

CABINET – 13th January 2004

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Removing Barriers to Progress

A Strategy for Special Educational Needs

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out detailed proposals for Leicestershire's Strategy for Special Educational Needs.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to agree the proposed actions as set out in Appendix B.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. Cabinet agreed on the 9th December, 2003 to ask officers to complete more detailed action planning on SEN Strategy. This was in response to consultation on draft SEN strategy proposals which had been approved by cabinet in September 2003.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. Lead Member December 2003/January 2004
Cabinet 13th January 2004
Education Scrutiny 21st January 2004

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

5. Cabinet 30th September 2003: draft SEN strategy proposals approved for consultation.
Cabinet 9th December, 2003, report on responses to consultation and agreement to more detailed planning.

Resource Implications

6. The timing of the implementation of the area special school proposals (Priority 3a, Appendix B) depends on the availability of capital resources. The new Melton area special school is under construction; the LEA has bid for resources for a replacement school for Dorothy Goodman School through the Targeted Capital Fund and the Cabinet has included area special schools as the second priority for the education capital programme after intergrid school replacements. The revenue costs relating to the SEN strategy fall mainly in the schools budget. The implications will be assessed in detail for the Schools Forum. Where possible, change will be made through the redistribution of resources, without removing

delegated funds from schools.

The Director of Resources has been consulted on this report.

Circulation Under Sensitive Issues Procedure

7. This report covers all areas of the County Council.

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NB: The detail of the report follows in Part B.

PART B

SEN Strategy: Removing Barriers to Progress

Leicestershire Learning for Life

8. **We believe that all the people of Leicestershire should have lifelong access to high quality education and training for vocational, social and personal needs to improve the quality of their lives and contribute to the economic and cultural development of this County and beyond.**

Introduction

9. In May 2003, cabinet agreed to begin discussions with stakeholders around the county about a strategy for special educational needs. An SEN action plan had been in place for several years, but the LEA inspection in January 2003 had concluded that there was a need to develop this plan into a strategy, with both more detail, and a greater sense of ownership among stakeholders.
10. Extensive discussions were held with headteachers, SENCOs, governors, parents, voluntary sector agencies and other statutory agencies, and a draft strategy document submitted for cabinet approval at the end of September. With cabinet approval, a series of six consultation meetings were organised around the county again inviting a wide range of stakeholders to hear the draft proposals and offer comment. Some 360 colleagues attended these meetings in October and November. Responses were collected in a number of ways:
- Group discussions were noted and the notes collated
 - Session leaders took detailed notes of the feedback groups gave in the plenary sessions
 - Colleagues were invited to return consultation forms by November 17th 2003. A summary is included in Appendix A.
11. This information was put together in the form of a further report to cabinet on 9th December, 2003, and the following recommendations endorsed:
- “Detailed action plans should now be drawn up taking account of:
- I. the need to adjust area boundaries in the light of feedback
 - II. the importance of moving ahead with developing plans for provision for both Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties, and Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - III. the less positive response to some of the detailed recommendations derived from the Best Value review of the Specialist Teaching Service
 - IV. the strong support for widening the involvement in statement panel
 - V. the strong support for both a unified programme of professional development for SEN, and for developing the arrangements to monitor SEN provision in mainstream schools.”
- (Cabinet Paper “Response to Consultations on SEN Strategy and Specialist Teaching Service Best Value Review” 9th December, 2003)
12. This paper includes the detailed plans called for by cabinet. See appendix B.

SEN Policy Principles

13. Leicestershire has had an SEN Policy and Development Plan since 2000 and has recently agreed an overarching Inclusion Policy.

The principles from these two policies underpin the work we do to promote equal opportunities for all pupils in Leicestershire and will inform further developments.

