Every Child Matters*** puts forward a range of measures to improve support to families: by improving information-sharing between agencies, joining up assessment procedures, setting up multi-disciplinary teams, co-locating services and making one professional responsible for ensuring that things work for individual families. The development of **Children's Trusts**, will bring together the planning, commissioning and funding of services to provide a better deal for children with SEN and disabilities and their families
  - ***Together from the Start***<sup>6</sup> and the related guidance on ***Developing Early Intervention/Support Services for Deaf Children and their Families***, establishes a national set of principles for promoting family-centred working by health, education and social services, in support of families with young disabled children
  - ***The National Service Framework (NSF) for Children*** due to be published in 2004, will set national standards for health and social care services for children, and the interface with education. It will draw on the principles established in *Together from the Start*<sup>6</sup> and the work of the Disabled Children's External Working Group.

6 *Together from the Start: practical guidance for professionals working with disabled children (birth to two) and their families* (LEA/0184/2002) published jointly by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health in 2003  
www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen

1.4 Practical action is being taken forward through the **Early Support Pilot Programme (ESPP)**, launched in September 2002. ESPP is a four year, £13 million programme to improve services for babies and very young disabled children and their families through:

- **single, co-ordinated assessments**
- **key worker support** so that one professional takes responsibility for ensuring that services are co-ordinated and delivered around the family's needs
- **clearer information** about local services and how to access them
- improving professionals' **skills and knowledge**
- **reviewing services** and identifying areas for improvement
- **partnership working** between agencies and across different areas.

These principles foreshadowed many of the proposals in *Every Child Matters*. To embed them further, new developments in phase 3 of the programme will include:

- a **family toolkit** setting out what parents should expect from local services and how to use them
- **toolkits for professionals** offering practical guidance on how to improve the quality and co-ordination of services for families, and to review how well they are doing
- **national monitoring protocol for deaf children** to track their early development
- **Early Support Pilot Programme (ESPP) pathfinder areas** to test out the operation of the full model, nine of which were established in 2003.

1.5 Through the forthcoming National Service Framework for Children, and the implementation of *Every Child Matters*, we will ensure that the principles established by the Early Support Pilot Programme become integral to practice nationally. In addition, through the Sure Start Programme we will support the **development and extension of portage services** to cover all local authority areas. The service, provided in children's homes, develops children's play, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling children with SEN to learn how to learn and to take part fully in family life.

### Case study Early Support Pilot Programme

In Salford, the Early Support Pilot Programme funded a group of parents of young deaf children to work with staff from the health, social care and voluntary sectors to draw up a multi-agency Family Support Plan to co-ordinate services for families of deaf babies and young children.

The Plan is written in the family's own words and describes the child's history, how they are doing and what support the family feels they need. It includes targets and action for the family and the various services that support them, which are reviewed regularly. All the services in Salford have agreed to use the Family Support Plan and the results are very positive. The fact that everyone involved with the family has drawn up the Family Support Plan together is what has made it so valuable for parents and professionals:

*"I like the family plans because people know about you and what you want before they meet you."* (Parent of a deaf child aged two)

*"This is a useful tool for developing multi-agency family friendly hearing services across health, education and social care."*  
(Audiology Professional Manager)

### Improving childcare for children with SEN and disabilities

1.7 We know that parents of children with SEN and disabilities have more difficulty than others in finding suitable childcare. A new strategy has been developed within the Sure Start Programme to improve this. Key priorities include:

- **promoting a co-ordinated approach to early education and childcare** by supporting Children's Trusts in developing services and disseminating best practice nationally and through the development of Children's Centres and extended schools
- **improving information on the availability of suitable childcare** locally through Children's Information Services and Childcare Link, and through the family and professional toolkits to be published under the Early Support Pilot Programme



- **helping families to meet the additional costs** associated with childcare for children who have disabilities by promoting take up of the Working Families Tax Credit; extending the Home Childcarer Scheme; promoting the best use of the SEN and Disability Strand of the Early Years and Childcare Grant, which authorities can use to subsidise start-up costs for new specialist facilities and adjustments to buildings and create equipment loan schemes; and promoting the use of direct payments for parents who want to organise their own childcare.

### Improving SEN advice and support to early years settings

- 1.8 Since 1997, there has been a substantial expansion of nursery education for three and four year olds under the Sure Start Programme and a significant investment in improving its quality. We know that high quality nursery education brings lasting benefits – ensuring that a child gets off to a good start and providing a firm foundation for future learning. It does much to help those who grow up in less privileged households to start school on a level playing field with their classmates.

#### Research findings

The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project and the associated Early Years Transitions and SEN (EYTSSEN) project are tracking the progress of over 3000 children through pre-school and primary school – finding that early years education has a positive effect on young children’s cognitive development. When they started pre-school, one-third of the sample were identified as being at risk in terms of their cognitive development, but by the time they started primary school, only one fifth were. Children who had no pre-school experience were most likely to be identified as ‘at risk’ of being labelled as having SEN on entry to primary school. The researchers concluded that pre-school can be an effective intervention for reducing SEN, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

Further details available at [www.ioe.ac.uk/projects/eppe](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/projects/eppe).

- 1.9 As the number of three and four year olds in early years education has grown, so the number of young children identified as having SEN has increased. In addition, advances in medical practice – for example, newborn hearing screening – have made it possible to identify some difficulties much earlier.
- 1.10 It is vital that early identification is backed up by effective intervention so that parents can be confident that once problems have been identified, help will be forthcoming. However, there are concerns that the increase in needs identification has outstripped the availability of specialist advice and support to early years settings. In particular, we know that private and voluntary sector settings – where two-thirds of three year olds and one-quarter of four year olds are educated – often have difficulty in accessing SEN advice and support.
- 1.11 The Government has already introduced **Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)** and **Area SENCOs** to ensure that children's needs are identified and met and to enable settings to access specialist advice and support. We will build on this foundation in three ways:
- within the Sure Start Programme, supporting the development of **co-ordinated early education and childcare services for children with SEN and disabilities**. We aim to help all settings become more accessible through training, networking opportunities to share knowledge and increase confidence, better support for parents and close liaison with specialist voluntary and commercial organisations
  - bringing all early years settings, including those in the private and voluntary sector, within the same local **networks of specialist advice and support** enjoyed by the school sector. There is already a wealth of expertise in schools and local authorities, which early years settings should be able to tap into, as happens in some areas. We will encourage all local authorities to review the availability of specialist advice and support to early years settings and to work in partnership with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships to extend services
  - including early years SENCOs and other key staff in relevant **professional development and networking opportunities** alongside primary school SENCOs. We will encourage local authorities to create more opportunities for sharing learning and expertise, problem solving, and planning to support a smooth transition to primary school.

### Case study Lancashire Under 5s Autism Programme

The Lancashire Under 5s Autism Programme provides intensive support to young children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). Children spend up to two years on the programme, which starts in the pre-reception year and carries on through the reception year. They attend school full-time and are supported by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA). Two specialist teachers provide support to the children on the programme and the staff working with them. A part-time speech and language therapist supports staff in developing children's communication skills. There is a weekly home visit from staff to work with the child's parents and involve them in the programme.

Children in the pre-reception year attend a variety of settings in the maintained and voluntary sectors. In the reception year, most children attend their local primary schools. Since 1999 when the programme was originally set up, some 45 children have been included in mainstream school provision, and of those, 30 have remained there.

- 1.12 We know that we need to do more to translate the lessons from research and identified good practice into effective support for those working with children under five with SEN and disabilities and their families. To complement the work of the Early Support Pilot Programme, we will work with a coalition of voluntary sector organisations, including MENCAP, to explore the feasibility of establishing a National Early Intervention Centre of Excellence. We expect this work to be completed in Summer 2004.

### Raising the skills and awareness of staff in early years settings

- 1.13. *Every Child Matters* signals our commitment to ensuring that all children's services work on a preventative basis, rather than waiting until crisis point is reached. This is consistent with the **graduated approach** set out in the SEN Code of Practice and with the increasing emphasis on personalised learning in the national strategies for schools, which emphasise pace and progression in learning according to pupils' individual needs. But for this approach to work in practice, it is critical that staff in schools and early years settings

have the skills to recognise where children may have SEN, that they know how to respond and at what point they should seek specialist advice.

- 1.14. To improve the expertise of those working with young children with SEN and disabilities, we want to see consistent, nationally recognised training provided to staff in all settings. The SEN and Disability strand of the Early Years and Childcare Grant provides funding to local authorities for this purpose. Through the Sure Start Programme, we will:
- support the production of training modules for childcare workers, including a module for childminders and playworkers and the development of new training material on early child development, building on the successful *Birth to Three Matters* guidance<sup>7</sup>
  - promote use of our comprehensive pack of training materials for **Early Years SENCOs**, to help with identifying children with SEN in the Foundation Stage. The materials include a training manual, activity sheets, video and introductory booklet and take into account the varying levels of expertise of early years practitioners
  - ensure that the current review of the **National Occupational Standards for early years and playwork** takes account of the needs of children with SEN and disabilities
  - disseminate, through the Primary National Strategy, materials to support the development of children's **language skills** in the Foundation Stage and advice on interventions to help those who are falling behind their peers; materials on the **early teaching of phonics**; and training to help schools to identify and support four and five year olds at risk of long-term literacy difficulties. We will also pilot 'small group' interventions for four to eight year olds who need extra help in developing **social, emotional and behavioural skills**.
- 1.15 Chapter 3 sets out wider proposals to develop the skills of classroom practitioners in working with children with SEN, and to increase the availability of specialist expertise.

<sup>7</sup> *Birth to Three Matters: a framework to support children in their earliest years* published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003

### **Funding to support early intervention and inclusive practice**

- 1.16 Research by the Audit Commission raises doubts about the compatibility of current SEN funding systems with promoting early intervention. They found that over two-thirds (68%) of SEN resources were focused on pupils with statements, leaving little scope for wider preventative work. They also found that statutory assessment was a 'costly and bureaucratic process', which could divert specialist staff from working in schools.
- 1.17 Local authorities have a crucial role in allocating resources, promoting early intervention and effective practice in schools in support of pupils with special educational needs, and enabling schools to access specialist SEN support services. Some authorities delegate resources for children with statements, enabling schools to take action more promptly and giving them greater flexibility over how they use their funding, for example, enabling them to invest in staff training, as well as meeting the needs of individual children. This in turn has tended to reduce demand for statements. Guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills in 2001<sup>8</sup> encouraged all Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in this direction, highlighting the advantages of this approach:
- individual needs can be addressed quickly and without the need for a period of failure before additional resources can be gained
  - resources can be managed on a whole school basis, enabling them to be used as efficiently as possible
  - open and transparent funding arrangements can be established that are seen to distribute resources equitably between schools
  - greater clarity about the respective responsibilities of schools and the LEA
  - less bureaucracy for schools and the LEA, as fewer children need statements.
- 1.18 We want to encourage the further delegation of SEN resources to support early intervention and the development of inclusive practice within schools, but this must result in a better deal for children and their parents, not a reduced entitlement. New research on strategies to reduce reliance on statements confirms the benefits of this approach, but also the critical importance of working in close partnership with local parents, schools, voluntary organisations, health and social services to manage the change process carefully. Key findings are summarised below.

### Research project on the impact of local authority strategies to reduce reliance on statements – key conclusions

- where statements have been reduced through a strong partnership between the local authority, schools and parents, with active and on-going consultation and review, this has proved very effective in supporting early intervention, the development of 'whole school' inclusive practice and reduced bureaucracy, leading to better outcomes for children
- where this has not been the case, reductions in statements have given rise to great anxiety and confusion about who should be responsible for meeting the needs of some children, particularly those who would formerly have had statements
- reducing reliance on statements is a long-term (i.e. 4-5 year) change process, requiring a cultural shift, extensive capacity-building at school level, a realignment of advice and support services, strengthened accountability arrangements, and additional support for parents, particularly those most affected by the changes.

The full research report can be found at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen).

- 1.19 A parallel investigation into the funding of SEN provision and Education Otherwise than at School highlights the great variation in practice at present, and the need to help all to learn from the experience of the best. It encourages local authorities to delegate resources for children with statements in mainstream settings if they have not already done so. It also highlights the need for national and local government to work together to find ways of managing the rising costs of residential placements in non-maintained and independent special schools.

### Investigation into local authority policy and practice on funding of SEN provision – key conclusions:

- there has been pressure for above-inflation increases in local authority expenditure on SEN, especially from increases in fees and placements at independent and non-maintained special schools
- local authorities that have worked with schools to increase the delegation of SEN resources for individual pupils have been most successful in containing increases in centrally managed budgets for pupils with statements
- a majority of local authorities in the sample have not yet developed adequate arrangements for monitoring outcomes for pupils with SEN, especially in relation to funding that had been delegated to schools
- all local authorities in the sample had discussed their spending plans with their newly established Schools Forum, although the quality of the discussion was varied and limited by other pressures on the agenda
- there was a need for more consistency and transparent reporting of expenditure on SEN between local authorities.

The detailed conclusions of this study are reproduced in guidance and published at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen).

1.20 We will take forward the recommendations of these studies by:

- issuing new guidance and case studies on effective financial management, approaches to delegation and arrangements for monitoring schools work on SEN
- organising a series of themed seminars through the SEN Regional Partnerships
- providing targeted support to authorities that have struggled to make progress in these areas<sup>9</sup>

- encouraging greater sign up to the National Association of Independent Schools and Non-maintained Special Schools contract, which includes a commitment to keep fee increases within a given framework
- working with local authorities and SEN Regional Partnerships to develop local capacity to meet a range of special educational needs thus reducing the need for expensive out of authority placements.

Chapter 2 gives further details of the work we are doing to promote better use of residential placements.

