

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL - 18TH JULY 2005

THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Please note that a glossary of terms and abbreviations is appended to the report.

Purpose

1. To consider the proposals of the Cabinet for the Special Educational Needs Strategy

The Need for Change

2. The need to review and realign provision for special educational needs (SEN) is long overdue in Dudley. The present educational provision, including the buildings and funding arrangements, and arrangements for the placement of children with SEN, have developed unsystematically over a period of years. The arrangements do not work well and have required ongoing *ad hoc* adjustments. There is a clear mismatch between the levels and types of need, the educational provision available, and the effective use of resources. Pupils with different needs across the borough do not have equal access to appropriate educational provision, and the quality of the provision made is too variable.
3. These issues were highlighted by OFSTED during the inspection of the work of the Council in 2000 and again in 2002 (Appendix 1). The 2002 inspection highlighted the need for a clear long-term SEN Strategy. The development of the SEN Strategy has been the last major plank in the recovery programme set out in the OFSTED Action Plan. Progress against the Post-OFSTED Action Plan will be a key focus for the Joint Area Review (JAR) of Children's Services expected in the spring of 2006.
4. The buildings used for SEN provision, including units and schools, vary greatly in accessibility, location and quality. Some buildings are simply 'not fit for purpose' because they are too small, outdated or in a poor state of repair. The most urgent needs are at Old Park School (which serves pupils with the most complex needs) and Halesbury School (which serves pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD)). Both of these have been judged inadequate by OFSTED inspections of the schools. Similarly the Home and Hospital Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is housed in poor-quality temporary buildings located on the car park at Saltwells Education Development

Centre. Pens Meadow School and Meadow Road PRU also have inadequate accommodation but are leased and therefore the possibilities for refurbishment are limited.

5. Over time, the population of children with SEN, and their specific needs, has continued to change. This change has several underlying causes:

- improved educational provisions leading to better educational outcomes;
- higher survival rates for children with disabilities;
- increased parental expectations of provisions for SEN; and
- changed legislative requirements which place greater weight on providing mainstream education where parents wish it.

6. In particular, there is a lack of appropriate provision within Dudley for children with:

- needs on the autistic spectrum (ASD);
- hearing impairments;
- mild MLD and learning delay;
- emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD) in both the primary and secondary phases.

In the case of EBSD there is no provision in the primary phase at all and an increasing un-met demand in the secondary phase. Too many pupils with EBSD at present have to be placed and educated out-of-Borough.

7. The present arrangements give poor value for money. There are significant numbers of unfilled places because there is now a broader range of needs which are not met by the existing provisions. These unfilled pupil places in schools and units are costly to maintain while at the same time there are pupils with un-met needs.

8. The special schools and units present a mixed picture in regard to OFSTED inspection outcomes. While some are excellent others have been judged to be inadequate. It is the right of every pupil to attend high quality provision wherever they live and whatever their particular needs.

Consultation

9. The development of the SEN Strategy has been supported by a multi-agency professional reference group, involving representatives from mainstream schools, special schools and units, the health service, social services, the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies, as well as specialist staff from within the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning. In addition, parental views were considered through the attendance of Dudley Parent Partnership and other parental group representatives at the reference group and otherwise. The professional associations have been specifically consulted. At various points specific individuals or interest groups were engaged in discussions. An independent review was commissioned from the University of Birmingham.
10. There has been a two year period of consultation on various proposals. In addition to a range of discussions with specific groups, there has been formal public consultation on three occasions. The formal public consultations were each analysed by an independent professional and the outcomes of the consultations have been published.
11. The key outcomes from the consultations were:
 - There was universal agreement with the general principle that children with SEN should wherever possible be educated in the borough and alongside their peers, and that transport distances and times should be kept to a minimum.
 - Dudley needs to retain, and continue to develop, specialist expertise in SEN within the borough.
 - Special schools should be retained as they have a very specific rôle with some pupils.
 - Existing provision must be retained where it is of high quality.
 - Local provision around the five townships would be desirable, with campus-based provision where possible.
 - There was general concern about the effect of closures both on individual children presently receiving education, and on future children, and on the morale of staff.

- There was concern about the nature and cost of new buildings.
 - There was concern about the need to ensure that the new arrangements were neither overly expensive nor a hidden cost saving.
 - There was a concern that mainstream and specialist staff would require proper and effective training.
 - Pupils with hearing impairments needed continuity between primary and secondary phases.
 - Changes need to take account of the impact on all pupils, both those with special needs and others.
12. Following each consultation period and subsequent analysis, the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning has redrafted the SEN Strategy taking account of the issues raised wherever possible, as well as other factors. For example, the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) decisions relating to 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) have required a re-thinking of the buildings issues.
13. This process led to the SEN Strategy document published on 7 March 2005.

Issues raised since publication on 7 March

14. Since publication the issues have largely related to the future of the special schools, and the proposals that would have required some pupils to move schools in September 2007 or before that.
15. In the light of these concerns, the SEN Strategy has been further developed to ensure that existing provision is continued and improved; that poor buildings are refurbished or rebuilt; and that the breadth and flexibility of SEN provision is increased, so as to best meet parents' and children's preferences.

