

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

June 2003

TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Tameside's SEN policy was last updated in 1998. Since this time there have been a number of significant local and national developments in the thinking and practice of inclusion, crucial to which was the 1998 Green Paper: 'Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs' and the resultant SEN Programme of Action.
- 1.2 In response, Tameside articulated its own position on inclusion in the 2001 policy document 'Inclusion: a Statement of Intent'. This general statement about inclusion has implications for pupils with SEN and for the Council and schools in seeking to meet their needs.
- 1.3 The production of Tameside's Vision for Education, 'Inclusion, achievement and progress for all', which reflects the revision of the SEN Code of Practice and the SEN and Disability Act 2001, has formally moved the inclusion agenda on to a new footing, firmly at the heart of the education system in this Borough.
- 1.4 Most recently, the Audit Commission published two research papers (add titles here), which have significant implications for the future viability of statutory assessment and the increased inclusion of pupils within mainstream settings respectively.
- 1.5 Tameside's SEN policy has thus been revised to assist the Council and its schools in grasping this challenging agenda.

2 Strategic framework

- 2.1 The SEN subgroup of the Schools Planning and Advisory Group (SPAG) has set five strategic priorities for SEN in Tameside. These address issues of:
 - Progress, attainment and inclusion
 - Delegation and SEN resource levels
 - Best Value
 - Monitoring
 - Partnership and customer satisfaction
- 2.2 Many of the Key Principles of the 1998 Tameside SEN policy map into these revised priorities, the exception being delegation, which had not been seen as a priority previously.
- 2.3 The revised policy is thus founded on the five strategic principles. These are reflected in the SEN strategic plan, whose purpose is to actualise the principles. The Key Principles (KP) from the 1998 SEN policy have been cross-referenced, thus:
 - **Priority One: Maximising progress and attainment for all children and young people in increasingly inclusive settings (KP1,2,4,5);**
 - **Priority Two: Increasing the level of delegated SEN funding to improve the capacity for interventions at Action and Action Plus;**
 - **Priority Three: Developing provision via partnerships to secure Best Value in low incidence services and facilitate the refocusing of extra-district budgets (KP6);**
 - **Priority Four: Monitoring effectively the use of resources to ensure that they are targeted at need, deliver priorities and support the local and national SEN frameworks (KP7);**
 - **Priority Five: Delivering customer satisfaction through high quality services and effective information-giving and consultation (KP3,8).**

- 2.4 The SEN Policy is amplified and interpreted through the SEN Handbook, and in particular, 'Matching Provision to Needs', which details the mutual responsibilities of the Council and schools in ensuring that pupils' SEN are identified and assessed in a timely and thorough manner, and that suitable provision is then made to meet these needs.
- 2.5 The Policy consists of the following sections:
- 1 Introduction
 - 2 Strategic Framework
 - 3 Definition of SEN
 - 4 Scope of the Policy
 - 5 Monitoring and review arrangements
 - 6 Strategic Principles
 - 7 References

3 Definition of Special Educational Needs

Section 312 of the Education Act 1996 says:

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- a) *Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age;*
- b) *have a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;*
- c) *are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.*

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- a) *for a child over two, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the education provision made generally for children of the child's age in maintained schools, other than special schools, in the area;*
- b) *for a child under two, educational provision of any kind.*

The Code of Practice says that, for the vast majority of children their mainstream setting will meet all their special educational needs, with outside help if necessary. School governing bodies have statutory responsibilities to ensure that those needs are met. In only a small minority of cases will a child have special educational needs of a severity or complexity which requires the LEA to determine and arrange the special educational provision for the child by means of a statutory statement of special educational needs.

4 Scope of the Policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all children and young people in Tameside between the ages of 0 - 19 who have SEN and to whom the Authority has a statutory obligation as defined by the 1996 Education Act and the Code of Practice (2001). The policy applies equally to all pupils and their families whatever their gender, ethnic origin, home language, religion, disability or social circumstances.