### Tackling bureaucracy

- 1.21 There are significant concerns about the volume of 'bureaucracy' related to the statutory framework on SEN. We take these concerns very seriously, not least because we know that this is diverting skilled staff from spending more time in the classroom. Some procedures and paperwork may be unavoidable as a result of statutory requirements. But the procedures can be operated in an inefficient or unhelpful way. We will be ruthless in tackling this. Reducing administrative burdens on SENCOs and specialist local authority staff will free up capacity for them to spend more time working directly with pupils and teachers.

#### Case study

##### Support for early intervention and inclusive practice in Southampton

Southampton local authority has a positive strategy of reducing reliance on statements, developed in partnership with local schools, dating back to 1997. The number of statements has fallen significantly – down to 1.7% of pupils in 2003. As a result, the number of cases that the educational psychology service (EPS) deals with has fallen dramatically, enabling them to spend far more time working in schools.

All schools are allocated a number of days from the EPS, based on a formula which takes into account their size and pupil profile. The head and SENCO agree how they want to use this time with their link educational psychologist, at the start of the school year. About 40% of EPS time is allocated in this way.



In addition to this, schools are able to bid every term – either individually or in groups – for further support to develop inclusive practice. 'Inclusion bids' do not provide support for individual pupils, but instead focus on wider policy and practice, such as staff training, parental involvement and group work. The emphasis is strongly on developing school practice and in making a bid, schools are asked to demonstrate how they will sustain the benefits beyond the official end date. 10% of EPS time is spent in this way. Other local priorities – each allocated 11-12% of EPS time – include emotional literacy, early years, and multi-agency working.

Both SENCOs and local authority officers highlighted the changed role of the EPS as a key benefit of reducing statements. SENCOs reported that they had more involvement – and valuably, on-going involvement – from the EPS, more discretion over how to use this time, and were able to do more for pupils without statements. The SENCOs described a similar change in their own role – spending less time on paperwork and more on advising colleagues and working with pupils. Both SENCOs and EPs reported improvements in job satisfaction.

1.22 As a first step we have initiated a joint project with the Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit, building on the work started in *Making a Difference*<sup>10</sup> to:

- identify the key causes of bureaucracy, at national, local and school level
- identify solutions to reduce or remove the bureaucratic burdens
- recommend practical action to cut the amount of SEN-related bureaucracy significantly, learning from effective local practice.

1.23 We want to tackle four key issues:

- annual reviews – it is important that annual reviews are carried out effectively, but there is no value in including those who are not involved in the child's education and support. We will identify and promote effective streamlined procedures

- individual Education Plans (IEPs) – many schools feel they must keep elaborate IEPs, sometimes as a result of the policy of the local authority. There is no statutory requirement for schools to prepare separate IEPs for all pupils with SEN as long as they have sound arrangements for monitoring their progress in conjunction with the child and their parents. We will offer further advice on effective practice based on case studies
- record keeping – many schools complain about SEN-related paperwork. But most paperwork can now be dealt with electronically. We will identify effective ICT solutions and encourage schools to use them wherever practical
- duplication of data held by different professionals – saving time and using resources more effectively by developing protocols for enabling professional staff working with the same child to have access to the same records wherever possible and work within a common framework.

The project will contribute to the wider work we are doing to manage sensibly the impact of our policies on schools. We have established an Implementation Review Unit made up of teachers and others working directly with schools to advise us and we are acting on their recommendations. The Unit will contribute to the implementation of this strategy.





## Chapter 2:

# Removing barriers to learning

### Where we are

The 1997 Green Paper *Excellence For All Children* signalled our commitment to the principle of inclusion and the need to rethink the role of special schools within this context. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 delivered a stronger right to mainstream education, making it clear that where parents want a mainstream place for their child, everything possible should be done to provide it.

Inclusion is about much more than the type of school that children attend: it is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. But we know that the reality does not always match this. Schools and early years settings still vary enormously in their experience in working with children with SEN, and in the specialist expertise and resources available to them from other schools, local authority education and social services, health, and voluntary organisations. *Every Child Matters* recognises the need to bring specialist services together, working in multi-disciplinary teams, to focus on the needs of the child.

## Where we want to be

We want to see:

- schools with the confidence to innovate and with the skills and specialist support they need to meet the needs of all pupils successfully
- special schools providing education for children with the most severe and complex needs and sharing their specialist skills and knowledge to support inclusion in mainstream schools
- schools working together to support the inclusion of all children from their local community, backed up by good quality specialist advice from the local authority and health services, working in multi-disciplinary teams as proposed in *Every Child Matters*
- parents with confidence, that, in choosing a local mainstream school, their child will receive a good education and be a valued member of the school community.

## Action we will take

We will:

- help schools to develop effective inclusive practice through a new **Inclusion Development Programme** bringing together education, health, social care and the voluntary sector
- provide practical tools and materials for schools and local authorities to improve access for disabled pupils, working with the Disability Rights Commission and voluntary sector partners
- work with the National College for School Leadership to ensure that leadership programmes promote inclusive practice
- clarify the future role for special schools, giving a strong focus to high standards and partnership working with mainstream schools and encouragement to participation in the full range of diversity programmes – specialist, leading edge partnerships, federations and clusters
- take steps within the National Behaviour Strategy to improve the quality of education for children with more severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- work with the SEN Regional Partnerships to improve regional planning of low incidence provision. Following an audit of specialist services, we will pump-prime regional centres of expertise, building on the work of leading special schools and local authority support services
- develop practical guidance on reducing reliance on high cost placements in residential special schools
- set minimum standards for SEN advisory and support services, for self-evaluation and for use by The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), to achieve greater consistency in quality, availability and cost effectiveness.

## Widening opportunities in mainstream education

- 2.1 Difficulties in learning often arise from an unsuitable environment – inappropriate grouping of pupils, inflexible teaching styles, or inaccessible curriculum materials – as much as from individual children’s physical, sensory or cognitive impairments. Children’s emotional and mental health needs may also have a significant impact on their ability to make the most of the opportunities in school, as may family circumstances.
- 2.2 We are committed to removing the barriers to learning that many children encounter in school. This will require sustained action over a number of years. The National Curriculum contains a statutory statement, *Inclusion – providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils*. All OFSTED inspections report on how schools are implementing this requirement. The statement forms a required baseline and over time, with the implementation of the disability discrimination and planning duties introduced by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, will bring significant improvements in access to education for disabled children and those with SEN. The implementation of the strategy for improving the quality of provision in early education and childcare settings set out in Chapter 1 will help both children and families.

### The SEN and Disability Act 2001

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 from September 2002, creating important new duties:

- for schools and many early years settings<sup>11</sup> to take ‘reasonable steps’ to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in relation to the education and other services they provide. This means that they must anticipate where barriers to learning lie and take action to remove them as far as they are able
- for schools, most early years settings and local authorities to plan strategically to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, make the physical environment more accessible and ensure that written information is provided in accessible formats.

2.3 We will continue to work in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission, the Council for Disabled Children and other partners in the voluntary sector, to provide practical support to early years settings, schools and local authorities to take forward this agenda. We will:

- develop a programme of **training seminars on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**, for all early years providers (both education and care) through the Sure Start Programme
- develop a **self-review and development tool** to help local authorities review their accessibility strategies in partnership with pupils, parents and schools and identify ways of further improving the quality of their planning and significantly increasing access to education for disabled pupils
- draw on effective practice to provide a **resource bank of practical ideas, strategies and training materials** for schools to help them to make reasonable adjustments to their policies and practice to prevent discrimination against disabled pupils.

Early material from the two projects will be made available at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/accessibleschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/accessibleschools).

### Case study

#### Working together to improve accessibility planning in Havering

The London Borough of Havering wanted to promote disability awareness and accessibility for disabled pupils and ensure that all its schools prepared accessibility plans that met statutory requirements. They offered training for clusters and individual schools which focused on raising awareness of the definition of 'disability' in the Disability Discrimination Act and enabled staff to understand their responsibilities towards disabled pupils under the Act. Schools were encouraged to form 'working parties' to draw up their accessibility plans. Training was offered to the headteacher, SENCO and a governor from each school and they were encouraged to attend together.

While an 'Access Initiative' group has focused on a longer-term strategic approach to physical improvements, the main emphasis in the training has been on curriculum access through differentiation and 'removing barriers to learning'. Link inspectors support the process and a schools monitoring group receives reports on the progress made.



All schools were required to submit their plans to the local authority. An analysis of accessibility plans has been carried out and further training and guidance will be provided to schools to support them in reviewing and developing their accessibility plans and meeting the requirement to publish information about their accessibility plans in their annual report to parents.

- 2.4 We will encourage through our ICT in Schools and E-learning strategies the wider use of ICT to improve access to education for children with SEN and disabilities, building on our Communication Aids Project.

### **Case study** The Communication Aids Project

The Communication Aids Project (CAP) went live in April 2002 and aims to:

- use ICT to help pupils with communication difficulties have greater access to the curriculum, become independent learners, and build their self-esteem
- help ease the transition of such pupils to employment or further/higher education

CAP is administered by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency and operates through a referral system and six specialist centres, which provide specialised advice and assessment facilities and ensure a close match of equipment to needs. Aids provided range from sophisticated communication devices such as Dynamites, which can be mounted on wheelchairs, to voice recognition systems for pupils with written communication difficulties

CAP is making a real difference to children's lives. For example, one young pupil with very significant needs received a communication aid through CAP which has opened up a whole new world for him. Before CAP, he had experienced the distressing frustration of not being able to commit thoughts and ideas to paper; he can now record his thoughts on paper and produce coursework using a voice recognition programme and laptop. His mother and others have commented that the improvements to his work are remarkable.

The project is currently being evaluated by University College, London.

### Developing inclusive practice

2.5 To help schools become more effective at responding to the needs of individual pupils we will launch a new **Inclusion Development Programme**. The programme will support partnership projects involving education, health and social care (in future through Children's Trusts), voluntary organisations, higher education institutions, special and mainstream schools, and early years settings to develop and pilot effective practice. The aim is to develop our evidence base about what works and build consensus about how to implement good practice most effectively. We will focus initially on:

- autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)
- speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and dyslexia
- moderate learning difficulties (MLD).

Each of these presents particular and growing challenges for schools. With autistic spectrum disorder, increasing numbers of children are being identified, presenting a wide range and complexity of needs. Children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties pose similar challenges, too often leading to exclusion from school. Overcoming speech, language and communication difficulties is crucial to enabling children to access the whole curriculum. Children with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream schools are the largest group with SEN but too often can find their needs overlooked.

- 2.6 The **Inclusion Development Programme** will support schools and early years settings through:
- teaching and learning resources for teachers and early years practitioners
  - training materials for, and advice on, effective deployment of learning support assistants
  - guidance on effective classroom strategies
  - models of good practice for working in multi-disciplinary teams
  - information about where to go for more specialist advice and support.

### Leadership for inclusion

- 2.7 Effective inclusion relies on more than specialist skills and resources. It requires positive attitudes towards children who have difficulties in school, a greater responsiveness to individual needs and critically, a willingness among all staff to play their part. The leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in making this happen.
- 2.8 We are currently working with the National College for School Leadership to revise the **National Standards for Head Teachers** to ensure that the new standards, to be published in autumn 2004, place far greater emphasis on the role of the headteacher in promoting inclusive practice within their school, in particular by:
- creating a positive learning environment for children with SEN and disabilities
  - ensuring that staff develop the skills and confidence to respond effectively to children's SEN
  - promoting collaborative working with special and mainstream schools
  - building the confidence of parents in the school's ability to meet their child's needs.
- 2.9 The National College for School Leadership is also introducing a new SEN module to the **Headteacher Induction Programme**, focused on developing new headteachers' skills and knowledge in these areas.

## Children with medical conditions

2.10 Some children have medical conditions that, if not properly managed, can hinder their access to education, although this does not necessarily mean that they have SEN. Staff can sometimes be concerned about how they can acquire the skills to give pupils the support they need, which may range from administering medication to intimate care. *Building on Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs: a good practice guide* and *Circular 14/96 – Supporting 'Pupils with Medical Needs in School'*, we have been working closely with the Department of Health to develop the Children's National Service Framework, including discussions on safe management and administration of medicines in education and care settings. We will take the opportunity to revisit the good practice guide in the light of the National Service Framework.

## Access to study support, out-of-hours activities and care

2.11 All young people can benefit from the opportunities that study support and activities such as after-school clubs and outings provide, but young people with SEN and disabilities can sometimes miss out on these opportunities due to a lack of specialist support after hours, inflexible transport arrangements or health and safety considerations. We will build on the practical advice in *Study support in special schools: good practice in special circumstances* [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/studysupport/) by developing:

- inclusive and affordable care and leisure facilities, within the wider strategy developed by the Sure Start Unit to improve childcare for children with SEN and disabilities
- inclusive care and leisure facilities as a priority within the extended schools programme
- with the Connexions Service, ways of helping young people with SEN and disabilities to find accessible social and leisure facilities.

## Transforming special schools

### Key facts on special schools

1.1% of children are educated in special schools. This proportion has fallen gradually since 1983, when 1.5% of children were in the special sector and varies greatly between local authorities – from 2.4% in Brighton and Hove to 0.1% in Newham.

Almost 94,000 children attend special schools, 2,000 of whom are dual registered and spend part of their time in a mainstream school. 6,224 are boarders at maintained and non-maintained special schools and a further 2,766 board at approved independent special schools.

68% of children in special schools are boys and 35% of children in special schools are eligible for free school meals (compared to about 16% in mainstream schools). Nearly two-thirds of children in special schools are of secondary school age.

The most common types of SEN for which special schools are approved are severe learning difficulties, followed by moderate learning difficulties (over 40% serve children with these SEN). Over one-third are approved for emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder, and one-quarter for profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

*Source: Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) Jan 2003.*

- 2.12 Some special schools have felt threatened by the inclusion agenda and unsure about what role they should play in future. We believe that special schools have an important role to play within the overall spectrum of provision for children with SEN – educating some children directly and sharing their expertise with mainstream schools to support greater inclusion. The sections that follow draw on the valuable work of the Special Schools Working Group, which was convened in 2002. Further details of the Group's report and the consultation can be found at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen).

