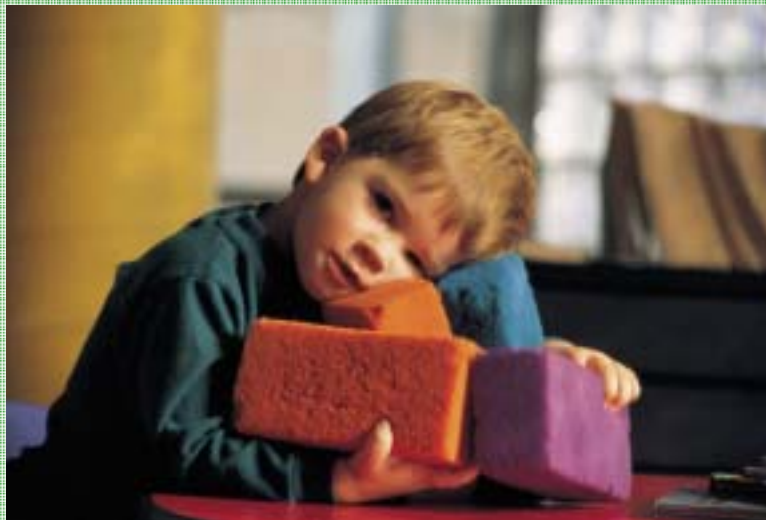


EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION



THE NEXT STEPS

INTRODUCTION

The consultation on the recommendations of the Project Board overseeing a review of provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) in East Sussex took place in the spring term 2005.

The review has two core objectives:

- (i) To promote greater inclusion in East Sussex schools (special and mainstream).
- (ii) To improve further the quality and range of provision available in East Sussex by using existing resources more effectively.

This booklet sets out the Council's vision for special educational needs provision for the county and contains a programme of sustained action towards it.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSES

The 'Review of Special Educational Needs Provision' Consultation Booklet (www.eastsussex.gov.uk/senconsultation2005) contained eight recommendations:

1. *There should be sustained, high profile support to all schools for managing behaviour, including support and training in developing the behaviour and attendance strands of the national primary and secondary strategies and emotional literacy approaches across schools.*

There was widespread support for this recommendation. In particular,, school respondents indicated that they would like access to focused professional development, early support, a 'rapid multi-agency response' from a range of services including the School Improvement Service, the Behaviour Support Service, Social Care, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and health. There was also strong support for the extension of the emotional literacy project as well as access to increased outreach from special schools. School respondents also emphasised the benefits of schools working together in a local area.

2. *A pilot scheme should be developed to delegate the funding for statements of special educational need to a partnership group of schools.*

The response to this recommendation was broadly supportive but a number of respondents expressed concern about a number of practical issues including the fair allocation of funds to the partnerships, sharing funds equitably between schools in the partnership, schools feeling they would be competing with each other, ensuring children have the support they require, ensuring parental confidence and increased administration/bureaucracy at local level.

3. *i) The range of special needs to be met by each special school, unit and facility in the medium term should be clarified.*
ii) A process should be developed for predicting future needs as accurately as possible involving health and social services.
iii) How special schools, units and facilities are funded should be reviewed.
iv) The role and funding of each special school, unit and facility should be clarified separately in relation to (i) the places provided for pupils at the school and (ii) their collaboration with mainstream schools.

There was also general support for this recommendation although a number of respondents did not believe there was a need to undertake (i) and (ii) particularly as the special school funding formula has only fairly recently come into operation. There was considerable support for early intervention and an extended offer to pre-school children.



4. *The range of services provided at each special school should be increased to include care before and after the school day and in the school holidays wherever possible.*

There was clear support for the provision of extended school and holiday activities to pupils with SEN or disabilities. Views were split on whether this should be attached to special schools and therefore be specialist or whether mainstream provision should be extended to include a wide range of pupils. Issues raised included funding, transport, and the wish to avoid placing additional strains on school staff.

5. *Options should be explored for making new local provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and very challenging behaviour, as an alternative to external residential placements.*

This recommendation was broadly supported but with caveats about the potential costs and some wish to extend the recommendation to encompass a wider range of children with ASD.

