

## Strategy for Educational and Social Inclusion

“Our vision is of excellence for all. Where all children are included as equal partners in the school community the benefits are felt by all. Our aspirations as a State must be for all our people”.

Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

### 1. Introduction and Background

This strategy builds on Southwark’s Inclusive Education Policy and is based on the beliefs stated therein: all pupils, regardless of gender, social or ethnic background, or disability, have an entitlement to a high quality education appropriate to their needs, interest, aspirations and potential;

- Social, ethnic, linguistic and personal diversity are not problems to be overcome, but rich resources to support the learning of all;
- Children acquire knowledge, learn and develop skills, ideas and values from those around them and so should have the maximum opportunity to participate in the curriculum and social lives of their local school or community;
- All students have a right to an education in their local community.
- From these beliefs the aim is to develop an education service, which offers all learners the maximum possible opportunity to; experience educational success, personal growth and achievements that reflect their abilities, aspirations and interest;
- Become mature, confident, independent thinking and self-reliant individuals able to successfully tackle the challenges of adult life;
- Develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to take an active part in learning through out their lives;
- Develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to taken an active and positive roll in the social, economic and political lives of their communities.

Southwark’s LEA Strategy for Social and Educational Inclusion sets out its response to government policy and requirement. It summarises strategic activity in terms of the development of the SEN Policy into practice.

The Strategy is based on proposals for the next 3 years including the contribution of plans already initiated and the development of projects.

### 2. Legal Framework

The main support for pupils with identified special needs in any setting is the Revised Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (1999). This document provides a framework for identification, support, provision and monitoring for individual children. The duties placed on schools and LEAs include:

- Identification of pupil special educational needs as early as possible
- Assess those needs carefully
- Make specific provision

The SEN Code of Practice provides statutory guidance to schools and LEAs on operating within the SEN framework. As from January 2002 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs must be educated in a mainstream school unless this is against the parents/carers wishes or is incompatible with the efficient education for other children. These are the only reasons why mainstream education can be refused outright.

### 3. Local Context

The Strategy for Educational Social Inclusion is the over-arching strategy, which moves policy into practice and relates to the following documents:

- Policy on Educational Inclusion
- Education Development Plan 2002-2007
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Accessibility Strategy
- Policy Statement for Special Educational Needs
- Transport policy
- The full range of policies for specific needs (dyslexia, autism)

Southwark's Policy on Educational Inclusion is based on the following statements

- All pupils have an entitlement to an education appropriate to their needs, interest, aspirations and potential.
- Diversity is a resource to support learning for all
- Children learn from those around them and should have maximum opportunity to participate in the curriculum and social life of their local school and social life of their local school and community
- All pupils and students have a right to an education in their local community.
- The LEA has six commitments for putting the policy into practice:
- To maintain clear protocols outlining the responsibilities of the LEA and schools for the provision of an inclusive education service;

**This will involve all schools and will require both legal and best practice responsibilities. For the majority of pupils and students with SEN, their educational placement will be in a mainstream school with the human and financial support needed to allow each one to take a full part in the life of the school. For the cohort of children and students for whom a specialist placement is appropriate for all or part of their time: school, appropriate places will be made in the borough schools. The development of dual registration placements is a key part of the strategy.**

- To develop knowledge and expertise of teachers and other staff supporting the inclusion of pupils and students in mainstream settings, from pre-school to college.

**The provision of in-service training courses, extended courses leading to additional qualifications and support from specialist services with the authority, will be made available to all teachers and other staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching children with SEN.**

- To provide advice, resources and teaching services, which support inclusion, and to give schools and pupils access to specialist services when needed.

**Services are available within the Borough of Southwark to support pupils with visual impairment, hearing impairment, emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and autism. Advice can also be accessed from external providers and agencies.**

- To offer a range of provision in context which reflect the needs and preferences of pupils and families.

**The clear commitment to the special schools in Southwark provides parents and carers with the opportunity to state their preference for the educational opportunity, which they regard as the most appropriate for their child. The special schools have agreed admission criteria, which guide parents when stating their preference. The role of the Parent Partnership Officer is to support and advise the parents.**

- To create new and develop existing partnership working with parents and carers and local agencies.

**The education services maintain close links with other agencies through regular meetings and joint working**

- Implement an approach to quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, which gains the confidence of all stakeholders.