## Sharing expertise between special and mainstream schools

2.13 We want to break down the divide between mainstream and special schools to create a unified system where all schools and their pupils are included within the wider community of schools. We will achieve this through our mainstream programmes by:

- promoting **greater staff movement** across sectors, to share expertise and experience in working with children with higher levels of need. We also want to see **more pupils moving** between the sectors, using annual reviews of children's statements to consider the scope for a dual placement or transition to a mainstream school. Schools now have scope (under the Budget Shares Regulations) to use their budgets flexibly for the benefit of pupils registered at other maintained schools. Local authorities should consider the potential of special school outreach to complement existing advice and support services, and plan strategically to promote such developments
- encouraging more special schools – including those in the non-maintained and independent sector – to participate in **federation, cluster and twinning arrangements** with their mainstream counterparts. Collaboration brings real benefits – building on the strengths of each sector, from management and leadership arrangements, through to tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children and assessing their progress using the P Scales. We want to involve highly effective mainstream schools in partnerships to turn around failing special schools and will consider such applications within the School Improvement Partnerships Programme
- encouraging the participation of special schools in the Department of Education and Skills' diversity programmes, including the **Specialist School and Leading Edge Partnership** programmes, to make the most of the skills and expertise in the special sector, by promoting collaboration, outreach, training and other activities
- using the Department for Education and Skills' capital funding strategy, including the **Building Schools for the Future** programme, to bring special and mainstream schools closer together physically, including co-locations. Such schemes could also involve partnerships with non-maintained and independent schools.

### Case study Outreach – Beaumont Hill Technology College, Primary School and ICT Centre

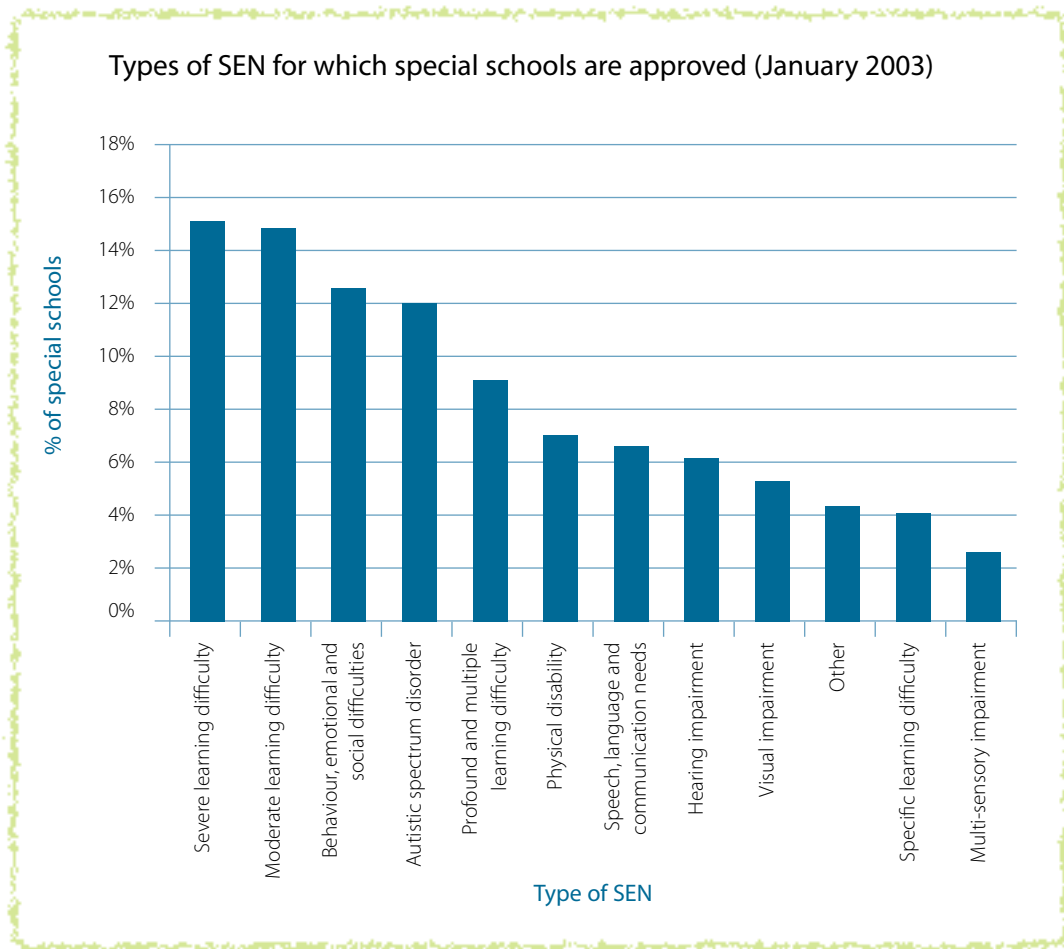
Beaumont Hill Technology College, Primary School and ICT Centre is a large generic specialist special school in Darlington. It provides outreach services to mainstream primary and secondary schools for children with autistic spectrum disorders and severe learning difficulties. An Advanced Skills Teacher supports inclusion for two days a week – one day working with pupils with statements in mainstream schools and one day working as part of the local authority's Learning Support Team and as an advisory and support teacher.

A senior member of staff at the school regularly supports the local authority's arrangements for ensuring consistency in assessments and statements. To support the authority's wider inclusion drive, the school has developed provision for children with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. This has led to a significant reduction in out of authority placements and enabled children to stay in their local communities.

### Educating children with the most severe and complex needs

- 2.14 The proportion of the school population educated in special schools varies greatly between local authority areas, reflecting both the historic pattern of provision and local commitment to supporting the inclusion of children with higher levels of need in mainstream settings. We have strengthened parents' rights to choose a mainstream place for their child but we recognise that some children have such severe and complex needs that they require more specialist provision than is currently available in most mainstream schools.

## Special schools in England, by type of need



2.15 Local authorities have an important strategic role to play in planning a spectrum of provision needed to meet children’s needs within their area. They should take account of the following considerations:

- the proportion of children educated in special schools should fall over time as mainstream schools grow in their skills and capacity to meet a wider range of needs
- a small number of children have such severe and complex needs that they will continue to require special provision



- children with less significant needs – including those with moderate learning difficulties and less severe behaviour, emotional and social needs – should be able to have their needs met in a mainstream environment. Successful special schools have an important contribution to make in preparing mainstream schools to support their inclusion
- reorganisations need to be carefully planned, involving active consultation with parents. It is critical to ensure that high quality provision is available locally *before* special school places are reduced
- co-locating special and mainstream schools, the development of resourced provision and special units in mainstream and dual registration can all help children to move between special and mainstream schools and support transition to mainstream education, as can effective use of specialist SEN support services.

### Supporting improvements in the quality of special school provision

2.16 Many special schools provide a good education for their pupils. However, special schools are three times more likely than mainstream schools to require special measures. The most common reasons for this include: poor leadership and management; an inadequately challenging or relevant curriculum; low attendance; poor teaching; and breach of statutory duties, for example on health and safety. As part of our programme to turn around failing schools we will develop a range of preventative strategies to avoid the need for special measures, taking into account the distinct challenges that special schools face and the need to ensure high expectations of all children. We will:

- promote leadership and management training for special school head teachers and managers
- increase access to diversity programmes in the special school sector to improve the curriculum
- develop tools to help local authorities to identify potentially failing special schools
- build expertise on special school improvement strategies and disseminating best practice
- promote collaboration between special and mainstream schools to support school improvement.

## Developing local communities of schools for local children

### A collaborative approach

2.17 Children should be able, wherever possible, to attend a local mainstream school and parents should be able to feel confident that this is the right choice for their child. This will never be achieved by individual schools working in isolation or competing against each other. A partnership approach is required:

- **led by the local authority**, planning strategically to develop an appropriate spectrum of provision to meet the needs of local pupils
- **between schools** in the special and mainstream sectors to make the most of their skills and expertise, and to offer inclusive experiences for all pupils, working in partnership with the local authority. Head teachers have a crucial role to play in making this happen
- **with health and social services**, to support the inclusion of children with complex needs. *Every Child Matters* makes clear our commitment to integrating health, social services and education around the needs of young people and their families and to bringing relevant professionals together to work in multi-disciplinary teams. The forthcoming National Service Framework for Children will establish national standards against which we can improve the availability and quality of health and social services for children
- **with voluntary organisations**, who make an important contribution, supporting the education of some young people and providing advice and support to families.

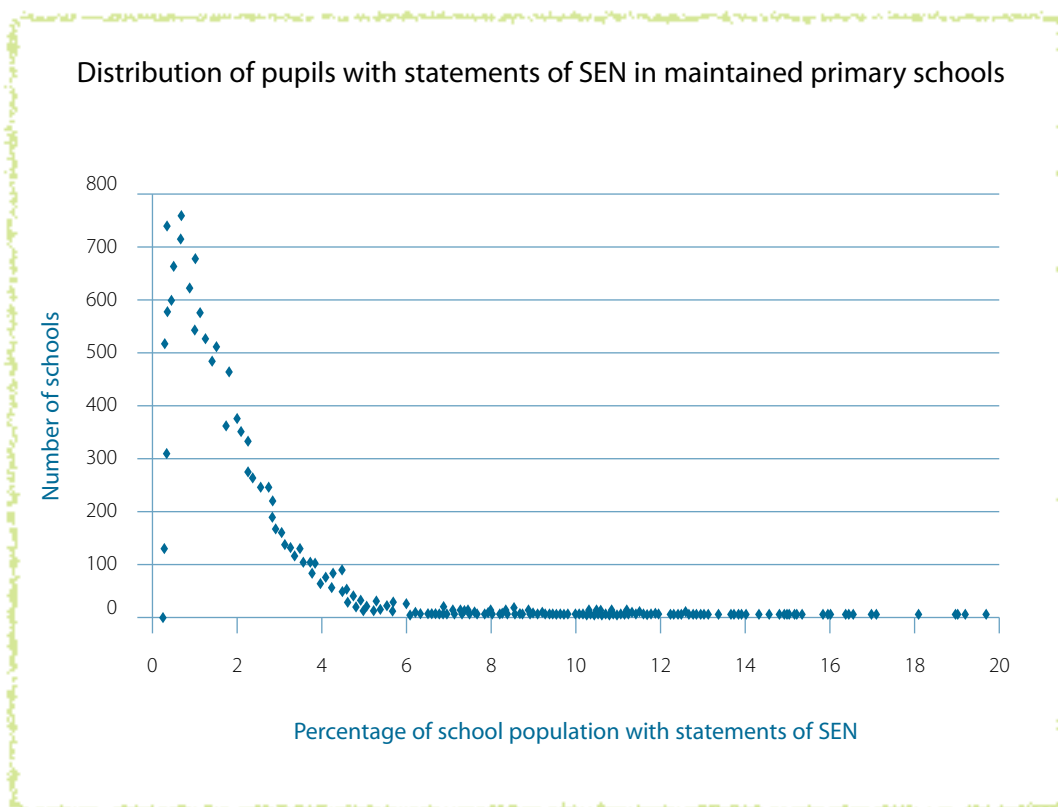
2.18 This partnership approach to SEN reflects our broader approach to education reform. We want to build on the experience of collaborative initiatives such as federations, specialist school networks, Excellence in Cities, London Collegiates and Training Schools to develop strong local networks of schools, sharing responsibility for the success of all children in their area and grouped together to:

- share transferable good practice and ideas
- extend the curriculum offer they make to their pupils

- promote innovation
- make flexible use of the most experienced staff and leadership expertise to improve school management and teaching and learning.

2.19 It will be for each network to determine its own priorities to meet local needs. But the key aim must be to support school self-evaluation and improvement. Networks will focus on developing personalised learning (which is described in more detail in Chapter 3), better use of performance data and benchmarking, peer coaching and sharing knowledge. We want to see special and mainstream schools working together within local networks to improve the quality of teaching and learning for children with SEN and disabilities.

2.20 Through our **e-learning strategy**, we will support the development of virtual communities to make it easier for all parties to innovate and collaborate, share resources, exchange ideas, work together to resolve problems, and communicate more effectively with parents and young people.



## Admissions and exclusions

- 2.21 While some schools are fully committed to including children who have SEN, others are still not playing their part fully – giving rise, in some cases, to difficulties with school admissions and exclusions. Recent Audit Commission research found that children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were the least likely to be admitted and most likely to be excluded; but that children with physical difficulties and learning difficulties were also experiencing similar problems.
- 2.22 Data for 2001/02 shows that children with SEN, including those who do not have statements, accounted for almost two-thirds of permanent exclusions. Children with SEN were thirteen times more likely to be permanently excluded than those without SEN. We will commission in-depth research to throw light on the particular difficulties that children with SEN are experiencing with school admissions and exclusions and to identify effective ways of supporting their inclusion. This will report in September 2004 and we will act on the basis of its findings.
- 2.23 Admissions and exclusions policies can also act unfavourably on **looked after children** (27% of whom had statements of SEN in 2001/02). Local authorities tend to find it difficult to find suitable school places for looked after children, often because a change of care placement requires a school move mid-year or even mid-term, or because schools assume looked after children are likely to have behavioural difficulties. In 2001/02 looked after pupils were ten times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers. The *School Admissions Code of Practice*<sup>12</sup> recommends that all admission authorities give looked after children top priority in their oversubscription criteria. The Social Exclusion Unit's report, *A Better Education for Children in Care*<sup>13</sup> includes a number of recommendations for improving the way in which the admissions system works and for reducing the exclusion rate for looked after children. We are committed to implementing those recommendations in full.
- 2.24 Some schools feel that the only way to ensure support for individual children with challenging behaviour is to exclude them. This does not, of itself, resolve the child's underlying difficulties, it disrupts their education and can be damaging to their long-term prospects. We want schools to work together locally to share responsibility for excluded pupils and those at risk

12 *The School Admissions Code of Practice* published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003

13 *A Better Education for Children in Care* published by the Social Exclusion Unit in 2003 [www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk](http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk)

of exclusion so that children are not out of school. Local Admissions Forums, which became mandatory in March 2003, have a specific remit to promote agreements for dealing with a range of difficult issues, including ensuring that potentially vulnerable groups such as looked after children or children with SEN are effectively provided for in admission arrangements. Similar consideration should also be given to the allocation of places to other children who arrive out of the normal admission round, including those who have been excluded from school or have a history of challenging behaviour.