6. *That co-ordinated, multi-agency services for children with ASD and their families should be developed.*

This recommendation was also widely supported but some respondents felt that a similar approach was needed for other special needs and disabilities.

7. *That options should be explored for bringing together resources across Education and Social Services for support for children with disabilities/SEN.*

Most respondents supported this recommendation but felt that health should also be included in any pooling of resources.

8. *That support for children with speech and language difficulties should be strengthened by the appointment of a qualified speech and language therapist to oversee the training and development of school staff, under the direction of the County Council.*

Most respondents felt that the provision of speech and language therapy is inadequate across the county and, in light of this, the employment of one therapist would be insufficient. Many respondents mentioned that there is a national shortage of speech and language therapists. A number of respondents felt that training school staff should complement, not replace, direct therapy. Health respondents felt that the therapist should be funded by the County Council and employed and managed by the Primary Care Trusts (PCT). Whereas a number of others felt that the Council should take over complete responsibility for speech and language therapy from the Health Service. Many respondents indicated their belief that this recommendation should be extended to include occupational therapy.

Overall, there was a good response to the consultation from respondents from a wide range of backgrounds and a more detailed analysis of the responses is in the booklet '*Review of Special Educational Needs Provision – Consultation 2005*' which can be found on the East Sussex County Council website at [website reference](#).



This booklet addresses all of the recommendations but is organised into 3 sections covering *Where we are now*, *Where we want to be* and *What we will do*.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

👉 There has been considerable progress in East Sussex in meeting the needs of children with SEN. Schools have high quality performance data for all pupils, including those vulnerable to underachievement. The focus of the contact advisers' target setting visits for the autumn term 2004 was on every school's capacity to identify vulnerable pupils and to set and track challenging targets. Schools' self-evaluation of inclusive practice was moderated by the School Improvement Service as part of the Moderated School Self Review (MSSR) in the spring and summer terms of 2004. Two Special Educational Needs Monitoring Officers were appointed to monitor SEN provision and value for money in mainstream schools.

👉 Standards of achievement in the county have risen particularly at Key Stages 2 and 4. There have been significant improvements in attendance in schools during 2003/04. The improvement in East Sussex was twice that of the average for the authority's statistical neighbours.



👉 The 'Behaviour Support to Schools 2004-05' booklet has been published and will be reviewed annually. All secondary schools have completed the Key Stage 3 Strategy behaviour and attendance audit and the Primary Strategy behaviour and attendance strand is beginning in April 2005. The programme of support, training and consultancy has developed through the year. The Education Action Zone successfully transformed to an Excellence Cluster in January 2005 and has a significant Behaviour Improvement Programme underway. The Emotional Literacy Project has been extended.

👍 The Early Years Support Programme has been launched and Playlink has revised its programme of provision to encompass the Birth to Three curriculum and offers more targeted support to families where children have been identified as being in need of some focused intervention. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and Early Years Teaching Support Service (EYTSS) continue to deliver a training programme that promotes inclusive practice in early years settings. New training focusing on behaviour, family support and positive child/adult interactions is being piloted with 50 settings. A mentoring scheme for new childminders is in place. There have been 790 additional childcare places created in 2004, and offered on an inclusive basis. The family and carers support strategy has been launched.

👍 The Learning Support Service has been reformulated to become the Language and Learning Support Service and is providing Level 1 and Level 2 training to schools. The Jump Ahead programme is now available countywide and Speechlink is being introduced to support schools in meeting the needs of children with motor difficulties and speech difficulties respectively.

👍 The co-location of the 11-19 aged pupils at Grove Park with Beacon Community College has been agreed and will be completed by September 2007. All East Sussex special schools have received good OFSTED inspection reports, Glyne Gap is a Beacon School and Cuckmere House has recently been assessed as excellent in all categories.

👍 The Children Index, previously known as Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT), is now available and in use across the County. A CAMHS commissioner has been appointed and a commissioning board has been established. The East Sussex Parent Partnership keeps a register of Webster Stratton parenting courses being delivered. Parent Partnership has piloted multi agency parenting courses delivered in primary schools.

