

Committee:	<b>Children's Services Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>26 September 2006</b>
Title:	<b>Special Educational Needs Departmental Review</b>
By:	<b>Director of Children's Services</b>
Purpose:	<b>to update the committee on the progress on made with regard to the key recommendations of the SEN review</b>

**RECOMMENDATION: to note the progress made to date on the actions arising from the Departmental review of special educational needs provision in the county**

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## 1. Background

1.1 The old Education Department (now the Children's Services Department), set up a review of special educational needs provision in 2004. This review was overseen by a Project Board chaired, initially by Matt Dunkley and then Helen Davies, as Deputy Director. The board membership included headteachers from mainstream and special schools, school governors, professional associations, Councillor Stroude (as lead member for responsibility for children), members of the Scrutiny Committee (Councillors Kramer and St Pierre), senior staff from the old education and social services departments, the health service and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

1.2 The review had 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.

1.3 Consultation on the recommendations arising from the review took place in the spring term in 2005. The Project Board then identified four key priorities for future action:

### 1. Behaviour

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. Local Specialist provision

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 autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families;

### 3. Funding to mainstream schools for SEN

Prepare for the pilot of the delegation of SEN funds to one or more local partnership for children in 2006/7 and undertake a cost/benefit analysis;

### 4. Out of school activities and respite

Extend out of school activities in special schools including;

- a. produce costed options for increased overnight respite for children with autism;
- b. pilot the establishment of out of school activities in The South Downs Community Special School, Eastbourne.

## **2. Summary**

2.1 Progress has been made on all the key recommendations of the SEN Review and further actions have been included in the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-08 which has targets in relation to SEN and disability in each of the age related sections and also contains a specific section for this area of work. This will ensure that progress towards the main aims of the SEN Review remains a high priority and that it will become embedded in the work of the Children's Trust.

2.2 See attached Appendix for full details on progress relating to the key recommendations.

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Local Members: All

Background documents: Review of Special Educational Needs Provision: The Next Steps  
<http://esc website/yourcouncil/consultation/2005/sen/sen2005.htm>

## Progress on key recommendations

### 1. Behaviour

1.1 There has been a comprehensive review of the support provided to schools for managing the challenging behaviour of individual children. The results of this review has been discussed by the Behaviour Board on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006 the Lead Members for Learning & School Effectiveness and Children & Families approved proposals for reconfiguring the secondary Behaviour Support Service, in light of the transition towards integrated services for children in the east and west of the county.

1.2 A flexible provision for young people who need an alternative curriculum as they are likely to be permanently excluded or are particularly vulnerable will become operational in September 2006 at Bexhill High School. It will be managed by a seconded community police officer supported by experienced SEN staff and will be located in a separate building on the lower school site. Discussions are underway with other mainstream secondary schools across the county about similar projects.

1.3 A new class at Cuckmere House School, Seaford will be in place and fully staffed from September 2006. It will cater for young people aged 14 and above who require very specialist provision in relation to their behavioural difficulties. It will be fully staffed from September 2006. It will be very important for there to be close liaison with post 16 providers in order to ensure that these particularly challenging young people are able to make as smooth a transition at age 16 as possible.

### 2. Local Specialist provision

2.1 There have been detailed discussions with the special school headteachers and governors to clarify the description of the range of special needs each school caters for. General agreement has been reached to adopt broader descriptions that communicate more clearly to parents and other professionals the range of special need covered.

2.2 The special schools are very positive about working in partnership with mainstream schools and a survey has highlighted the areas in the county where partnerships are already in place and where further input is required. The analysis shows that there are good partnership arrangements already in place in the East and West of the county to support children and young people who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties, and Learning Difficulties. There is not the same availability for schools supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties, physical or sensory impairments. There also appear to be fewer partnership arrangements currently available in the central/northern area of the county. These areas will be the focus for future partnership development.

2.3 The establishment of an integrated special educational needs and disability social care service from June 2006 has supported the development of multi-agency liaison and support to special schools which will ensure that all children attending our special schools receive a co-ordinated response.