The SEN Strategy

16. The principles underpinning the SEN Strategy can be summarised as:
- Where possible, local provision will be made for children with SEN – 'local schools for local children'.

- There will be a wider range of provision to meet the breadth of needs.
 - Increased flexibility will be provided to children and parents through the greater choice of provision.
 - All specialist staff working in special provisions will be retained and there will be development opportunities and specialist training for all school staff who need it.
 - The Directorate, special schools and provisions, and mainstream schools will work increasingly closely with other agencies in light of the Children Act 2004.
 - Unnecessary disruption and change for pupils with SEN will be avoided both through continuation of existing provisions and through the Annual Review process and engagement with parents and children themselves, where this is practicable.
17. The current provision for pupils with SEN needs to be realigned. However this does not mean a wholesale movement of children with SEN into mainstream schools. This has never been the intention; indeed the SEN Strategy has more planned places for children with SEN than there are presently children in special provisions. However, the label of 'inclusion' has proved misleading and no longer features.
18. Children's placements will continue to be identified through Statements of SEN, prepared in close consultation with parents and, where possible, children. On those rare occasions when the specialist SEN officers cannot reach agreement with parents and children, parents and children will have recourse to the SEN Tribunal, as at present.
19. Summary of proposals
- Retain the existing special schools.
 - Relocate Old Park School on a new site with a new building (see below).
 - Expand EBSD provision at Rosewood School by relocating to a new and larger site (see below).
 - Establish a small EBSD primary provision linked to Rosewood School.

- Continue to develop the PRU provision so that it becomes more preventative.
 - Establish 10 new Additional Resource Centres (ARCs) located within mainstream schools to make provision for those children who can benefit from part of a mainstream curriculum but are not able to operate fully within a mainstream environment. The ARCs will cater for local children with one in each township for primary and one in each township for secondary (see below).
 - Establish new secondary units in each township for pupils on the autistic spectrum.
 - Relocate the language units so that there is one in the north and one in the south of the borough.
 - Continue to offer and encourage training across sectors for all staff.
 - Redefine and establish clear and transparent processes for assessment and placement of pupils with SEN.
 - As patterns of parental preference develop within the new framework, planned places in the different SEN provisions will be reviewed on an annual basis.
20. There are two possible strategies for improving the buildings at Old Park School. The first would involve 'decanting' the children into temporary accommodation for at least a year while the present building is demolished and rebuilt. This would be very expensive as well as disruptive for the children. The alternative is to develop the new school buildings on a new site already owned by the Council and then to relocate the school and sell the existing land and buildings. This is the preferred option as it would enable a second 'campus' development along the lines of Campus 21.
21. The relocation of Rosewood School will require a new, larger, site; none has yet been identified but this would be a matter of urgency.
22. Additional Resource Centre (ARCs) will consist of provision for children located on a mainstream school site but separate from it. ARCs will make provision for those children who can benefit from part of a mainstream curriculum but are not able to operate fully within a mainstream school environment. The ARCs will enable children and staff to work toward

gradual and appropriate levels of integration but also allow for withdrawal for small group and individual work as appropriate to the individual child's needs. The ARCs will provide a stepping-stone for pupils between special and mainstream school when they become ready for a greater level of integration. This specialist provision is not available at present and will provide a key element of parental choice. The ARCs will be developed on a phased basis, with no child in a special school placed in an ARC unless a request is made by the parents and children. Children with new Statements of SEN will be placed in ARCs where this is agreed by parents, children and SEN specialist officers. Initial plans are being made for around 25 pupils in the primary phase and 25 in the secondary phase.

23. There will be no disruption to existing patterns of staffing. Any changes will be gradual. As changes develop over time, the professional associations will support any member of staff who may be affected.
24. All school staff will have access to ongoing training and professional development through their delegated school budget and school improvement grant. Centrally-based staff have similar training provision. In addition additional funding of £150,000 has been identified from SEN budgets to support and boost levels of training specifically around SEN.
25. Subject to approval, the SEN Strategy will be implemented through a process of detailed action planning involving all mainstream and special schools and the multi-agency professional reference group. There will be a series of individual Decisions by the Cabinet Member on the implementation of each of the key elements of the SEN Strategy. The Strategy will be subject to on-going review taking account of future developments and the views of stakeholders. The on-going review will be included in the work programme of the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning.
26. The Cabinet considered the above information on 20th April, 2005 (see Minute 129 of that meeting). The Council is recommended to endorse the Special Educational Needs Strategy as attached.

Finance

27. The implementation of the SEN Strategy is expected to be revenue cost neutral. From April 2006 the costs of all special provisions will be met from the Dedicated Schools Budget.
28. Work has been undertaken over the last year on the analysis of the costs of meeting the educational needs of individual children in the different

provisions. This work will lead to the introduction of an equitable, open and transparent funding matrix for April 2006.