4.2 This policy also has implications for all our partners in the SEN process:

- schools
- governing bodies
- parents/carers
- statutory/voluntary agencies

5 Monitoring and Review arrangements

5.1 This policy is based on five key principles which reflect the Code of Practice. Activities which will lead to the implementation of each principle can be found in the SEN Strategic Plan. In this document the Council has identified success criteria by which the effectiveness of the policy will be measured.

5.2 This policy will be monitored on an annual basis through the publication of a report which will be circulated to schools, to the Schools Planning and Advisory Group and other education partners.

5.3 The policy will be reviewed at least before the end of 2005.

6 Strategic Principles

6.1 Strategic Principle 1:

Maximising progress and attainment for all children and young people in increasingly inclusive settings

Success criteria

- a) The proportion of children with statements;
- b) The proportion of new statements which name a mainstream school;
- c) The proportion of children with statements who make at least 'adequate progress' (as evidenced at annual review);
- d) The number of schools which have identified inclusion activities in their School Improvement Plans;
- e) The number of schools which set 'additional' targets in relation to children with SEN;
- f) The proportion of pupils placed in special schools (as a % of all children);
- g) The number of statements issued per 1000 children during the year;
- h) The proportion of pupils with SEN but without statements in primary and secondary provision;
- i) The proportion of statements discontinued (except those discontinued at the end of compulsory schooling);
- j) The number of pupils transferring from special school to mainstream provision compared to the number of pupils transferring from mainstream to specialist provision;
- k) The number of pupils permanently excluded from special schools;
- l) The proportion of pupils permanently excluded from mainstream schools who were at Action, Action Plus or who had statements.

6.2 Strategic Principle 2

Increasing the level of delegated SEN funding to improve the capacity for interventions at Action and Action Plus

Success Criteria

- a) The level of resource allocated to pupils with SEN but who do not have statements;
- b) The extent to which resources are targetted at need in individual schools;
- c) The cost of provision per pupil with a statement within the ISB;
- d) The total education spend per pupil with SEN within the ISB;
- d) The extent to which the Council's Strategic Access Plan is successfully implemented;

6.3 Strategic Principle 3

Developing provision via partnerships to secure best value in low incidence services and facilitate the refocusing of extra-district budgets

Success criteria

- a) The proportion of pupils with statements in special schools maintained by other Local Education Authorities or in independent or non-maintained special schools;
- b) The proportion of new statements which name a special school maintained by another LEA or which is non-maintained or independent;
- c) The extent to which the Council has entered into partnerships with other Councils or with other providers to make more effective and efficient education provision for pupils with SEN;
- d) The unit cost for pupils who are placed in special schools maintained by other Local Education Authorities or in independent or non-maintained special schools.

6.4 Strategic Principle 4

Monitoring effectively the use of resources to ensure that they are targetted at need, deliver priorities and support the local and national SEN frameworks

Success Criteria

- a) The extent to which schools have engaged in SEN self-review;
- b) The extent to which the school profile has been used to improve SEN process and practice across the Borough;
- c) The proportion of pupils formally assessed but for whom a statement was not issued.

6.5 Strategic Principle 5

Delivering customer satisfaction through high quality services and effective information-giving and consultation

Success criteria

- a) The proportion of statements issued within 18 weeks:
 - a)i) including and
 - a)ii) excluding 'excepted' assessments;
- b) The proportion of a)ii) which were issued in 16 weeks;
- c) The proportion of EP advices for formal assessment which meet EP workgroup quality criteria;
- d) The extent to which locally agreed timescales for the assessment of new VI/Hi referrals are met or exceeded;
- e) The number of new referrals to the Parent Partnership Service;
- f) The number of referrals to the Disagreement Resolution Service;
- g) The extent to which services and assessments are co-ordinated between Education, Health and Social Services;
- h) The results of school and parental satisfaction surveys;
- i) The proportion of assessments to which parents have submitted independent advice;
- j) The proportion of assessments to which the children and young people who are the subject of those assessments have contributed;
- k) The outcomes of workgroup Continual Improvement activities;
- l) The number of SENDIST appeals heard per 10,000 pupils.