Leicestershire's Inclusion Policy is based on the following principles:

- Inclusion as a continuing process of increasing participation for all learners
- Celebration of human diversity
- Increasing self-esteem and the desire to achieve for all learners
- The entitlement of all learners to receive a broad and balanced curriculum that gives the opportunity to achieve success

14. Leicestershire's SEN policy is based on the following principles:

- A commitment to comprehensive community education, which offers high quality provision to all pupils of statutory school age appropriate to their needs and all others who wish to learn.
- The entitlement of all children to receive a broad and balanced curriculum; they have a right to achieve success and fulfilment of their potential.
- The overall strategy of the Local Education Authority and national initiatives.
- Working together with parents, carers and other agencies to provide access to high quality education for children with special educational needs
- Early identification and intervention for pupils with special educational needs
- The needs of children with SEN being met within their appropriate mainstream school wherever possible; all teachers are teachers of special needs and all schools make provision for all pupils including those with special needs in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice.
- Children with SEN being educated in their local community wherever possible and living with their own family.
- Targeted, responsive and clearly described financial arrangements made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Recognition that many factors influence whether a child has special educational needs

Strategy Priority Areas

15. Detailed plans are included for seven priority areas:

- Priority 1: Developing inclusive practice in schools
- Priority 2: Developing an Area Focus for SEN Support Services
- Priority 3a and 3b: Area Special Provision
- Priority 4: Development of Provision for Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)
- Priority 5: Development of Provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Priority 6: Best Value Review of the Specialist Teaching Service
- Priority 7: Involving schools in SEN decision making

Plans are included in appendix B.

Underpinning Rationale

16. A consistent theme running through our discussions about SEN strategy has been the importance colleagues attach to improving working relationships between services and agencies. This a very significant theme with respect to the Green Paper “Every Child Matters”, which has drawn together thinking in this area around the importance of:
- Single point of access for specialist services
 - Keyworkers to co-ordinate multi-agency work with individual families
 - Common Assessment Frameworks for agencies working with vulnerable/disabled children
 - Shared budgets for integrated support
 - Sharing information between services and agencies
17. The single point of access into SEN support services was particularly important, according to feedback, for SENCOs. Many felt that this would reassure them that they had not missed an important service that they should have known about, and reduce the amount of phoning different agencies that would be necessary.
18. Achieving a single point of access is not straightforward. Routing all referrals through a single multi-agency panel would be a very inefficient use of time, because most referrals would not engage most of the group. Rather, multi-agency panels seem to work most effectively when they deal with complex cases which require a degree of joint problem solving. These proposals build on this.
19. Shared working between schools needs to use existing networks as much as possible, and development groups offer just such a mechanism. It is proposed to build the capacity for SENCOs to work together to:
- Share good practice
 - Problem solve complex cases
 - Plan INSET opportunities and visits to schools in the group
 - Share information on new initiatives/materials
20. Consultation revealed the importance colleagues attach to enabling mainstream schools, special schools and support services to work more effectively in partnership. The five area structure for the county received strong support, although there is a need to consider some adjustments to boundaries. It is proposed to enable colleagues from schools, SEN support services, health and social services, and area special schools to come together in each area to both share information, co-ordinate, and problem solve complex pupil cases. These fora will also provide an opportunity for colleagues to plan shared initiatives to develop local provision for pupils with SEN.

21. *Links with other plans*

The following plans link to the SEN Strategy:

OFSTED Action Plan

This plan sets out the overall process for establishing an SEN strategy.

Strategic Plan

This plan sets the overall objectives for the Education Department.

Education Development Plan

This plan deals with the overall plans the LEA has to raise attainment and achievement. The plan sets targets for the raising the achievement of children in special schools, and for support for vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children.

Behaviour Support Plan

This plan deals in particular with improving the provision for pupils with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). A new plan is being prepared for publication in April 04 and it will draw heavily on components of the SEN Strategy.

22. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Six monthly monitoring reports will be prepared by lead officers for each priority within the strategy. The reports will be considered by:

- Special Educational Needs Officers Group
- Departmental Senior Management Team
- Lead Member for Education

The reports will also be published on the SEN Strategy website.

23. With respect to evaluation, a yearly evaluative report based on monitoring reports will be prepared for lead members, and cabinet. Again, this will be published on the website.

Conclusion

24. This paper sets out the priorities for Leicestershire's SEN Strategy. The key elements are improving specialist provision in the areas of Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorders; and enabling colleagues in different schools, services and agencies to work more effectively together for pupils on an area basis.

