

Consultation Paper on school target setting arrangements for children with special educational needs

The purpose of this consultation is to invite your views on the Government's proposals regarding:

-the addition of the 'P-Scales' to the target setting framework for special schools and other schools with large numbers of pupils with significant special educational needs; and

-to invite you to share your views and experiences about pupil mobility and target setting.

Please feel free to comment on any or all of the issues raised. The closing date for responses is Friday 15 December 2000.

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Introduction

In general, schools have responded positively to statutory target setting as a school improvement strategy and there is evidence of progress in raising standards.

Some schools have expressed concern about how current target setting arrangements affect:

- special schools; and other schools with large numbers of pupils with significant special educational needs (SEN); and
- setting and meeting targets in schools with high levels of pupil mobility.

We are therefore consulting on these issues, and following this will give guidance to schools on any changes.

Background

To support the school improvement process, all Governing Bodies are required to set school targets for pupil achievement. Current target setting arrangements are outlined in DfEE Circular 11/98 (July 1998).

The **aims** of school target setting are:

- to help raise standards of pupil performance;
- to focus schools' activities and promote good management; and
- to support the setting and achievement of local targets - those agreed in Education Development Plans; and national ones for literacy and numeracy at the end of Key Stage 2 and GCSE/GNVQ.

Schools are required to set targets that are challenging but realistic. LEAs are asked to support and challenge schools throughout the target setting process. Circular 11/98 provided guidance for schools wishing to set additional targets to reflect their priorities. Schools were not required to publish these targets and could set them according to different time scales.

Target setting and special educational needs

School target setting is an important step in the process of school self-review and improvement. All schools should be involved, irrespective of their different populations of pupils. Targets should reflect the planned progress for all pupils in the school.

However, most special schools and many mainstream schools have pupils whose progress cannot be reflected in the current target setting arrangements, which focus on achievement at level 4 at Key Stage 2, and in GCSE/GNVQ at Key Stage 4. Some schools have had to set zero targets, although they would have preferred to have set targets that were meaningful for their pupils and formed a coherent part of national target setting.

Supporting the target setting process for pupils with special educational needs (DfEE 1998) introduced the *P scales*, which provide descriptions of attainment below level 1, and within levels 1 and 2, for English and mathematics. A scale for personal and social development was also included. These were developed with the wide-scale participation of teachers involving two pilots and further data collection exercises. Many LEAs and schools are using the *P scales* to assist group target setting and to generate group data, to enable them to share their experiences across schools. Although this activity does not yet constitute national benchmarking, it is providing a basis for informed discussion of the issues.

The following points relating to SEN should be understood, if target setting is to assist in the process of school self-review and improvement.

Individual pupil targets

Setting *school* targets is intended to drive school improvement; whereas setting *individual pupil* targets, as part of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), is intended to address the specific and sometimes idiosyncratic needs of these children. Every pupil with a statement of special educational need, or on Stage 2 or above in the current Code of Practice, is likely to have individual targets. They are set to help meet individual priorities and may address basic skills, aspects of behaviour and/or study skills. They are likely to be relatively short term and therefore are not appropriate for strategic whole school target setting.

Group target setting

In some schools, particularly special schools where year cohorts may be relatively small, group target setting - by key stage and / or a needs-based classification - may be more appropriate. For example: having reviewed their work, a school may decide that a group of pupils need to make greater progress in communication skills. Group targets might be set, to ensure that provision focuses on strategies to improve speech, language and other communication skills for the pupils identified, by key stage cohorts. The range of pupils' abilities in a school will mean that targets may be set for some specified groups which do not apply to all pupils.

In proposing the *P scales* for school target setting purposes, there is no expectation that pupils of different ages will necessarily be taught together simply because they are on the same level on the *P scales*. The grouping of pupils will vary in different circumstances and is entirely a matter for schools to decide.

The process of school target setting

Supporting the target setting process described the process of school target setting as part of the cycle of school self review designed to raise standards; and demonstrated how individual pupils' levels in mathematics and English could be aggregated and a degree of 'challenge' added to reach group targets. School targets in special schools and schools with large numbers of pupils with significant SEN should be set in this way, using additional scales such as the *P* scales to do so, where pupils' progress is not reflected in National Curriculum levels.

Benchmarking

The school self review process involves benchmarking schools' own data against that of similar schools. However, the benchmarking data currently available are of limited relevance for many special schools and others with high numbers of pupils with significant SEN. Some of these are exploring the potential to use the *P* scales, or an equivalent, to compare the attainment and progress of groups of pupils across schools. This comparison is helping them to identify which schools have different strengths from their own, in order to share experiences and identify strategies for improvement. For this purpose, we are seeking views about the longer term potential for revised *P* scales, or their equivalent, to be adopted nationally as a common system. Feedback on the use of the *P* scales so far suggests that with further revision this could be done.