👍 The admissions protocol for vulnerable pupils was launched in April 2004. It is currently under review in the light of the recently published DfES guidance. An exclusions protocol, issued at the same time as the admissions protocol, sets out the Local Authority's expectations on the handling of exclusions and the making of alternate school placements or Local Authority interim provision for excluded pupils.

👉 An audit of provision in the Further Education (FE) sector has been completed by the Learning Skills Council (LSC), working together with ESCC and Connexions to inform the coming Strategic Area Review (StAR) of provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) to develop provision locally to meet the needs of learners.

👉 However, some significant challenges remain, including the low proportion of pupils with statements of SEN placed in mainstream schools and conversely, the high proportion in special schools, compared to other authorities. The high number of placements in independent and non-maintained special schools continues to absorb a large proportion of the SEN budget. Too many children are placed in residential schools away from home. Some schools feel ill-equipped to meet the range of needs of the children in their community and some parents/carers do not feel confident that their children will be welcome in their local school.



👉 Some parents/carers feel they have to fight to ensure their child's needs are met and this leads to a disproportionately high number of appeals registered with the SEN and Disability Tribunal.

👉 There is insufficient flexibility in the system for schools and agencies to intervene early and creatively to meet children's needs and there remains strong reliance on one-to-one support in mainstream schools. The system remains bureaucratic and can feel distant from daily life in the classroom and at home.

👉 There are limited local options for students with SEN post 16 and there are more young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) in Sussex than nationally.

✎ Both the successes and the challenges exist within a changing context including the establishment of the new Children's Services Department, the development of a Children's Trust, the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, extended schools, the development of the Local Partnerships for Children (LPCs), Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional, 'Owning Every Child', the 0-5 strategy including the establishment of 28 Children's Centres, the family support strategy and the review of CAMHS.



WHERE WE WANT TO BE

Principles:

- all children and young people have a right to have their needs met;
- this will normally be their local mainstream school;
- the views of the child or young person should be sought and taken into account;
- parents/carers have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education
- all children and young people, including those with special educational needs, should be offered access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

In order to achieve this we want to see:

- schools and early years settings with the skills and resources to enable them to take prompt action to help children and young people with special educational needs and the confidence to innovate, with access to the specialist support they need, to meet the needs of all pupils successfully;
- schools/early years settings and agencies working together to support the inclusion of all children from their local community, backed up by good quality specialist advice and support;
- school/early years settings and central staff spending more time on early intervention and less time on SEN paperwork and bureaucracy;
- parents and carers with the confidence that their local school/early years setting (mainstream or special as appropriate) will provide their child with a good education and that he or she will be a valued member of the school/setting community whether or not he or she has a statement of SEN;
- local special schools providing education for children and young people with the most severe and complex needs and sharing their skills and knowledge to support inclusion in mainstream schools;
- all pupils attending special schools and units having the opportunity for regular inclusive experiences alongside their mainstream peers;
- children with special educational needs/disabilities able to access a wider range of out of school activities;
- parents/carers with access to a wider range of family support programmes and activities.

We need to:

- ensure the needs of children and young people with special educational needs are identified and assessed, without delay, and that these are matched by appropriate provision whether or not they have a statement of SEN;
- improve access for all children and young people to their community school and local specialist provision, and with the long term goal of locating all specialist provision within mainstream schools;
- shift resources into preventive strategies and early/timely intervention;
- have high expectations for, and raise the achievement of, all children and young people, including those with special educational needs;
- develop teaching and learning practice to support the achievement and fulfilment of individual pupils' needs and aspirations;
- build schools' confidence and ability to meet the diversity of need;
- develop the workforce in East Sussex through professional development and the dissemination of good practice in East Sussex and from elsewhere;
- encourage the active participation of children and young people in their education and school/community life;
- involve and communicate well with parents and carers so that they can support their children's learning and participate in the development of school and Council policy and practice;
- ensure parents and carers of children with special educational needs are supported effectively and have access to independent information, advice and support
- improve the effectiveness of multi-agency working;
- continue to keep arrangements for special educational needs under review in consultation with parents/carers, schools and other key partners.