Summary of Responses to Consultation

SEN Issue	Detailed Options suggested	Response to Consultation
Area development of Provision	Option 1: Continue to reconfigure our special schools as area special schools Option 2: Seek opportunities for developing special school provision on mainstream sites Option 3: Develop provision for pupils with MLD in all schools Option 4: Develop area wide unit provision for pupils with MLD	Very positive response Colleagues wished to see a refinement of the areas, linking to other initiatives such as 13-19 strategy, and rapid progress with detailed plans in each area.
Development of provision for BESD	Option 5: Develop provision for pupils with EBSD in all schools Option 6: Develop area wide unit provision at Primary for EBSD Option 7: Develop area wide unit provision at Secondary for EBSD Option 8: Develop both primary and secondary EBSD provision as above but within a unified management structure across the elements of provision	Provision in every school did not receive strong support, but there was good support for the unit provision option, moderate support for the unified management option.
Development of Provision for ASD	Option 9: Enhance the staffing of the Autism Outreach Team Option 10: Establish unit provision with a county wide remit for pupils with ASD in a linked college and high school or all age secondary	There was a clear need to be more specific about proposals in this area
Best Value Review of the Specialist Teaching Service	Option 11: Reduce direct teaching and increase consultative support to schools (recommendation 2,7,) Option 12: Bring all early years services under one management (rec 5&6) Option 13: Focus training on early identification (rec 10) Option 14: Invite schools to commit to 3 yr contracts with a fully traded LST (rec 14, 17) Option 15: Broaden the range of modified teaching resources available for pupils from the service (rec 11) Option 16: Enable access to the AOT for pupils without statements (rec 16) Option 17: Change the name of the service from the Specialist Teaching Service to the Special Needs Support Service (rec 21)	There was enthusiasm for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated management of early years services • Training on early identification • Broadening the range of modified teaching resources • Widening access to AOT. There was much less enthusiasm for the other options
Area focus for SEN support services	Option: 18 Develop a co-ordinated area focus to SEN support services	There was very strong support for this option
Involving schools in SEN decision making	Option 19: Increase school involvement in statement panel	The importance of openness and transparency were underlying themes to many comments.

		Many colleagues welcomed this and suggested other opportunities for involvement should be sought
Developing Inclusive practice in schools	<p>Option 20: Create stronger area networks between mainstream, special schools and support services</p> <p>Option 21: Encourage schools to focus on developing provision for all pupils through a charter mark scheme to recognise best practice</p> <p>Option 22. Further development arrangements for monitoring SEN provision in mainstream schools</p> <p>Option 23: Build a unified and coherent programme of continuous professional development for schools in SEN, including elements for Senior Management Teams, Governors, Teachers, LSAs and SENCOs</p>	<p>Colleagues were strongly in favour of stronger links between special, mainstream and support services, but did not on the whole, favour a charter mark scheme for individual schools. Improving monitoring arrangements received moderate support, with strong support again for the unified INSET programme</p>

Strategy Priority Areas
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Priority: 1: Developing Inclusive Practice in Schools

Programme of Activity	Timescales
1. Develop stronger local networks between mainstream and special schools, support services and other agencies, by establishing forums in which partners can share information, plan and problem solve complex cases.	Dec 05
2. Establish procedures for a single point of access for mainstream schools to SEN support services in each county area	July 04
3. Develop a leadership course for SEN managers/leaders in schools to help them develop a strategic approach to SEN provision	Dec 04
4. Develop and evaluate the monitoring arrangements for resources delegated to schools for pupils with special educational needs	Jul 04
5. Produce a unified programme for Continuous Professional Development in SEN for school staff, including an annual survey of SENCOs in schools as part of the planning process	Sept 05
6. Seek information from parents as to their reasons for choosing a non-catchment area school, where their child has Special Educational Needs	Jul 04

Resources: Officer time from current resources

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved attainment for lowest attaining quartile of pupils.
- Fewer pupils placed in out of county special schools (excluding schools in neighbouring authorities).
- A reduction in the need for statements of special educational needs. Referrals for statutory assessment reduced by 10% by April 2005.
- Improved rating of LEA SEN Strategy by schools in the Audit Commission survey from 3.85 in 2003 to less than 3.00 by 2005.
- School Section 10 OfSTED reports identify SEN provision as satisfactory or better in 90% of schools inspected by 2003-04 and as good or better in 90% of schools inspected 2005-06.
- Increase in the proportion of pupils in special schools being included in a mainstream experience by 30% between 2002 and 2004.