- 2.25 We have encouraged Local Admissions Forums to discuss and agree protocols for the allocation of vulnerable children, taking account of parental preference as much as possible. They are also required to monitor how well admission arrangements, including agreed protocols, are working in practice. We are clear that all schools have a responsibility to work together to ensure that children are not out of school and we expect Forums to play a key role in facilitating this.
- 2.26 *Every Child Matters* sets out the Government's long-term approach to strengthening support for parents and carers, through universal services for all and a more targeted approach for those who need additional help. Where a child's behaviour escalates to such a level that exclusion becomes necessary, the co-operation of parents is critical. Some parents may need specialist support to play their part. Voluntary parenting contracts with the child's school and local authority have a role to play. Where parents are harder to engage or even appear to condone their child's poor behaviour in school, compulsory parenting orders may be a further option. But parenting contracts and parenting orders should *not* be seen as alternatives to taking appropriate action to meet a child's special educational needs.

### Tackling challenging behaviour

- 2.27 We recognise that some children are more difficult to include than others – typically, because they exhibit challenging behaviour or because they require more specialist support, including guidance and counselling, than local schools are able to provide. We are therefore investing considerably in improving behaviour and attendance in schools through the Behaviour Improvement Programme and the National Primary and Key Stage 3 strategies.

### **The Behaviour Improvement Programme**

The Behaviour Improvement Programme has recently been extended to involve 61 local authorities and almost 2,000 schools in areas with higher levels of truancy and youth crime. Funds have been made available to improve standards of behaviour, reduce truancy ('unauthorised absence'), reduce exclusions and improve provision for children and young people out of school. Priorities have been decided locally, but most programmes have included:

- key workers to support persistent truants and young people at risk of exclusion and/or offending; multi-agency behaviour and education support teams (BESTs), carrying out preventative work with young people with BESD
- behaviour and attendance audits and staff training
- innovative provision for children and young people who have been temporarily excluded, including flexible placements in other schools, work with the youth service, and in-school exclusion centres.

### **Behaviour Support for schools through the National Strategies**

The Key Stage 3 Strategy provides training to all secondary schools on how to promote positive behaviour in the classroom with the aim of enhancing learning and improving attainment.

For children in the primary phase, work is underway to trial curriculum-based approaches that develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills, alongside professional development opportunities for staff and targeted support to schools where behaviour and attendance are key issues.

2.28 OFSTED are currently investigating the full range of provision made for young people with BESD, and drawing on their findings, we plan to take steps to improve the quality of education for those with **more severe and complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties** by:

- clarifying the roles of pupil referral units, special schools and alternative provision in meeting the needs of pupils with BESD and promoting greater partnership working to avoid the need for permanent exclusion wherever possible
- improving the quality of provision made for young people with BESD in all types of setting. There are particular concerns about the disproportionate number of failing BESD special schools
- promoting greater use of curriculum flexibilities to keep young people with significant BESD engaged in learning and working towards qualifications
- exploring the scope for developing intensive, short-term interventions, working in partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), particularly for those at risk of exclusion, as well as ensuring longer-term support for those children with enduring needs.

This work will take account of the proposals in *Every Child Matters* for working in multi-disciplinary teams, with lead professionals for children known to more than one specialist agency, and the national standards for CAMHS to be set by the Children's National Service Framework. It will complement the Green Paper proposals for a multi-agency strategy for mental health service development in all children's agencies.

#### Making specialist provision for children with 'low incidence' needs

2.29 A small number of children have extremely severe and complex needs, requiring more support than can ordinarily be made available within the local community of schools. There are about 6,200 pupils in maintained and non-maintained residential special schools in England and about 2,800 in independent residential special schools. Nearly all have statements of SEN and many have significant health, social care and mental health needs. There are concerns about the high cost of such placements, the quality of some provision, patchy monitoring arrangements, and the lack of contact some children have with their families.

2.30 We will work with local authorities and the SEN Regional Partnerships to promote effective regional and sub-regional planning to meet the needs of children with low incidence SEN. We want to see joint investment by local authorities and other agencies in the development of specialist provision that can provide outreach and tailored packages of support for children. In the light of the findings of the forthcoming audit of specialist services, we intend to pump-prime the establishment of regional centres of expertise, providing specialist advice, training and consultancy support to staff in mainstream settings. Some centres may be based in special schools with an enhanced outreach role, while others may build on SEN advisory and support services working with health and social care specialist services. Our aim will be to achieve a more consistent coverage of specialist expertise across the country so that all schools know where to find the help they need.

#### **Residential placements – so far we have:**

- Collected data from 81 local authorities on the number, needs and costs of residential placements through the SEN Regional Partnerships; in future, we will collect this data annually from all local authorities
- carried out, again through the SEN Regional Partnerships, a survey of how far local education authorities are notifying social services departments about placements of children in residential schools (as required under the Children Act, sections 85 and 86) to secure the welfare of children living away from home
- worked with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Association of Special Schools (NASS) to develop a contract on the placement of children in non-maintained and special independent residential schools. This covers all aspects of placements from negotiations about fees through to review arrangements, with the aim of improving the quality of such placements and ensuring a more consistent approach.



2.31 We will improve the use of residential placements by:

- enabling better planning – by commissioning an audit of specialist services across education, health and social care provision in maintained schools and health and social care settings and of unmet needs, drawing on the information held by the SEN Regional Partnerships
- giving priority to work on regional planning and the commissioning of specialist services through the SEN Regional Partnerships, building on the valuable work already taking place in some areas
- helping local authorities to better manage expenditure on residential placements by sharing good practice in reinvesting resources in local provision and services, so enabling children to be educated nearer home. We will commission further research to identify and disseminate best practice, evaluate the impact of the LGA-NASS agreement and SEN Regional Partnership initiatives, and explore the scope for collective planning and commissioning of residential placements.

2.32 In the longer term, the appointment of Directors of Children's Services in each local authority will enable a more strategic approach to be taken across education and social services to supporting children with severe and complex needs. The *Choice Protects* initiative to strengthen the commissioning of placements for looked after children will consider residential special schools. We know that better family support and access to short-term breaks can help families to keep their children at home and the National Service Framework for Children will consider these issues.

#### **Case study Building local capacity to meet low incidence needs**

As part of an initiative established by the South East SEN Regional Partnership, Kent has collaborated with Dorton House School, a non-maintained school catering specifically for children with visual impairment, to provide a range of services to support children with visual impairment and enable them to make the most of their education.

Staff from the local authority and Dorton House have worked together to plan joint services for assessment; staff training; child centred learning programmes; and use of technology. An assessment centre co-ordinator has been appointed and joint training and development

for staff is being offered to school staff across the region, along with individual programmes for children and young people with visual impairment during weekends and school holidays. Joint targets and performance indicators are being developed based on national quality standards and focused on children's achievements.

The scheme is being evaluated regularly, including with children and parents and carers. Early signs are that this partnership is working well and achieving good results.

### Providing transport for children with SEN

- 2.33 There are long standing concerns about the cost and quality of transport for children with SEN. We will undertake new research to help authorities to improve their arrangements with a view to publishing guidance on effective strategies for meeting needs and achieving value for money. In November 2003 the Department for Education and Skills announced that it would publish a draft School Transport Bill in 2004. The purpose of the Bill will be to allow up to 20 local authorities to trial new arrangements for school transport, focused on cutting car use on the school run. The pilot areas must consider the transport needs of all pupils in the area, not just those entitled to free school transport. We anticipate that pilots will start in September 2005.

### Improving specialist advice and support for schools

- 2.34 Schools need access to specialist SEN advice and support to help them identify and meet children's needs and to provide back-up when children's needs suddenly change or crises occur. Local authorities have historically played an important role in providing this through the educational psychology service, behaviour support teams, and teams of specialist teachers. The ways of providing support vary. Some local authorities have large central teams, many have delegated resources enabling schools to 'buy-back' support, and some fund outreach services provided by special schools and voluntary sector organisations.

- 2.35 Research commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and The National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) in 2000 suggests that increased delegation of SEN resources has eroded the availability of support in some areas, and that learning and behavioural support were most affected. We want to see further delegation but not at the cost of SEN support services, which play a key role in supporting the development of inclusive practice.
- 2.36 We aim to ensure greater consistency in the quality, availability and cost effectiveness of SEN advice and support services without imposing a single model, by developing **generic minimum standards for SEN support services**, informed by:
- local authority best practice and standards for evaluating SEN support services developed by the East Midlands SEN Regional Partnership
  - OFSTED's forthcoming review of local authority support services
  - existing standards, for example in relation to hearing and visual impairment and national standards for school improvement professionals
  - further development work and consultation with all concerned.
- 2.37 The standards would be used for self-evaluation by local authorities and in OFSTED inspections and would apply across all SEN advisory and support services, however they are provided, including outreach provided by special and mainstream schools. The standards will take into account the following objectives:
- extending SEN advice and support to early years settings, including those in the private and voluntary sectors that are in receipt of state funding
  - increasingly offering advice and support on a preventative basis, so reducing the need for statements
  - supporting the development of inclusive practice in all schools and early years settings
  - making the best use of existing specialist provision including special schools and specialist resource bases and units in mainstream schools.



## Chapter 3:

# Raising expectations and achievement

### Where we are

We need to provide a personalised education that brings out the best in every child, that builds on their strengths, enables them to develop a love of learning; and helps them to grow into confident and independent citizens, valued for the contribution they make.

We have seen great progress in the achievement of pupils in primary and secondary schools in recent years. But we need to do much more to help all children, including those with SEN to achieve as well as they can, not least if we are to reach the challenging national targets expected of all schools. Some have argued that there is a conflict between the Government's school improvement and inclusion agendas. The reverse is true. Helping children with SEN to achieve is fundamental to sustaining improvements in schools' performance.

The proposals in *Every Child Matters* for integrating services in order to improve outcomes for all children support this aim. However, there remain concerns about:

- how effectively some schools are able to respond to the wide range of pupil needs in today's classrooms and how far children with SEN are helped to achieve to the full
- whether some children are making reasonable progress due to a lack of relevant comparative data
- a lack of relevant curricular pathways and recognised qualifications for young people with learning difficulties
- lack of confidence in involving young people in decisions about their education, the variable quality of advice on options beyond school and limited opportunities for progression for some young people.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to see:

- all teachers having the skills and confidence – and access to specialist advice where necessary – to help children with SEN to reach their potential
- improved data giving parents and teachers a clearer picture of how well children working below age-related expectations are progressing
- young people able to follow courses which build on their interests and aptitudes and lead to recognised qualifications
- young people with SEN actively involved in decisions about their education and options post-16 and having real opportunities for progression, training and work.

### **Action we will take**

We will:

- put children with SEN at the heart of personalised learning, helping schools to vary the pace and approach to learning to meet individual children's needs
- deliver practical teaching and learning resources to raise the achievement of children with SEN through the Primary Strategy and strengthen the focus in Key Stage 3 on young people with SEN who are falling behind their peers

- develop a framework of evidence-based strategies and teaching approaches for pupils with particular needs for dissemination through the national strategies
- work with the Teacher Training Agency and higher education institutions to ensure that initial teacher training and programmes for continuous professional development provide a good grounding in core skills and knowledge of SEN and work with higher education institutions to assess the scope for developing specialist qualifications
- promote and extend the use of P Scales to measure the progress made by those pupils working below level 1 and collect this data nationally from 2005
- consult on changes to the performance tables so that schools get credit for the achievements of all pupils, including those with SEN
- publish practical tools for involving young people with SEN and disabilities in their decisions about their learning
- work across Government to improve the quality of transition planning, setting national standards for health and social care through the children's NSF. We will work with the Connexions Service and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to expand educational and training opportunities and develop new opportunities for transition to work.

## Personalising learning for children with SEN

3.1 We are actively exploring how to make education more responsive to individual children – how to deliver **personalised learning**. This means:

- having high expectations of all children
- building on the knowledge, interests and aptitudes of every child
- involving children in their own learning through shared objectives and feedback (assessment for learning)
- helping children to become confident learners
- enabling children to develop the skills they will need beyond school.

Personalised learning embraces every aspect of school life including teaching and learning strategies, ICT, curriculum choice, organisation and timetabling, assessment arrangements and relationships with the local community. These developments provide an important context for the proposals in this chapter.

3.2 Effective teaching for children with SEN shares most of the characteristics of effective teaching for *all* children. But as schools become more inclusive, so teachers must be able to respond to a wider range of needs in the classroom. We will support them in this task by sharpening our focus on children with SEN within the National Strategies, and through action to improve initial teacher training, induction and professional development opportunities. We also want to develop our understanding of and support for children who are gifted and talented but also have special educational needs.

### The principles of learning and teaching underpinning personalised learning

Good learning and teaching should:

- **set high expectations** and give every learner confidence they can succeed
- **establish what learners already know** and build on it
- **structure and pace the learning experience** to make it challenging and enjoyable

- **inspire learning** through passion for the subject
- **make individuals active partners** in their learning
- **develop learning skills** and personal qualities.