WHAT WE WILL DO

The SEN Review Project Board (see Annex 1 for membership) recommended that action should be taken in the areas listed in this section but felt that the most immediate priority should be given to four key areas of activity:

- 1. co-ordinate and publicise the significant number of initiatives and strategies for promoting good behaviour in schools, through the work of the recently established Behaviour Board, with the aim of providing comprehensive advice on resources and support, including those present in specialist SEN provision, for promoting good behaviour;**
- 2. review the range and scope of East Sussex maintained specialist provision with the aim of increasing flexibility and reducing out of county placements, including options for the changed use of St Mary's Special School, Horam and develop plans for multi-agency (including education, social care and health) co-ordinated services for children with ASD and their families;**
- 3. prepare for the pilot the delegation of SEN funds to one or more local partnership for children in 2006/7 and undertake a cost/benefit analysis;**
- 4. extend out of school activities in special schools including;**
 - a. produce costed options for increased overnight respite for children with autism and report back to Cabinet for decision by December 2005;**
 - b. pilot the establishment of out of school activities in The South Downs Community Special School, Eastbourne.**

These four key priorities will be the main focus of the SEN Review in the immediate future whilst work will also progress on the wider range of actions for the short and medium term listed below.

1. Specialist support and advice

In the short term:

- a. increase training opportunities for early years/school staff, staff from other agencies and parents/carers ensuring timely and focused training is offered jointly, where appropriate;

- b. extend the range of support available to families of children and adolescents with behavioural difficulties through the implementation of the family support strategy;
- c. review the availability and funding of outreach to mainstream schools provided by special schools, units and facilities to ensure good coverage and establish accountability through the development of service level agreements;

In the medium term:

- d. through the 'Owning Every Child' initiative, support the development of a wider range of short term alternative provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties within the Local Partnerships for Children and through dual placements with special schools, as appropriate;
- e. develop protocols for the support of vulnerable pupils on transition into and between schools and post-16 provision;
- f. extend the role of the Language and Learning Support Service to include the brokerage of dyslexia specialist teachers and support staff to provide direct input to children for schools and LPCs to purchase;
- g. clarify and extend the network of advice and support in relation to ASD to mainstream early years settings and schools by co-ordinating the work of the Language and Learning Support Service, the Early Years Teaching Support Service and outreach from special schools and incorporating multi-agency specialist ASD professionals, where possible;

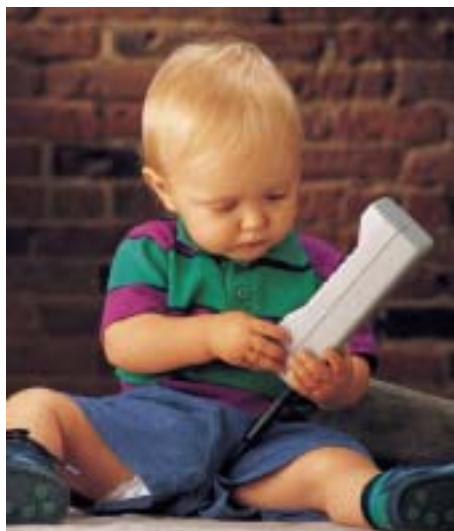


- h. review the current provision of all therapy funded by the Council and, in association with health, propose new arrangements to ensure that the Council's statutory obligations are met and schools have access to high quality advice, training and support;

2. Specialist provision

Where children have severe or complex needs and require more specialist provision than is able to be provided by mainstream schools/early years settings, the expectation is that this will normally be provided by the special schools, units and facilities maintained by East Sussex County Council. In a small number of situations it is necessary for the Council to seek a placement in an independent or non-maintained special school but this should be the exception. The East Sussex provision will be arranged to cover the east or west of the county and so that there:

- i) is a group of community special schools, units and facilities which provide for a range of needs;
- ii) are designated special schools which meet the needs of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and others designated for severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;
- iii) are ASD specialist resources in all community special schools for pupils with learning difficulties and a range of ASD facilities attached to mainstream schools;
- iv) is coverage of special schools, units and facilities for the eastern and western areas of the county working together to meet the needs of the children and young people in their communities who require specialist provision.