**The emphasis on improved data handling and the use of such data will continue to provide evidence of raised standards and achievements for all schools and for individual children. The links established between the education teams with Southwark (School Improvement, Access & Inclusion, Excellence in Cities) will provide additional quality assurance and evaluation.**

#### 4. Southwark's Education Development Plan 2002 – 2007 and the Strategy for Educational Inclusion.

Priority four of the Plan focuses on 'Improving Participation and the Quality of Education for All'

- Activity 4(a)1

**Improve identification of vulnerable pupils and their families in the Foundation/primary phases**

- Activity 4(a)2

Improve provision for vulnerable children and support for their families in the Foundation/Primary phases.

Activity 4(b) 1

Target educational support on pupils in known At Risk/Key Stage 4.

- Activity 4(b) 2

Provide a framework of Pupils and Family Support for Vulnerable Pupils to meet their individual needs.

- Activity 4(c)

Improve analysis of the outcomes of the full range of interventions; publish best practice guidance and re-shape provision accordingly.

The actions identified with these activities include:

- Specialist training in identification of and support for pupils with specific needs.
- Development of outreach from special schools and pupil referral units
- Support from Inclusion Team to facilitate entry of children with SEN to schools
- Develop links with Parents Consultative Forum
- Formulate arrangements for mediation and disagreement resolution services
- Maintain appropriate representation and in-put to the strategic groups and forums, which contribute towards the Children's Services Plan, the Children's Partnership Board, the Youth Crime Sub-Group and the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

## 5. Developing the strategy

As the strategy has been developing over the period 2002-03 the objectives of the SEN policy have been the key drivers:

- To raise the educational, social for children with special educational needs
- To promote effective partnership with parents/carers and children with SEN and to involve them in all decisions that are made about their educational provision.
- To ensure that Southwark LEA meets all its statutory duties with regard to special educational needs so that outcome reports made will reflect the targets
- To establish positive and constructive working relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies. To work with other agencies in order to ensure effective and efficient special educational needs services.
- To ensure that children with special education needs are identified and receive provision appropriate to their needs in a timely and effective manner.
- To develop the capacity of schools to make high quality provision for special educational needs.
- To establish a continuum of high quality non-Statemented and Statemented provision for children with special educational needs. The actions required to achieve the objectives are detailed within the Policy.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The evaluation of the effectiveness of the Strategy will, at the end of each financial year, be carried out by a 'Moderating Team'. This will be related to the financial aspect of the use the schools have made of additional funding to support provision at School Action Plus and with Statements (Revised Code of Practice).
- A database will be constructed and regularly updated to monitor the progress of cohorts and individual children
- The SEN working group acts as the main focus for consultation with stakeholders in relation to policy and practice for meeting special educational needs
- The Strategy, as the over-arching statement will be circulated with attached appendices on specific aspects of Special Educational Needs.

## 7. Moving Forward – the enactment of the Strategy

- The dissemination of good practice to schools. This will be via a booklet containing information about resources available locally, contact details for voluntary and other agencies and training opportunities
- The development of a planned programme of training. Training needs will be considered with regard to pupil and school needs, available funding and any national developments
- Developing greater self-sufficiency of schools to meet needs. This will involve schools becoming more self-reliant by looking at their resources and expertise, and then seeking to enhance their own provision from a range of other sources.
- The development of outreach work. This will be stated as a pilot project between specialist schools linked with 2 mainstream schools, which are geographically located in the same area. The aim of such an initiative will be a greater understanding of the working of the schools, increased teacher expertise, improved curriculum access for children with special educational needs and a cascade of knowledge gained with the schools.
- Use of data to develop a more comprehensive range of in-borough provision. An annual audit of special educational needs within all schools will provide data, which can be used as the basis for future developments
- Developing good practice – identifying, evaluating funding. This will require rigorous monitoring of provision at School Action Plus and more effective provision at this stage to reduce requests for Statutory Assessments. Greater transparency in funding mechanisms should reward good practice.

## 8. Out-of-Borough Placements.

Such placements will only be considered if:

- The needs of the child cannot be met within a Southwark special or mainstream schools
- There is no place available in a Southwark school
- The needs of the child require a S2 work placement

- Recourse to the Tribunal for Special Education Needs leads to a requirement for a child to be placed out-of-borough

## 9. Redress

The parent/carer has the right to appeal to the Tribunal for Special Educational Need if they cannot agree the content of the Statement, if the authority refuses a Statement or if the schools named in the Statement is not their stated preference. The authority has a duty to comply with the findings of the Tribunal.