### Sharpening the focus of the National Strategies

- 3.3 The National Primary Strategy is now well developed and the main focus of 'Wave 3', currently underway, is to raise the achievement of pupils who fall behind their classmates. The 'Waves of support' are consistent with the graduated approach to meeting children's needs set out in the SEN Code of Practice. Over the next three years we will deliver a range of practical teaching and learning resources focused on children with SEN, including materials to:
- help teachers expand their repertoire of inclusive teaching skills and strategies and plan confidently to include children with increasingly complex needs
  - help schools to put in place increasingly effective provision for children with significant difficulties in literacy and mathematics
  - promote the achievement of particular groups of children (initially, those with hearing impairment; visual impairment; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; and communication and interaction difficulties)
  - help SENCOs, and literacy and mathematics co-ordinators to support children with dyslexia
  - promote 'learning to learn' skills across the curriculum, which meet the needs of lower-attaining children and reluctant learners.
- 3.4 The **Key Stage 3 Strategy** has focused on developing active and engaging teaching and learning strategies and lesson design to raise the achievement of all pupils. We will sharpen the focus on young people who are falling behind their peers and becoming disengaged from learning through targeted support, building on the experience of Wave 3 of the Primary National Strategy. As a first step, new training for 2004/05 will include:



- materials to support professional development and promote inclusive approaches to teaching and learning in both mainstream and special schools
- guidance for key staff, including training for SENCOs on managing and monitoring effective learning for pupils with SEN in secondary schools
- information to increase the knowledge and skills of Key Stage 3 to enable them to confidently tackle the under-attainment of pupils with SEN within their local schools.

3.5 As the strategy develops, in 2004 and beyond, we will:

- develop materials on Assessment for Learning, to ensure that the 'next steps' for learning are clearly identified and built into lesson design for pupils with SEN
- focus on effective behaviour management, in particular on transfer to secondary education, when difficulties often worsen
- develop materials and guidance to support successful transfer to secondary schools for all pupils, including those with SEN.

#### Improving our understanding of 'what works'

3.6 There is a wealth of research evidence surrounding children with SEN and strategies for raising their achievement. However, much of the research is short-term and small scale, giving rise to disputes about its validity, and mainly based on the learning of younger pupils. There is a lack of research evidence about the learning of pupils with SEN at secondary level. We are determined to learn from the available evidence, commissioning new research where there are gaps in our knowledge.

3.7 We have already begun to develop **a framework of evidence-based strategies and effective teaching approaches** for pupils with particular needs, across all age groups. The Universities of Cambridge and Manchester have recently completed a major scoping study to inform this. We will work collaboratively with the national strategies, building on the themes emerging from the scoping study, to further develop the knowledge base and capacity of schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning of children with SEN.

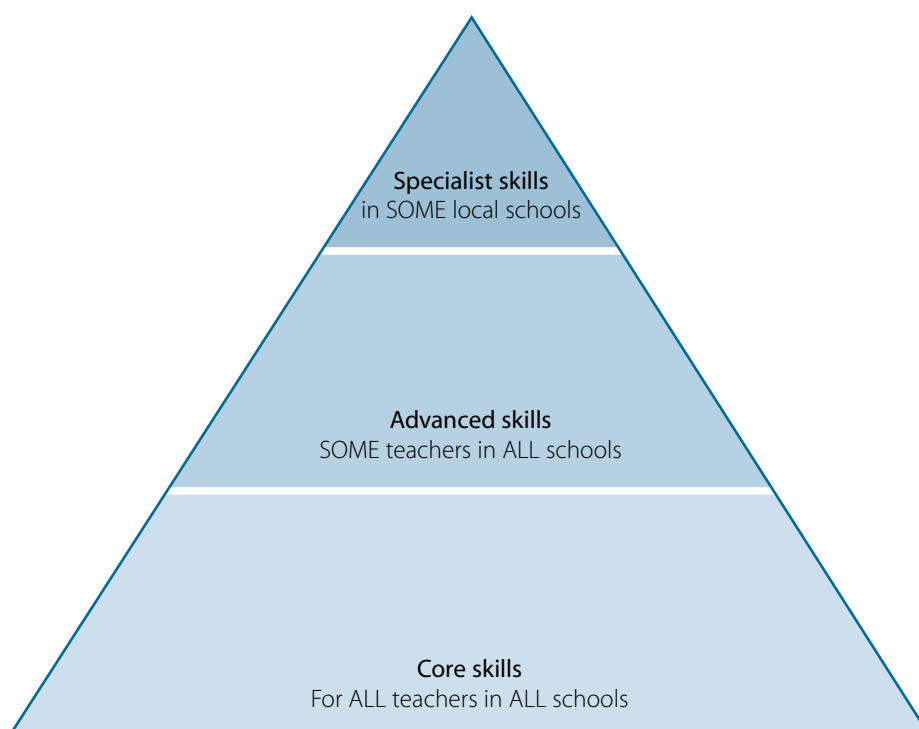
## ICT in Schools and e-learning strategies

3.8 Information and communications technology enables staff to tailor their approaches more effectively to meet the individual learning needs of children. It can provide self-paced exercises to suit the differing needs of individual learners. It can also greatly improve the efficiency of information-keeping, linking curriculum and administrative systems to support assessment and reduce bureaucracy. It can be an excellent way of involving parents in their children's learning and an effective tool for building up a portfolio of evidence of what children can achieve. Our ICT in Schools and e-learning strategies will embed the use of ICT across the curriculum through the national strategies for primary schools, at Key Stage 3 and in the 14-19 phase. We will:

- develop comprehensive advice, guidance and training for teachers and teaching assistants on how ICT can be used effectively in the classroom to support children with different types of SEN. This will complement the Inclusion website on the National Grid for Learning which has an SEN advice forum for teachers
- support teachers and teaching assistants to use ICT to plan and manage learning in school and the home for children with SEN, through funding to develop new or enhanced opportunities to share good practice in the effective use of ICT in teaching and learning through a structured, locally developed driven programme of hands on support
- work with the National College for School Leadership to ensure that headteachers and leadership teams develop the vision, knowledge and skills to use ICT for whole school improvement which supports inclusion
- encourage the use of ICT to manage information in a way which reduces bureaucracy and enables children with SEN to make smooth transitions between schools.

### Improving training and professional development opportunities

- 3.9 Every teacher should expect to teach children with SEN – and we must ensure that they are equipped with the skills to do so effectively. This will require action at three levels.



We will ensure that our approach to the training and development of teachers and teaching assistants on SEN issues takes account of the wider reform strategy for the children's workforce to be developed following *Every Child Matters*.

### Improving core skills – for all teachers

- 3.10 We will work with the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and higher education institutions to ensure that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provides a good grounding in the core skills needed for teaching in today's diverse classrooms, including:

- planning and teaching for inclusion and access to the curriculum
- behaviour management and awareness of the emotional and mental health needs of pupils (to build their self-esteem as learners)
- assessment for learning (learning skills)
- an understanding of where professional advice may be needed.

3.11 **New standards for Qualified Teacher Status** came into effect in September 2002, and **new Induction Standards for Qualified Teachers** came into force in September 2003. Both place greater emphasis on SEN and the new induction standards also reflect school's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

#### Those awarded Qualified Teacher Status must demonstrate that they can:

- understand their responsibilities under the SEN Code of Practice, and know how to seek advice from specialists on less common types of SEN
- differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEN
- identify and support pupils who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

#### Standards for the Induction Support Programme for those awarded Qualified Teacher Status require:

- the head teacher to ensure that all Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) understand the duties and responsibilities schools have under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to prevent discrimination against disabled pupils
- the Induction Tutor to arrange for NQTs to spend time with the school's SENCO to focus on specific and general SEN matters
- the NQT to demonstrate that they plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils in their classes with SEN, with or without statements.

- 3.12 Higher education institutions have since been working to adapt their courses to reflect the wider inclusion agenda. We want to support them in doing this. We will work with the TTA to explore the scope for introducing practical guidance on how inclusive practice might be embedded across the ITT curriculum, for introducing short placements in successful special schools and mainstream specialist provision for trainees who have a particular interest in teaching children with SEN and for ensuring that trainees gain an understanding of schools' duties towards disabled children under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 3.13 We want newly qualified teachers to continue to develop the skills of inclusive teaching during their **induction year**. We have asked the TTA to consider introducing new training materials in this area and how we might encourage more NQTs to take placements in successful special schools.

#### Developing advanced skills – in all schools

- 3.14 To take forward the ambitious agenda set out in this strategy, and in particular, to support their colleagues in delivering improvements for children with SEN in the classroom, we want to develop staff with advanced skills in SEN and an explicit training role:
- SENCOs play a pivotal role, co-ordinating provision across the school and linking class and subject teachers with SEN specialists to improve the quality of teaching and learning. We want schools to see the SENCO as a key member of the senior leadership team, able to influence the development of policies for whole school improvement
  - we will encourage local authorities to create a new cadre of staff with particular expertise in SEN and dealing with pupils emotional, mental and behavioural difficulties, within the **Advanced Skills Teachers** programme and provide national networking and development opportunities. They will be able to act as 'change champions' in mainstream schools, special schools, and pupil referral units and across local authorities
  - our **leading practice** programme will recognise primary schools who have outstanding practice in particular areas, such as SEN, and enable them to spread their practice across local networks of schools.

### Developing specialist skills – within each community of schools

- 3.15 We want to build up the specialist expertise within each community of schools to support the inclusion of children with increasingly complex difficulties. We will:
- work with higher education institutions to support the development of **specialist qualifications** for those wishing to specialise in SEN in the mainstream or special sectors. We envisage that these qualifications would cover both the theory and practice of working with children with particular needs, such as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or severe learning difficulties.
  - work with the TTA and the General Teaching Council to explore the possibility of targeting **incentive allowances** (or 'golden hellos') to encourage suitably-experienced teachers to enter the special sector
  - encourage the participation of special schools in the Specialist School and **Leading Edge** programmes
  - as set out in Chapter 1, introduce **new generic minimum standards for local authority support services**, to ensure greater consistency in both the quality and availability of specialist advice and support.

#### Case study Flexible SEN training for secondary school staff

The South Central SEN Regional Partnership has developed on-line training for secondary school staff in partnership with I CAN, a national voluntary sector organisation for children with speech and language difficulties.

Over 30 online facilitators drawn from local authority SEN support services have been trained. The quality of the training has had a positive impact on the knowledge and skills of school staff and led to an improvement in the achievement of the children they teach. The success of the scheme has led the partnership to develop additional training in autistic spectrum disorders and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The creative use of ICT and the positive partnership between local authorities and the voluntary sector has enabled a wider range of needs to be met more effectively within local schools.

### Role of teaching assistants who work with children with SEN

- 3.16 Teaching assistants who work with children with SEN and disabilities, often referred to as Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), play a valuable role, providing one-to-one support to children with SEN as well as wider support in the classroom. However, research suggests that individual support from an LSA can in some cases lead to less involvement by the teacher, leaving the LSA to deliver most of the curriculum. It is important that teachers and LSAs play complementary roles, avoiding over-dependence on the LSA and depriving the child of teacher attention. Similarly, whilst making due allowance for special needs, it is important that children do not rely excessively on the LSA or solely on one-to-one help. If they are supported to learn within peer groups, they will be better able to develop social and collaborative skills enabling them to move towards increasingly independent learning.
- 3.17 We have developed induction-training materials on SEN for assistants working in both primary and secondary schools, which have been well received. We will continue to look for opportunities to address their training needs, including developing specialist resources geared to particular areas of SEN. The CD-ROM *Success for All*<sup>14</sup>, for example, shows how LSAs are working closely with teachers to provide disabled children with increased access to Physical Education (PE) and sport. We will look for further opportunities to promote effective joint-working by teachers and LSAs.

### Making better use of information on how well children with SEN are progressing in school

- 3.18 We know more than ever before about the achievements of pupils in our schools. This information is fed back to schools and LEAs through the Pupil Achievement Tracker (PAT – formerly the Autumn Package) and OFSTED's Performance and Assessment reports (PANDAs) allowing schools to compare their performance with others and identify groups and individuals who are falling behind. The Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) now provides more detailed information on the progress made by particular groups of pupils. We will consider with OFSTED how this can be used in the future in the PAT and PANDA. Training for SENCOs on interpreting and using the new progress measures is planned within the Primary National Strategy.

- 3.19 From January 2003, schools were asked to identify in their annual returns which children had statements of SEN and which were having their needs met at *School Action* and *School Action Plus*. This means that we can now compare how well pupils with SEN are progressing at different stages of education, in different subjects and compared to other pupils. All this information highlights the need to target support for some children more effectively.

### Early analysis of 2003 results shows

#### Some children with SEN achieve well in school...

One in seven pupils with SEN without a statement gained at least 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE/GNVQ, as did one in twenty pupils with statements.

Three-quarters of pupils with SEN without a statement and well over a third of those with a statement gained 5 A\*-G grades at GCSE/GNVQ.

#### ... but there is much variation across subjects ...

Pupils with SEN (both those with and without statements) perform best in maths at Key Stage 1 (KS1), in science and maths at KS2, and science at KS3. They perform least well in English at all stages (or at KS1, reading and writing). The gap in attainment between English and the other core subjects in Key Stages 1 to 3 is greater for pupils with SEN than for those who do not have SEN.

#### ... and evidence that some are falling behind as they move up through school ...

Generally, the proportion of children with SEN who reach the expected level falls at each key stage. At KS1, roughly one-quarter of those with statements reach the expected level in reading, writing and maths; but less than one-eighth reach the expected level in English and Maths at KS3. Among those at *School Action*, only half as many reach the expected level in KS3 English (26%) and in KS3 Maths (30%) as in the equivalent subjects at KS1 – and the trend for pupils at *School Action Plus* is similar.



**... gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status have an impact ...**

Beyond KS1, boys with statements achieve better results than girls with statements, across all key stages and subjects – except English at KS3, where girls do marginally better. This may reflect gender differences in identifying needs – over two-thirds of pupils with SEN are male, which suggests that schools are more likely to identify boys as having SEN.

The attainment for SEN pupils across different ethnic groups generally mirrors the attainment of all pupils across ethnic groups, though pupils from some ethnic groups, particularly African-Caribbean pupils and gypsy/traveller children, are more likely to be identified as having SEN, relative to other groups.

As for all pupils, there is a clear socio-economic effect: SEN pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve less well than SEN pupils who are not, at all key stages and across all subjects.

*Source: National Pupil Database Version 2.2 (combining 2003 PLASC data and final 2002 attainment data).*

- 3.20 We still do not know enough about the progress made by children working below age-related expectations, around 50% of whom are not entered for national tests and examinations beyond KS1. We therefore propose a range of measures to improve our understanding of how well these children are doing in school.
- 3.21 We will promote and extend the use of P Scales, which help schools to assess the progress made by pupils working towards level 1 of the National Curriculum. **P Scales** are used widely in special schools, but their use in mainstream schools remains patchy. We will work with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to:
- make minor revisions to the P Scales, including separating the strands for speaking and listening and reviewing the perceived gap between the top of the P Scales (P8) and Level 1 of the National Curriculum

- promote greater and more effective use of the P Scales by producing 'moderation' materials to help schools to make judgements on a consistent basis
  - produce guidance for schools to support these changes and promote outreach support by schools who are already experienced in using the P Scales.
- 3.22 From 2005, we intend to collect the P Scales nationally, as part of the national data collection exercise from schools<sup>15</sup>. We and OFSTED hope to include this national information in the PAT and PANDA in future so that schools which use the P Scales can make meaningful comparisons about progress made by pupils working below National Curriculum levels. We are also considering the development of new P Scales to assess pupils' broader achievements in terms of personal and social development.
- 3.23 We will develop the use of **teacher assessment** to monitor the progress made by pupils, including those working below age-related expectations, exploring its reliability with a view to including it in the PAT and school PANDAs in future. We will encourage schools to make better use of routine tests, tasks and other forms of assessment to inform target-setting. For example, the QCA website provides a range of optional tasks for children working below the level of the tests. Targets should be both realistic and challenging and wherever possible, based on relevant comparisons – for example, with past performance, or with similar schools. Through the Key Stage 1 trial announced in *Excellence and Enjoyment*<sup>16</sup>, we will try out an approach that uses testing to underpin teacher assessment, instead of having the two alongside each other. Our aim is for the tests to inform one comprehensive teacher assessment of a pupil's progress and attainment, which will then be reported.
- 3.24 From January 2004, we collect **data by type of SEN** as part of the PLASC. In time, this should provide valuable evidence to underpin strategic planning by local authorities and enable us to study trends, such as the apparent growth in autistic spectrum disorder; to monitor the impact of targeted initiatives and interventions; and to identify the need for further action to raise the achievement of particular groups of pupils.

<sup>15</sup> Schools using compatible systems will be able to contribute to this exercise

<sup>16</sup> *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools* published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003

- 3.25 Detailed guidance was issued to schools and LEAs in June 2003 and many have since run training sessions. Some schools have had difficulty in deciding which definition to use and we recognise that the first year's data will be approximate. While the main purpose of the data is for planning purposes, we also want to explore the feasibility of developing comparative data on the progress made by pupils with different levels and types of need, to help teachers to set suitably challenging targets. This is likely to be most relevant to pupils whose principle needs are related to a learning difficulty, rather than those with physical, sensory or behavioural difficulties.
- 3.26 The Department for Education and Skills, through its national strategy to raise minority ethnic achievement, is committed to a programme of work to lift the achievement of the poorest performing pupils and address issues of SEN, ethnicity and achievement. The high levels of SEN identification among some groups of pupils may be partly explained by teacher expectations and unconscious or conscious stereotyping. We will work with the Teacher Training Agency to ensure that teachers are better prepared and more confident in meeting the needs of minority ethnic pupils and will continue to take forward specific initiatives focused on raising the achievement of African Caribbean and gypsy/traveller children.

### Recognising the achievements of all pupils

- 3.27 We want schools to get recognition for their achievements with all children, not least those who have difficulty learning, whose progress may not be reflected in national threshold measures (for example, the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2). Many head teachers have voiced concerns that school performance tables do not take account of how inclusive a school is and appear to show them to be performing less well than their less inclusive neighbours.
- 3.28 As signalled in our *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools*, we will explore how we could better reflect the progress made by *all* children in national performance tables. We expect this to involve:
- placing greater emphasis on value added measures
  - developing value-added measures to reflect the progress made by pupils working below the level of the tests
  - including OFSTED judgements about how inclusive a school is in the contextual information published alongside the tables.

- 3.29 We plan to consult on these and other possible changes to the performance tables in 2004.
- 3.30 We will also do more to recognise and reward the commitment of inclusive schools through our national schools programmes. Already, schools bidding for inclusion in the **Leading Edge Partnership Programme** must demonstrate an exemplary record on inclusion, based on evidence. We will extend this requirement to other programmes.

### Developing a flexible curriculum and recognised qualifications for all

- 3.31 Young people learn in different ways, at different paces and have widely varying interests and aptitudes. The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement – ‘Inclusion – providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils’<sup>17</sup> provides statutory guidance on planning and teaching the curriculum. It requires teachers to set suitable learning challenges for all pupils, tailor the curriculum to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work, and to overcome potential barriers to learning, including those arising from SEN and disability.
- 3.32 Feedback from the consultation exercise that informed the development of this strategy suggests that, while there is increased flexibility in the National Curriculum, we have some way to go in developing a curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. Our primary strategy, *Excellence and Enjoyment* encourages schools to make more use of existing flexibilities, emphasising the freedom teachers have to decide how they teach and our commitment to extend this further. However the greatest concerns are in relation to Key Stage 4, when many young people with SEN become seriously disengaged with learning and leave school with few or no qualifications.

### 14-19 strategy

- 3.33 Our 14-19 Strategy: *Opportunity and Excellence*<sup>18</sup> sets out an agenda for transforming the learning experiences of all young people by ending the distinction between academic and vocational routes and building on the flexibilities at Key Stage 4 to offer a broader range of choices. The Working Group on 14-19 reform, chaired by Mike Tomlinson, will advise us on longer-term change to secure a much stronger vocational offer and a unified qualifications framework that will provide opportunities for all

<sup>17</sup> *National Curriculum Handbook* published by QCA in 2000

<sup>18</sup> *Opportunities and Excellence* published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003

young people. In its progress report in July 2003, the Group proposed a new framework of diplomas covering all levels of learning, including entry level, to give young people of all abilities the chance to gain a qualification that will be recognised by employers and which can be used as a staging post to progress to higher level qualifications. The new qualifications structure will recognise a wide range of skills rather than focusing only on what young people have learnt in school. It will be important to ensure that new ways of assessing progress are developed so that the full range of their achievements can be taken into account. The Working Group is looking specifically at this issue. Its interim report in February 2004 will set out more detailed reform proposals.

- 3.34 Ensuring greater flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs is central to our 14-19 agenda. We are encouraging institutions to think more flexibly about enabling students to take qualifications earlier or later than their peers. We are encouraging them to provide students with the support they need to access the curriculum and to progress at a pace appropriate to them, building on their particular strengths and abilities. We will work with them to identify best practice in helping all learners to achieve. We will also work with schools to explore the issues concerned with pace and progression and to consult on options for change in this area.
- 3.35 Our policies for the 14-19 phase will encourage high and realistic expectations of all young people and provide a broad range of learning opportunities. We want to encourage institutions to offer a full range of opportunities tailored to individual students' needs. We are therefore working with around 200 schools to test and evaluate an **extension of the performance tables to report achievements in all approved qualifications** for pupils at the end of their compulsory education.
- 3.36 We are testing delivery of 14-19 education and training, through a **series of pathfinders**. Some are exploring how to support the inclusion of young people with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities within the opportunities presented by the 14-19 strategy. On the basis of this, we will compile a manual of good practice, which will be widely disseminated. Other options that we are exploring include whether there is scope for developing new qualifications which better suit students' aptitudes.

3.37 In parallel, we will work to improve the **quality of advice** offered to young people about their options post-16. Through QCA and the awarding bodies, we will provide training on the most effective guidance and support for pupils in selecting courses and managing the examination process. We will also work with the QCA to develop guidance for SENCOs and Connexions personal advisers, providing details on the range of courses and qualifications available for young people who are working below age-related expectations.

### Involving children and young people with SEN in decision making

3.38 All children and young people have a right to have their views taken into account in decisions about their education. Involving them in decision-making enriches their learning and helps to develop life-skills such as problem-solving and negotiation. It is a key element in both Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship education. The Department for Education and Skills recently published draft guidance – *Working Together: Giving children and young people a say*<sup>19</sup> aimed at helping LEAs and schools to become more effective at involving young people, at both the individual and policy level.

3.39 The SEN Code of Practice places considerable emphasis on the importance of involving children with SEN in decisions about their own learning, including ways of removing the barriers to learning they may face. All children, even those with the most severe or complex needs, will have views about their education and the choices before them, and all should be enabled to communicate their wishes, using specialist tools and techniques where appropriate. We will work in partnership with the voluntary sector and local authorities to develop **practical tools for consulting and involving children with a wide range of needs**, both in terms of:

- decisions about their own learning and in relation to individual education plans, reviews of statements and planning for the transition from school to adult life
- the development of school policies and authority-wide strategies for improving local services.

<sup>19</sup> *Giving children and young people a say* published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2003

## Improving opportunities for progression beyond school for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities

3.40 Making the transition beyond compulsory education can be a particularly difficult time for young people with learning difficulties and complex needs, with new funding structures and arrangements for making additional provision to be negotiated, numerous professionals involved and, often, narrower opportunities for progression. There is extensive guidance on transition planning and there have been many initiatives to improve processes, most significantly through the introduction of the Connexions Service, which is able to work with young people with learning disabilities up to the age of 25. However, we know from research that the quality of transition planning varies, the statutory procedures are not being followed in many cases, services are often poorly co-ordinated, and young peoples' and parents' views and concerns are not adequately addressed.

### Recent research on transition for young people with SEN and disabilities

Outcomes for young people identified as having SEN or disabilities at school (Youth Cohort Study; data is collected on alternative years, as indicated below).

	% in education	% in training	% in employment	% not in education, training or employment
<b>16 year olds</b> (2002 data)	67%	11%	10%	13%
<b>17 year olds</b> (2001 data)	56%	10%	12%	23%
<b>18 year olds</b> (2002 data)	35%	8%	35%	23%
<b>19 year olds</b> (2001 data)	33%	13%	30%	24%

- 3.41 We will work across Government to support schools, local authorities and other agencies to:
- improve the quality of **transition planning** improving the specialist expertise of the Connexions Service and building on the arrangements for Person Centred Planning introduced in the Government's *Valuing People* strategy. In particular we will:
    - develop ways of monitoring the effectiveness of transition planning and transition standards, drawing on the work of the SEN Regional Partnerships
    - maintain a single reference point for information on transition
  - set **national standards** to support a smooth transition from children's to adult services through the National Service Framework for Children
  - work with the Learning and Skills Council to expand **educational and training opportunities**. In particular we will:
    - build on their mapping of current provision to identify future demand and gaps in provision
    - ensure that the development of 14-19 provision includes the delivery of courses and opportunities for vocational training appropriate for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly with complex needs – including better use of the Entry to Employment (E2E) scheme and QCA guidance on developing the curriculum for young people with learning disabilities
    - encourage specialist and local colleges to work together to broaden the range of educational provision
  - develop **new opportunities for transition to work**. In particular we will:
    - improve opportunities for community based and supported employment by strengthening links between local Learning Disability Partnership Boards and employers
    - enable professionals and parents to have access to clear information, on benefit rules and employment and explore options for encouraging young people able to work between 5-16 hours per week to seek employment
    - disseminate examples of young people with learning disabilities who have successfully gained employment.



### **Case study Successful transitions – King Egbert School, Sheffield**

King Egbert School's 25 place resource unit for young people with autistic spectrum disorders encourages inclusion in mainstream life of the school and works with the local further education college and employers to promote successful transitions to adult life.

The unit caters for 11-16 year olds with statements of SEN. It has a staff of nine. Children are taught in over 80% of mainstream lessons. Mainstream staff receive training about autism and all pupils are taught about autism. Each teacher receives a written profile about children from the unit and advice on a daily basis. From Year 9 children are able to access a scheme of work placements for half a day a week. The resource unit has a charitable arm that works closely with Sheffield College, which has a team of ten support staff for students with autism. It has appointed an Employment Support Manager at Meadowhall shopping/entertainment centre and there are four students on work placements at Meadowhall shopping/entertainment centre and two young adults in paid employment there. Four other students are also in employment elsewhere.



## Chapter 4:

# Delivering improvements in partnership

### Where we are

SEN is one of the most difficult and challenging of local authorities' responsibilities, as recognised by both OFSTED and the Audit Commission. Many local education authorities have made great progress in providing for children with SEN in recent years and there are a number of examples of effective practice. But despite a robust legal framework and detailed statutory guidance, too often parents face a 'postcode lottery' in the support available from their school, local authority education and social services, and the health service. *Every Child Matters* recognised the importance of addressing these issues

A culture of mistrust has grown up in some areas, such that parents feel they need to 'fight' for the support to which their child is entitled. There is confusion about what provision should be made by the school, and what provision should be made by the local authority, giving rise to disputes, delays and gaps in support. There are shortfalls in the availability of some local authority and health services and a lack of rigorous monitoring arrangements.