The establishment of the eastern and western economies of specialist provision will allow the special schools, units and facilities to work with the Local Partnerships for Children in their area to ensure that there is flexibility in provision to meet the changing needs of the localities. Outreach and partnership work, including dual placements, will be within the two economies and will support the development of effective and responsive links with the schools and settings in the area. The expectation will be that all children requiring specialist provision within the

eastern and western areas will have their needs met by the special schools, units and facilities in those areas. This will support the Local Partnerships for Children in 'Owning Every Child' and also reduce the amount of travelling that some children are currently required to undertake.

In the short term:

- a. work with special schools, units and facilities and LPCs to clarify how the eastern and western economies of specialist provision will together co-ordinate the provision for the children in their communities;
- b. consult on the changed use of St Mary's School, Horam as an 80 place school for boys aged 8-19 with BESD including 20 residential beds to be used flexibly;
- c. develop multi-agency plans for co-ordinated services for children with ASD and their families including those with severe ASD exhibiting very challenging behaviour as an alternative to external residential placements through the employment of a specialist project worker;
- d. establish liaison protocols with social care and health, building on the Children Index, to support the future planning of special provision;
- e. clarify the County's transport policy for children with SEN and publish a booklet for parents/carers and others;
- f. review the future need for the special facilities for children with specific learning difficulties;
- g. develop revised service level agreements with all devolved special units and facilities including their outreach and support functions to ensure clarity and appropriate accountability allowing value for money and impact to be evaluated;
- h. publish high quality information for parents/carers and others on the specialist provision in the county;
- i. work with special schools to establish moderation procedures for the allocation of place led funding;
- j. work with special schools, units and facilities and LPCs to plan for all pupils attending special provision to have the opportunity for regular inclusive experiences alongside their mainstream peers;



In the medium term:

- k. develop a strategic plan, within current resources, for the establishment of a network of special facilities catering for pupils with high functioning ASD attached to mainstream primary and secondary schools;
- l. develop an SEN Transport action plan to reduce the amount of travelling undertaken by pupils attending specialist provision and to encourage independent travel where appropriate;



- m. establish long term plans for the future co-location of all specialist provision with mainstream;
- n. review the specialist provision for pupils with severe speech and language difficulties and develop a strategic plan to establish a network of co-ordinated provision across the county;
- o. review the specialist and outreach/mainstream support provision for pupils with physical difficulties.

3. Early Intervention

In the short term:

- a. review the current funding formula for schools in liaison with the Schools' Forum to ensure a clear match between need and allocation of resources.

In the medium term:

- b. review the working of the ancillary funding for young children with severe SEN to early years settings to support greater inclusion for early years children;
- c. incorporate a commitment to inclusion into all policies and strategies in relation to early years education and care including Children's Centres and develop the role of the maintained nursery classes in partnership with the schools and LPCs.



4. Family support and out of school activities

In the short term:

- a. identify and publicise the current out of school and holiday schemes that offer places to disabled children and identify where there are gaps in provision;
- b. work with LPCs to ensure as many extended school activities as possible, are accessible to children with SEN/disabilities, including those on roll at special schools.



In the medium term:

- c. through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), work to expand the number of child minders supported within child minding networks who offer places to disabled children;
- d. investigate the options for increasing the availability of respite and residential support for children and young people with ASD;
- e. review the choice and range of children's social services provision, including direct payment, to ensure that services are targeted appropriately and are cost effective;
- f. work with voluntary and statutory agencies to develop a network of parent support groups and helplines.

5. Multi-agency working

In addition to the multi-agency actions listed in the sections above the Council will:

In the short term:

- a. pool budgets for the provision of joint-funded placements held within social care and education and establish clear protocols for the allocation of these resources to include strategies to reduce out of county placements;

In the medium term:

- b. explore with health the possibility of establishing a tri-partite pooling arrangement.



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