Responsibilities: Charlie Palmer, SEO, SEN & Inclusion

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<i>Priority: 2: : Developing an Area Focus for SEN Support Services</i>	
<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Develop an interagency presentation on area working for sharing with colleagues in other agencies and services	Jan 04
2. Develop area working models based on the above presentation	Feb 04
3. Invite colleagues from support services to join pilots	Feb 04
4. Identify groups of schools to pilot working methods	Feb 04
5. Provide training for groups in multi-agency work, and allow group members time to get to know other professionals and their work	Mar 04- May 05
6. Ask all team leaders in services to establish allocations of team members to county areas	July 04
<p><i>Resources:</i> The Early Support Pilot Programme provides the LEA with funding to develop this work. Some £70,000 is available from central Government.</p>	
<p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SENCOs report a greater sense of area teamwork, as measured by the annual survey of SENCOs. ▪ Improved headteacher confidence in LEAs planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs, as measured by the Audit Commission Annual Survey of schools, from 3.75, in 2003, to less than 3 by 2005. 	
<p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Charlie Palmer, Senior Education Officer, SEN & Inclusion</p>	

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Priority: 3a: To review the special facilities in each area of the county and propose new structures in line with the concept of area special schools.

<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Adjust area boundaries in response to feedback received during consultation	Jan 04
2. Melton and Thurmaston Complete preparatory work for new school to open Sept 2004	Sept 04
3. Oadby, Wigston, Countesthorpe, Braunstone and Market Harborough Develop detailed proposals by April 2004 for implementation 04-05	Apr 04
4. Hinckley, Market Bosworth, Lutterworth Bid for targeted capital submitted: awaiting response for April 04-05. Review position when outcome known.	March 04
5. Coalville, Ashby, Ibstock, Markfield, Groby Working group to be established in April 2004 to report in October 2004	Oct 04
6. Loughborough, Shepshed, Castle Donington, Barrow on Soar, Birstall, Glenfield, Anstey Working group to be formed in January 04 to report in April 04	Apr 04

Resources: Officer time from current resources

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved headteacher confidence in LEAs planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs, as measured by the Audit Commission Annual Survey of schools, from 3.75, in 2003, to less than 3 by 2005.
- Fewer pupils placed in out of county special schools (excluding schools in neighbouring authorities)
- Increase in the proportion of pupils in special schools being included in a mainstream experience by 30% between 2002 and 2004.

Responsibilities: Christine Cassell, Assistant Director, Access & Inclusion

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Priority: 3b: Development of Area Special Provision: Process for each Area

<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Identify stakeholder groups and organisations with an interest in SEN provision in the area	see 3a
2. Establish a working group and links between it and stakeholders in the area. Establish constraints on the options available for the group to consider	see 3a
3. Establish means of collecting information from stakeholders on current and wished for patterns of provision	see 3a
4. Seek cabinet approval to consult stakeholders on plans produced by the group.	see 3a
<i>Resources:</i> Officer time from current resources	
<i>Expected Outcomes:</i> see 3a	
<i>Responsibilities:</i> Christine Cassell, Assistant Director, Access & Inclusion	

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Priority: 4: Development of Provision for Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD)

<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Develop a presentation for heads and governors on the principles of the resource network initiative, and seek opportunities to present to headteachers, SENCOs and governors	Feb 04
2. Identify schools interested in pilot work: minimum number needed: two primary and five secondary	Apr 04
3. Appoint consultant to oversee pilot development	Jun 04
4. Run pilot groups with pupils from local areas	Sept 04
5. Cost proposals for county wide provision on the basis of pilot work	Jan 05
6. Appoint headteacher for resource network to develop pilot projects into long term provision and add additional units to network	May 05

Resources: Additional resources will be needed to develop this provision in 04-05 and continuing. The intention is that this should be found through redistribution of centrally held resources.