Working within the framework of integrated children's services set out in *Every Child Matters*, we aim to build the capacity of schools and early years settings to meet children's SEN. We will work in partnership with local authority education and social services, the SEN Regional Partnerships, health services and voluntary organisations - so that parents may be confident that mainstream education is right for their child, without feeling that the only way to achieve appropriate provision is through a statement. We will keep a close eye on progress, to ensure that real improvements are delivered and inclusive practice is the hallmark of our education system.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to see:

- more consistency between local authorities in their strategic management of SEN, particularly in their use of statements, the level of delegated funding to schools and in special school provision
- schools regularly reviewing the effectiveness of their SEN provision, with LEAs providing support and challenge where concerns are raised
- parents with greater confidence that their child's SEN will be met in school, whether or not they have a statement
- greater integration of education, health and social care to meet the needs of children and families in line with the proposals set out in *Every Child Matters*.

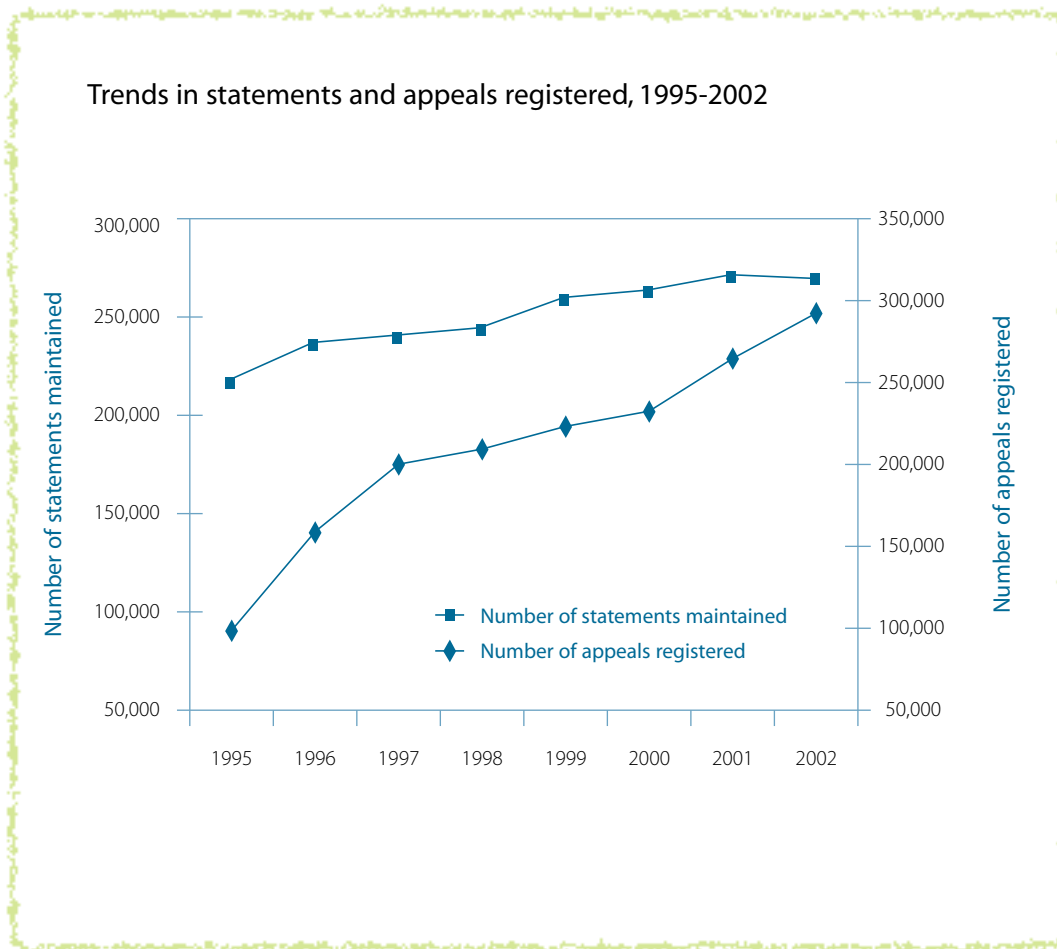
## Action we will take

We will:

- promote more consistent practice through a team of expert national advisers, working closely with the Department for Education and Skills' Schools Directorate Advisers, who will provide support and challenge on key SEN issues including the use of statements, management of SEN resources, identifying and sharing good practice and tackling underperformance. The networking and collaboration facilitated by the SEN Regional Partnerships and Beacon Councils will support this work
- make SEN Regional Partnerships directly accountable to the Department for Education and Skills for their work on the implementation of this strategy
- ensure that schools make inclusion an integral part of self-evaluation. We will publish OFSTED's judgement about schools' inclusiveness in performance tables
- share best practice and improve comparative data on SEN performance through further development of the SEN National Performance Framework
- enable local authorities to better monitor schools' performance in meeting the needs of children with SEN. OFSTED's inspection framework will reflect the key role for local authorities set out in this strategy
- spread best practice in improving accountability to parents for SEN and in providing advice and support to parents locally
- build on the proposals for integrating children's services in *Every Child Matters*, in particular the common assessment framework and Children's Trusts, to deliver joined up services for children and families
- deliver a joint Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health implementation strategy for the SEN strategy and the Children's National Service Framework.

## Monitoring progress and supporting improvement in local authorities

4.1 While some local authorities have made great progress in managing SEN in recent years, there remains much variation in performance and some poor practice. This is reflected in continued demand for statements, as parents seek extra assurance that their child's needs will be met, and rising levels of appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). We want all to move in the direction of the best and we will support improvement in a number of ways.



### A 'hands-on' approach to improvement

- 4.2 Nationally, we will monitor progress at local authority level more closely than we have done in the past. The OFSTED inspection criteria, introduced in January 2004, reflect the themes and priorities set out in this strategy – focusing in particular on the development of inclusive practice. It will also reflect a local authority's support for its SEN Regional Partnership within its overall judgement on the authority's effectiveness. We will develop a clearer picture of authorities' performance in developing inclusive practice and monitor progress in terms of:
- the types of setting in which children with SEN are taught
  - how fully children with SEN are involved in the life of the school, drawing on data on admissions, attendance and exclusions as well as qualitative judgements from OFSTED about the curriculum, ethos and attitudes
  - how well children are achieving – including value-added measures.
- 4.3 To do this we will develop the capacity within the Department for Education and Skills for promoting improvements in provision for SEN across all its programmes. We will recruit additional expert advisers working closely with Schools Directorate Advisers to engage directly with local authorities on taking forward the action set out in this strategy. Many local authorities are already identifying SEN as a priority in their LEA/Department for Education and Skills Compacts, which bring individual authorities and the Department together to work on shared objectives. We will identify and promulgate best practice in SEN provision and provide hands-on support where that is needed. Early priorities will include:
- delegation of SEN resources to support early intervention and inclusive practice
  - reducing reliance on statements
  - strategic planning to ensure a spectrum of provision to meet the needs of local children, including special school reorganisations
  - improving the availability of specialist advice and support to schools
  - improving information to parents on arrangements for SEN by the local authority and in local schools
  - reducing the bureaucracy associated with SEN.

- 4.4 The SEN Regional Partnerships will play a key role in sharing best practice and facilitating links between authorities and, for the next two years, the **Beacon Council Scheme** will allow applications for beacon status to focus on making progress on SEN issues. The Beacon Council Scheme was established to recognise authorities that are centres of excellence in particular areas and to encourage them to share their expertise and practice with others.
- 4.5 The **SEN Regional Partnerships** have worked on a range of priorities at the discretion of their local authorities and other partners. We want them to become more directly accountable for their work around the delivery of this strategy, whilst preserving flexibility for regional priorities. In future, the Department for Education and Skills will approve their strategic and annual plans and seek regular progress updates to release funding. The effectiveness of the SEN Regional Partnerships and the impact of these changes will be the subject of an evaluation between January 2004 and December 2005.

#### Benchmarking and national data

- 4.6 We will give local authorities easy access to a variety of SEN indicators in the **National Performance Framework**. This will enable them to benchmark their performance, support self-evaluation and identify priorities for improvement. Initial data will cover pupil numbers, provision, social disadvantage and attainment in Key Stage tests. We will work with authorities and the SEN Regional Partnerships to develop further indicators and new datasets on:
- progress on inclusion
  - pupil outcomes
  - cost effectiveness.
- 4.7 Following concerns about the reliability of the data on SEN expenditure collected annually in 'Section 52' returns we have, as part of our wider investigation on SEN funding, reviewed the use of each line. We will amend the guidance to authorities to achieve more consistent financial reporting, provide reliable comparative data and a clearer picture of current practice.

#### Monitoring progress and supporting improvement in schools

- 4.8 Implementing this strategy requires clear and consistent policy-making at national level, leadership and strategic planning at local level, and the

commitment of every teacher in every school. Many schools have already made great strides towards inclusion and many local authorities have developed inclusive policies and practice. This strategy will build on their experience, putting forward a wide range of measures to help all schools to move in the same direction.

### School self-evaluation

- 4.9 Inclusion is not something that can be made to happen from outside a school or even by the commitment of a few dedicated individuals. It requires ownership by the head teacher and senior management team, governors and all staff. It also requires willingness on the part of schools to look critically at their own practice and to identify areas where they could do better. Inclusion must be an integral part of whole school self-evaluation and improvement. Many local authorities have agreed self-evaluation frameworks with their schools and there is a wide range of tools which schools can draw on to assess how well they are serving different groups of pupils, including those with SEN.

#### School self-evaluation tools

OFSTED's inspection handbook.

Evaluating Educational Inclusion (OFSTED, 2000).

Primary National Strategy – materials to link with existing self-evaluation frameworks for subject leaders.

Index for Inclusion – designed to help schools to assess how inclusive they are and to support their development, explains the concepts behind inclusion and provides a detailed framework for self-review and materials to support it (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), 2002).

Quality in Schools materials (booklet and CD-ROM) – contain tools that a school can use for self-assessment and improvement planning, including self-review in relation to provision for children with SEN and inclusion. They have been developed by Lloyds TSB and are available free of charge.



4.10 We believe that good schools are educationally inclusive. **OFSTED's inspection framework** emphasises the importance of this. Inspectors make a separate judgement on a school's inclusiveness and this is a key part of their overall assessment of a school's performance. We will publish OFSTED's judgement about a school's effectiveness in meeting the needs of *all* its pupils in **national performance tables**.

#### Local authority monitoring of school performance

4.11 Local authorities have a critical role to play in monitoring school performance on SEN, in supporting improvement and providing challenge where it is needed. However arrangements for monitoring vary greatly across the country. A survey by the Audit Commission in autumn 2001 indicated that barely half of local authorities were systematically monitoring schools' work on SEN – although one third said they were developing systems to do so.

4.12 The Code on LEA-school Relations sets out the overall framework for monitoring and establishes the principle that intervention should be in inverse proportion to success. But this does not preclude local authorities from monitoring schools' work on SEN, in line with their responsibilities under the SEN Code of Practice, which take precedence in relation to SEN. This guidance highlights 'auditing, planning, monitoring and reviewing provision for children with SEN (generally and in relation to individual pupils)' as a critical success factor and regulations<sup>20</sup> require local authorities to publish their arrangements for doing so.

4.13 As more SEN resources are delegated to schools to support early intervention – as proposed in Chapter 1 – it is critical that appropriate accountability arrangements are put in place so that parents may be confident that their child is receiving the provision they need, whether or not they have a statement. Different arrangements have been developed in different areas. Though we do not wish to prescribe one model, we are clear that *all* local monitoring arrangements should be linked to service standards for SEN specialist support and outreach and should be focused on outcomes for children and school self-evaluation. We will incorporate standards for joint local authority/school arrangements for monitoring and accountability for SEN in our forthcoming guidance on distributing resources to support inclusive practice.

## Building parents' confidence in mainstream education

4.14 The acid test for the success of this strategy will be if children with SEN are doing better in school. But it will also be if their parents feel more confident about this. Parents of children with SEN are often much under pressure and relationships with local services can be difficult, particularly where views differ about what provision would be most appropriate. The SEN Code of Practice makes clear that we expect all professionals to work actively with parents and value the contribution they make.

### Case study SEN Code of Practice (paragraph 2:2)

Parents should be empowered to:

- recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active and valued role in their children's education
- have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the SEN framework
- make their views known about how their child is educated
- have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making processes about special educational provision.

4.15 **Parent partnership services** play an invaluable role, providing impartial advice and support to parents on SEN matters and helping them to pursue their concerns with the school or the local authority. We will seek to build on their successes. We will evaluate the arrangements in different areas, looking in particular at how they have supported improvements in school and local authority practice and considering the scope for increasing the effectiveness and enhancing their impact. We will disseminate best practice in delivering effective parent partnership services through the SEN Regional Partnerships and the National Parent Partnership Network to bring all services up to the standards of the best. We will also ask OFSTED to assess the effectiveness of parent partnership services and disagreement resolution services in their inspections of local authorities.

### Case study Partnership with parents – listening to parents' views

Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service holds termly Parents Forums in each part of the county. The Forums are attended by local authority senior officers and cover significant local policy developments such as the delegation of funding for SEN to schools. Specific meetings are also arranged for parents to talk to officers about particular issues. Parents' views have made an impact on the local authority's policies; for example, feedback from parents on their experiences of the statutory assessment process in Warwickshire has resulted in changes being made to make the process clearer and user-friendly.

- 4.16 The **SEN and Disability Tribunal** can be a last resort for parents when other avenues have been exhausted and they are still not satisfied with the provision being made for their child. Recent research shows that the appeal process can be very stressful for parents, and expensive if they use a solicitor. It is therefore of great concern that the number of appeals registered is rising faster than at any time in the last five years (up 16% last year to almost 3,400 appeals in England), although just over half were settled without a formal hearing.
- 4.17 SENDIST is an important source of information about aspects of the SEN framework and the education system that are not working well for parents. Working with SENDIST we want to use this knowledge to contribute to improvements in practice whilst ensuring a high quality service and consistency of decisions. There should be a shared understanding of wider policy and strategy including the desirability of developing local packages of provision for children with SEN wherever possible.