2.4 Statutory notices in relation to the proposed changes to St Mary's School, Horam are to be issued in September 2006. The proposed changes will make clear that the school caters for children with behaviour difficulties, revise the age range covered by the school from 11-19 to 9-16 and alter the school from being co-educational to becoming a boys only school. Building works are scheduled for summer 2007.

2.5 Statutory notices have been issued for the co-location of the 11-16 and 16-19 provision at Grove Park School with Beacon Community College with a view to the 16-19 co-location becoming fully effective in January 2007 and the 11-16 co-location in September 2007. Building works are currently underway.

2.6 A resourced facility for young people with mainstream academic ability and ASD is planned for Heathfield Community College. Detailed planning regarding the accommodation is underway and visits are planned to similar facilities in neighbouring authorities. It is intended that this facility will be the first of a network so that there is equality of provision across the county and access for all mainstream schools to specialist expertise in the local area.

2.7 A group of Children's Services Department officers, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services staff, the Principal of New Horizons School, the Chief Executive of Sussex Autistic Society, and a Speech and Language Therapy Manager, has been established with a view to planning a similar provision in Hastings to that being established at Heathfield for high functioning autistic children.

2.8 Three area ASD Monitoring and Support Groups have been established which monitor the progress of children with ASD placed in mainstream schools and ensure there is co-ordinated multi-agency support for their schools and their families. Each group has an associated parents' focus group. These groups ensure that there is a comprehensive range of training available to professional staff and parents. The post of ASD Co-ordinator is being advertised, and it is intended that the post holder will ensure that there is an integrated multi-agency response to children with ASD and their families.

2.9 East Sussex is participating in the Regional SEN Partnership's on-line training programme which currently focuses on speech and language difficulties and ASD. A behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) module is in preparation. The training modules each take about 9 hours of study, which is supported by on-line trainers provided by the Children's Services Department. The packages have been developed by specialists in the field and are designed for teaching and support staff in mainstream schools but could also be available to others, including parents.

2.10 The Department is supporting the county's specialist ASD provision to achieve accreditation with the National Autistic Society. This accreditation is nationally recognised as a mark of excellence and will help to ensure that parents have faith in and high regard for the good quality provision available for ASD in East Sussex.

### 3. Funding to mainstream schools for SEN

3.1 A project group of officers has met to identify a number of proposals for consideration by a wider group of interested parties including heads, governors and parents beginning in autumn 2006. Final proposals will have to be agreed by the Schools' Forum. It is intended that new funding arrangements will be operational from April 2008.

### 4. Out of school activities and respite

4.1 The Sussex Autistic Society has received funds to operate leisure opportunities for young people with ASD on Saturdays. They are intending to establish a group in Bexhill and Children's Services staff are working closely with them to identify a venue.

4.2 The Disabled Children's Development Group established a working party in February 2006 to look at leisure activities for children in mainstream school with special educational needs. Activities were organised in community settings with support, advice and training provided to the setting. Activities ran in the February 2006 school holiday and again in the summer break. The intention is to support community settings in accepting and involving children with special needs.

4.3 Since March 2006 a project officer has been seconded to support the development of after school and holiday childcare opportunities for children attending special schools. In line with the Extended School Strategy, special schools will, by 2010, be expected to offer access to high quality childcare 8am-6pm all year round, a varied menu of activities such as study support, sports activities, out of school hours learning, parenting support, swift and easy referral to specialist services and wider community access to school activities. South Downs, New Horizons and Glyne Gap schools have been identified as "early adopters" and will be offering extended school services from September 2006.

4.4 As part of the departmental restructuring, a new post of SEN Child Care Market Manager has been created in the Child Care Team. The post holder will have the key responsibility to increase the range of 'child care' available to children with special needs up to the age of 18.

4.5 The refurbishment of the disabled children's respite centre in Bexhill is underway. On completion the centre will open every night and will increase the number of beds available from 5 to 7. Discussions are underway about the possibility of providing specialist overnight respite to children with severe learning difficulties, ASD and extremely challenging behaviour.