Expected Outcomes:

- Reduction in the number of permanently excluded pupils in comparison to national trends.
- Reduction in numbers of pupils with Emotional Behavioural and social Difficulties educated out of county (excluding those in schools in neighbouring authorities or independent provision within Leicestershire) to less than 50 by 2005 / 2006.
- Reduction in fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days.
- Improved rating of behaviour support by schools in the Audit Commission survey.
- School Section 10 OfSTED reports identify behaviour as good or better in 90% of schools inspected by 2004-2005

Responsibilities: Charlie Palmer, Senior Education Officer for SEN & Inclusion

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Priority: 5: : Development of Provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Develop detailed map of all provision for ASD for all pupils educated in and out of the county- to identify gaps in provision	Feb 04
2. Develop specification for high school/college linked provision	Mar 04
3. Seek schools interested in developing such proposals	April 04
4. Refine proposals and costings with partner schools	Jun 04
5. Define any additional provision needed stemming from 1.	Mar 04
<p><i>Resources:</i> Additional resources will be needed to develop this provision in 04-05 and continuing. The intention is that this should be found through redistribution of centrally held resources.</p>	
<p><i>Expected Outcomes:</i> Improved headteacher confidence in LEAs planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs, as measured by the Audit Commission Annual Survey of schools, from 3.75, in 2003, to less than 3 by 2005.</p>	
<p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Charlie Palmer, Senior Education Officer for SEN & Inclusion</p>	

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Priority: 6: Best Value Review of the Specialist Teaching Service

<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Review and revise, where necessary, staff job descriptions and personnel specifications to ensure effective deployment and engagement of staff in undertaking tasks appropriate to their knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications	April 04
2. Ensure effective recruitment and appointment procedures are in place to support equal access/opportunity for disabled prospective candidates	Feb 04
3. Extend performance management systems to include administrative/clerical staff	April 04
4. Formulate written criteria for assessing the staffing establishment of each Service Team and determining threshold levels of difficulty for service involvement	March 04
5. Develop improved procedures for informing schools on a termly basis of service activity	July 04
6. Develop improved financial procedures with regard to service traded activity	July 04
7. Further develop the range of service produced differentiated/modified resources for children with SEN	Sept 04
8. Develop improved procedures for reporting back to parents/carers following school visits	April 04
9. Update and publish the service policy on the teaching of hearing impaired children	July 04
10. Review/revise with Health Service colleagues current practice in providing audiological services with the aim of ensuring appropriate funding and management arrangements	Dec 04

Resources: Existing service resources and staff time

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved headteacher confidence in LEAs planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs, as measured by the Audit Commission Annual Survey of schools, from 3.75, in 2003, to less than 3 by 2005.

Responsibilities: Bob Barlow, Service Manager, Specialist Teaching Service

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<i>Priority: 7: Involving Schools in SEN Decision Making</i>	
<i>Programme of Activity</i>	<i>Timescales</i>
1. Publish, consult and implement, proposals to widen participation in statement panel	Mar 04
2. Implement proposals to promote closer working between mainstream schools, special schools, support services and other agencies (priority 2)	May 05
3. Evaluate potential for SEN inclusion standards course for senior school managers as an alternative to a charter mark scheme	Jul 04
4. Evaluate impact of new monitoring arrangements for 03-04	Nov 04
5. Establish SEN INSET programme co-ordination group including area group representatives	Jan 05
6. Develop web sites for both SEN delegation and SEN strategy to demonstrate that feedback has been analysed and responded to	Jan 04
<i>Resources:</i> Officer time from current resources	
<i>Expected Outcomes:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved headteacher confidence in LEAs planning of SEN provision to meet identified needs, as measured by the Audit Commission Annual Survey of schools, from 3.75, in 2003, to less than 3 by 2005. 	
<i>Responsibilities:</i> Charlie Palmer, Senior Education Officer for SEN & Inclusion	