### Improving transparency and accountability to parents

- 4.18 Many disputes with parents arise due to a lack of clarity about what support a child should be receiving, and who – the local authority, the school or another agency – should be providing it. This drives many parents to seek a statement. Earlier in this chapter, we set out proposals to improve the monitoring of both schools' and local authorities' work on SEN. We also want to ensure that *the way* that SEN resources are allocated, and the outcomes

they achieve, become much clearer so that parents know what support their child should be getting and from where, whether or not they have a statement.

- 4.19 Local authorities are already required to publish information about local funding for SEN provision, particularly for children who do not have statements.

**The Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities) (England) Regulations 2001 require LEAs to publish:**

‘An explanation of that element of special educational provision for children with special educational needs (but without statements) which the local education authority expect normally to be met from maintained schools’ budget shares and that element of such provision that the authority expect normally to be met by the authority from funds which it holds centrally.’

- 4.20 More generally the Regulations require authorities to publish details of their policies on SEN and their arrangements for putting those policies into practice, including their arrangements for providing additional SEN support to schools and for monitoring and reviewing the provision that is made, both generally and in relation to individual children. School governing bodies have a statutory duty to do their best to see that children with SEN get the support they need. They play a vital role, with the head teacher and the staff, in helping to ensure that children with SEN are able to learn and participate fully in the life of the school. Schools are required to provide a range of information about their policies for SEN (see box on next page). Both contribute to improving transparency and shared accountability for SEN.

**A school's SEN policy should include information about:**

- how they identify and make provision for children with SEN
- the facilities they have, including those which increase access for pupils who are disabled, including access to the curriculum
- how resources are allocated to and amongst pupils with SEN
- how they enable pupils with SEN to engage in activities of the school together with pupils who do not have SEN
- how the governing body evaluates the success of the schools' work with pupils with SEN
- their arrangements for dealing with complaints from parents.

4.21 Despite the importance of these duties, we know that the arrangements are not being observed as widely or as well as they should. OFSTED will continue to consider the effectiveness of local authorities' and schools' accountability arrangements as part of their inspections. To help ensure that schools and local authorities meet their statutory duties effectively and improve their practice, we will evaluate best practice and **disseminate effective models** for producing and publicising this information, working in partnership with the National Strategies where appropriate. Our aim will be to encourage a more consistent approach, without requiring new paperwork.

**Improving the availability of health and social services for children and organising services around the needs of children and their families**

4.22 Many children with SEN have health and/or social care needs which make it harder for them to make the most of their education. Some have severe and complex needs and require long-term support from their local authority, for both education and social care, and their local health service. While there are some excellent examples of agencies working together to support children and their families, we know that differing spending priorities, geographical boundaries and the number of different statutory frameworks often get in the way.

4.23 The proposals for reform set out in *Every Child Matters*, and the forthcoming Children's National Service Framework offer real opportunities to transform services for children, building them around the needs of children with SEN and disabilities and their families.

4.24 This strategy shares the aims of *Every Child Matters* to:

- make sure that children's needs are identified and that they are helped to achieve their potential
- shift the balance of provision towards prevention
- ensure that support is provided earlier before children reach crisis point.

Within that overall framework, key proposals in *Every Child Matters* will bring significant benefits to children with SEN and disabilities:

- **strong leadership** – the appointment of **Directors of Children's Services** and **Lead Council Member for Children** in every local authority will provide clearer accountability for services for children and their families and a more strategic approach to education and social care for children with SEN and disabilities, particularly those with the most complex needs
- improved arrangements for **information sharing** locally will help to improve early intervention and planning for transitions, with a **lead professional** in each authority to co-ordinate the sharing of information
- work to move towards a **common assessment framework** across services and the parallel work of the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health to promote **common use of language** about SEN and disabilities, will enable professionals to improve the way they respond to the needs of children with SEN and disabilities and their families
- **multi-disciplinary teams** to improve co-ordinated planning and delivery of services
- the provision of **integrated services** through:
  - a network of **Sure Start Children's Centres**, initially targeted at the most disadvantaged areas, offering integrated early education and day care, health services and parenting support

- new **Children's Trusts** bringing together local authority education and children's social services, community and acute health services for children, and other services such as youth offending teams and the Connexions advisers. There are already 35 pathfinder trusts, many of which are focusing on improving services for children with SEN and disabilities. We want to see Children's Trusts in most areas by 2006 and will work with them to test out the proposals put forward in this strategy and the implementation of the National Service Framework for Children, with a view to rolling-out best practice nationally.

### Case study Hammersmith & Fulham Children's Trust

Hammersmith and Fulham are developing an integrated service for children with special needs and disabled children as part of the Children's Trust. The aim is to develop a child-centred and family-friendly approach by integrating services from health, education and social services to meet the individual needs of children with the most complex special needs and disability (age 0 to 19). For most of these children, there will be a childhood-long partnership between the children and their families and the services. Parents/carers and staff from a range of agencies and services have been involved in developing the new service.

The services will be organised in a hub and spoke model. The Centre will be located in the community rather than in a hospital and will provide a range of services including assessment, treatment and administration.

The plan is for the Centre to have a sensory room, meeting rooms (for parental and sibling support activities), assessment and therapy facilities and a play-room. The Centre will also have an information and advice officer supporting an information service with a resource area. Services will be delivered from a variety of other settings, according to accessibility and suitability. Some services will be provided at schools. There are close links with the development of a new school for children with learning difficulties.

The new integrated multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team will be located at the Centre, managed by a single Service Manager. Included in the team will be a number of staff carrying out the new separate role of keyworker. Keyworkers will manage complex cases, act as the main point of contact for the parent or young person, and co-ordinate treatment and services from other specialists. Some staff in the team will be full-time, others will provide specialist input on a sessional basis as required.

The new service will provide multi-agency assessment of health, education and social care needs with specialist assessments to follow as necessary, including multi-disciplinary health assessment and assessment of special educational needs. Each family will have a family service plan, in a format accessible to parents, and based on clear multi-agency child journeys, with regular reviews and re-assessments when required, particularly at key transition points. Where the case is multi-agency and complex, a keyworker will be appointed.

Commissioning budgets from the PCT and social services will be pooled. The Integrated Services Team would carry out commissioning of services and placements for individual cases. A Joint Panel is being set up involving Social Services, Education and Health to agree tri- and bi-partite funding packages for children with complex needs.

- a network of **full service extended schools** – at least one in every local authority by 2006 – will offer childcare, parenting, adult learning and family classes, study support, ICT, arts and sports facilities, and access to health and social care services. Extended schools will provide opportunities for co-locating the services that play a significant part in improving the lives of children with SEN and disabilities and their families on one site. We will learn from their experience to develop more effective multi-agency approaches to supporting pupils with SEN in school. In time, we want all schools to become extended schools, acting as the hub for services for the local community. By 2006, all LEAs will be funded to employ co-ordinators to lead such developments



### Case study Chestnut Lodge – a full service extended school

Chestnut Lodge maintained special school in Halton is the first full service extended school. The school has run successful summer schools and play schemes for local children with and without SEN for a number of years and its facilities, including its swimming pool, are used extensively by a range of community groups including the local Sure Start programme and disabled adults wanting to learn to swim. The school also offers parenting classes and a range of other courses for adult learners.

The school offers placements for Nursery Nurse Education Board courses and outreach facilities for local mainstream schools and early education settings, which includes training for staff in approaches to teaching children with a range of SEN. The school offers daily childcare for families with young children with SEN in partnership with the local nursery. Plans are being considered for using the school site to co-ordinate a range of services including those concerned with teenage pregnancy, children with medical needs and those with school phobia.

- 4.25 The **Children's National Service Framework** will set national standards for the delivery of health and social care for children and the interface with education. The NSF will include exemplars to illustrate the national standards and one of these will relate to services for people with autistic spectrum disorders.
- 4.26 *The Emerging Findings* from the Children's National Service Framework set out the following aim for disabled children and their families. 'To ensure that disabled children and young people enjoy the highest quality of life possible, gain maximum benefits from educational opportunities, health care and social care, and that their needs and those of their families are promptly and sensitively addressed and their choices respected.'
- 4.27 The NSF will build on the progress made by the Quality Protects Programme and look at ways that families and children can receive a child and family centred service that addresses all types of need, provides continuity across transitions in the child's life and is not limited by separate agency roles and responsibilities. The NSF is expected to be published in 2004.

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- 4.28 Therapy services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy) are important in supporting early intervention. Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health will work together to explore further the ways in which specialist therapy staff can support and train others, for example teachers and learning support assistants, to deliver programmes within the child's school or early years setting and in line with strategies agreed with teachers to support the child's learning. A Speech and Language Therapy Forum has been established with the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, I CAN and others, to identify and disseminate good practice.
- 4.29 A key priority will be improving access to comprehensive **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** (CAMHS) and behavioural support services for all children, including those with learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. One area of action will be to increase preventative work with schools, raising staff awareness of children's mental health issues.
- 4.30 Another key priority will be improving the range and quality of **equipment for disabled children** to meet their communication, mobility and daily living needs and support inclusion – in school, at home, in social activities, or on short-term breaks. We will build on the programme set out in the National Health Service Plan to integrate health and social services' community equipment services by 2004, developing and disseminating good practice providing children's equipment services. We will work closely with the Integrated Community Equipment Service Team to develop and spread good practice on children's equipment services.
- 4.31 The Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health will work closely to ensure an integrated approach to the implementation of the Children's National Service Framework and this strategy.



## Conclusion

We have come a long way in recent years in improving education for children with SEN. We owe those improvements to the skill, hard work, commitment and dedication of all those who work in the education service and their partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors.

But despite the progress we have made, for children with SEN, too much still depends on where you live, which school you attend, or on other factors such as your family circumstances. Some children still face real barriers to learning and some parents still lack confidence in the commitment and capacity of our schools to meet their child's needs. We are determined to transform their experience, working together with all those in the education service and their partners.

*Every Child Matters* gave a commitment to improving provision for children with SEN. This strategy fulfils that commitment and sets out a long-term programme of change. Its implementation will be part of the wider developments stemming from *Every Child Matters* and the Children's National Service Framework. We will publish the Government's response to *Every Child Matters* in early 2004, followed by the Children's National Service Framework later in the year. Annex A sets out an

illustrative timetable for implementing the key elements of this strategy, although these may be subject to change in the light of wider developments.

Looking ahead, we will know that our strategy has been successful when we have ceased to rely so much on separate structures and processes for children with SEN, because their interests are embedded in all aspects of policy and their needs are met effectively in local schools and early years settings. We will know we have made a difference when:

- children with SEN have their needs met as soon as they become apparent, without the need for a period of failure
- children with SEN feel valued members of their school community
- the barriers that divide mainstream and special schools have disappeared and all schools work in partnership with other services and the voluntary sector to meet the needs of local children
- there is much greater consistency in the quality of provision that children with SEN receive in school and from the local authority, and parents are confident of this.

We have asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to evaluate progress in delivering this strategy. We will consider whether, in the light of his advice, any further changes are needed to remove the barriers to learning and participation that prevent children with SEN from making the most of their education.



## Annex:

# outline timetable for implementation

This strategy was developed to fit with the implementation of *Every Child Matters* and the Children's National Service Framework. It contains practical action over the next three years in many key areas which will provide the foundation for further work and help us to achieve our longer-term ambitions for children with SEN. The following examples give a flavour of the kind of activity we will be undertaking:

## 2004

### **Early intervention**

Complete phase 1 of the Early Support Pilot Programme

Childcare strategy for children with SEN and disabilities

Feasibility study into National Early Intervention Centre of Excellence

Practical guidance and support on effective delegation of SEN funding to schools

Project to tackle bureaucracy in SEN

### **Removing barriers to learning**

Launch of Inclusion Development Programme

Research into SEN admissions and exclusions

Audit of regional provision for low incidence SEN

Practical guidance on reducing reliance on high cost residential placements

Minimum standards for SEN specialist advisory and support services

### **Raising expectations and achievement**

Research report on effective teaching approaches for SEN across all age groups

SEN materials to promote inclusive approaches in Key Stage 3

Training for SENCOs on effective teaching strategies for SEN in Key Stage 3

Consultation on changes to the performance tables to recognise SEN achievements

Work with the Teacher Training Agency, the National College for School Leadership and others on developing the skills of staff working with children with SEN

Dissemination of good practice in transition planning

### **Delivering improvements in partnership**

Recruitment of national team of SEN advisers to provide support and challenge on key SEN issues

OFSTED's judgement about schools' inclusiveness to be published in performance tables

Improvements to comparative data on SEN performance in the SEN National Performance Framework

Dissemination of good practice in improving accountability to parents for SEN and in providing advice and support to parents locally

## 2005

### **Early intervention**

Phase 3 of Early Support Pilot Programme – principles embedded in Children’s National Service Framework

### **Removing barriers to learning**

Development of Inclusion Development Programme

Training for early years settings in disability discrimination

Practical tool for local authorities to improve disability access planning

Strategies and training materials for schools on disability discrimination

Regional centres of expertise in SEN

### **Raising expectations and achievement**

Disseminate effective teaching approaches for SEN across all ages

Collect data nationally on the performance of children working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum – P Scales

Practical tools for schools and local authorities on consulting and involving children and young people with SEN in decisions about their learning

### **Delivering improvements in partnership**

Joint delivery plan for SEN strategy and Children’s National Service Framework

*The activity set out above focuses on research to fill the gaps in our present knowledge and strengthen our evidence base; action to test out different approaches; and practical measures to help build the capacity of early education settings and schools to respond to children’s diverse needs. We will review our progress periodically and take further action to build on what works in practice.*



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Please quote ref: DfES/0117/2004  
D35/PPSTERL/0104/24

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