We have set out some possible ways forward which are not mutually exclusive. We invite comments on each, and on any other aspects covered in this paper.

Proposal 1

All schools, including those which currently set zero-rated targets should be required to set measurable performance targets.

DfEE's current advice to such schools is that they are free to set and publish additional targets alongside the statutory ones. They can also publish any helpful contextual information. The Department has published advice on setting additional targets for pupils with SEN based on the system of *P scales*. As with the rest of the target setting arrangements, we would expect LEAs to support schools in setting realistic yet challenging targets. We welcome your views on whether targets for English and mathematics should be expressed as absolute levels e.g. P3, P5 or as ranges P8 and above, P6 and above as follows:

KS4 % of pupils to achieve		at least one Certificate of achievement
KS2-4 % of pupils to achieve	NC level	3 and above for English and mathematics
		2
		1
	P scale level	8 and above for English and mathematics
		6
		3

Additional targets

Governing Bodies may wish to consider setting additional targets which express the value-added by the school and reflect more accurately schools' performance in priority areas not covered by statutory target setting. Additional targets could address areas such as behaviour or personal and social development.

Progress targets

Some schools are concerned that their inclusive ethos is not sufficiently recognised within current target setting arrangements. They have suggested that setting progress targets would better reflect their priorities. This might be achieved through indicating the numbers of levels of progress made.

Proposal 2

Schools should be encouraged to set additional progress targets as appropriate for KS2, KS3 and KS4 selecting from the following range of targets:

% of pupils with progress over the previous two years through at least

two	NC levels in English and mathematics	
one	NC level	”
three	P scale levels	”
two	P scale levels	”
one	P scale level	”

Pupil Mobility

Schools which experience high individual or group mobility are concerned about the effects of considerable changes in a cohort over the five terms between target setting and relevant tests or examinations. Group mobility principally affects Traveller, refugee and armed service families; while at individual level, pupils are affected by family break up or migration and readmission following exclusion.

Dr Janet Dobson's work on pupil mobility and its impact on their education and on policy found that most schools experience some pupil mobility. An average mobility rate of 10-20 per cent across all primary schools was reported by diverse urban LEAs. Average levels in secondary schools were generally lower, though some London LEAs were an exception to this.

The extent to which mobility creates problems for school level target setting depends on the proportion of pupils who move in the two years before tests or examinations are taken. We recognise that while the number of schools very adversely affected is probably quite small, the consequences for individual schools, particularly small ones can be high.

Earlier this year, Ministers announced that certain categories of pupils (ie those recently arrived in this country and with English as an additional language) will be omitted from reported school performance tables. National level statistics which measure progress against national targets will continue to include all pupils in the relevant cohorts. Therefore there are no plans to change the criteria for school target setting. Clearly it is important that schools affected by high pupil mobility should still be able to set appropriately ambitious targets. We invite schools which have

found ways of addressing target setting and pupil mobility effectively to share their practice more widely.

Proposal 3

Schools should continue to publish contextual data, such as details of levels of pupil mobility, alongside their targets in annual reports.

DfEE should disseminate examples of effective strategies to address pupil mobility in school target setting.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE PRO FORMA

Please use this pro forma for your response, adding continuation sheets if necessary.

NAME _____

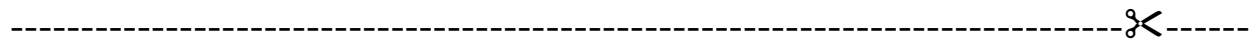
ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

Please tick the type of organisation that you represent:

Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special unit attached	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special School	<input type="checkbox"/>	LEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diocese	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Please give details	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____					



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Proposal 1

All schools, including those which currently set zero-rated targets should be required to set measurable performance targets.

Question 1a:	Should schools which currently set zero-rated targets be required to set measurable performance targets?	Yes	No
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Comments: _____

Question 1b:	Should P scales be included in the national framework for statutory target setting where pupils' progress cannot be reflected in National Curriculum levels? If not what further changes would be required ?	Yes	No
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Comments _____

PUPIL MOBILITY

Proposal 3

Schools should continue to publish contextual data, such as details of levels of pupil mobility, alongside their targets in annual reports.

DfEE should disseminate examples of effective strategies to address pupil mobility in school target setting.

Question 3:	Have you any comments on pupil mobility with regard to school target setting?	Yes	No
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Comments:

**Your response may be made public unless you indicate otherwise.
Please send your response to:**

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