29. This development work is being carried out in close consultation with the Headteachers Consultative Forum and its Budget Working Group and Access and Inclusion Working Groups. There will be formal consultations with the Schools Forum as appropriate, as well as the Select Committee on Lifelong Learning.
30. The capital costs of relocating Old Park School will be the subject of a bid to the DfES for capital funding under the 'Targeted Capital Funding' (TCF) programme. If this is not approved, other funding options will be considered.

Law

31. The legislation governing special educational needs is set out in:
 - the Education Act 1996
 - the School Standards and Framework Act 1998
 - the Disability and Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2001
 - the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
 - the Children Act 2004
 - the SEN Code of Practice 2001

Equal Opportunities Policy

32. This report and the SEN Strategy itself aim to meet the Council's equal opportunities policy by ensuring equality of access to high quality and appropriate education provision for all children whatever their level of needs, background or locality.

Proposal of Recommendations

33. That the amended SEN Strategy published with this report be endorsed and approved.

David Caunt

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Leader of the Council

Background documents

Inspection Report on Dudley LEA (OFSTED 2000)
Inspection Report on Dudley LEA (OFSTED 2002)
Post-OFSTED Action Plan (2002)
School OFSTED inspections (OFSTED, various)
Policy for Educational Inclusion (2002)
Dudley Inclusion Strategy Document (2002)
Consultation responses to the Inclusion Strategy Document (2003)
Revised Dudley Inclusion Strategy 2004-2010 (2003)
Consultation responses to the Revised Dudley Inclusion Strategy 2004-2010 (2004)
Inclusion Strategy Action Plan (2004)
Consultation responses to the Inclusion Strategy Action Plan (2004)
The SEN Strategy (2005)
Report of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th April, 2005

Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in the report

Building Schools for the Future

BSF

(BSF is the programme to rebuild or renovate every secondary school, including special schools with secondary pupils, in England within 15 years. Recent announcements mean that Dudley will not benefit from this programme until 2008 at the earliest, with new buildings not in place until 2010.)

Additional Resource Centres

ARCs

ARCs will be located within mainstream schools and will make provision for those children who can benefit from part of a mainstream curriculum but are not able to operate fully within a mainstream environment.

Department for Education and Skills

DfES

Joint Area Review of Children's Services

JAR

A JAR is the multi-agency inspection of all children's services in a local authority area, coordinated by OFSTED, introduced by the Children Act 2004. The first JAR in Dudley will be between January and March 2006.

Moderate learning difficulty

MLD

In non-technical terms, MLDs vary along a spectrum from very mild, in which a Statement is not required and the child has a mainstream school place, to mild, where a Statement is required and the child has a mainstream place, to more complex, where a Statement is required and the child can benefit from some aspects of a mainstream school but cannot cope with a full-time placement, to more complex, where a statement is required and the child is placed in a special school.

Office for Standards in Education

OFSTED

OFSTED is a non-departmental government body that inspects and reports on education provision. Among other rôles, it inspects the work of the Council as the local education authority, and of schools.

Pupil Referral Unit

PRU

PRUs are similar to schools but are intended to make short-term provision for pupils excluded from school (without statements) and for pupils who cannot

otherwise attend school for a short term period, for example because of hospital attendance.

Special educational needs

SEN

Pupils with SEN have a statutory 'Statement of SEN' setting out the provision required. The assessment process is known as 'Statemending' and is carried out in partnership with parents.

SEN Code of Practice

The SEN Code of Practice is the statutory framework that the Council has to follow when operating the SEN legislation.

SEN Tribunal

The SEN Tribunal is the independent statutory body that resolves disputes between parents and Councils relating to the provision made for individual children. The ruling of the Tribunal is binding and final.

Targeted Capital Funding

TCF

TCF is a one of several capital programmes supported by the DfES. It is the most closely matched to the need to rebuild Old Park School.

SECTION 3: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**Summary of the effectiveness of the LEA's Special Educational Needs provision**

107. In the last inspection, the LEA's arrangements for meeting special educational needs were judged to be unsatisfactory and providing poor value for money. Under strong leadership, this area is now being tackled with commitment and energy. Satisfactory progress has been made, although much of it is recent. There are now sound systems for meeting statutory obligations, supporting school improvement and raising standards. Substantial improvements have been made to special educational needs policy and aspects of provision. The new team has not had sufficient time to develop a satisfactory special educational needs strategy, although the general direction of change is clear. Links between the access and inclusion plans and EDP 2 are inadequate.

The LEA's strategy for Special Educational Needs

108. The last inspection found the LEA's strategy for SEN to be unsatisfactory. This remains the case, despite recent improvements.

109. After a faltering start when, in some respects, the situation deteriorated, there was a major restructuring, resulting in the establishment in September 2001 of a new division for access and inclusion, under new leadership. Since then progress has been considerable. Policies have been prepared for inclusion and additional educational needs and for delegated funding. An external consultant has been commissioned to work closely with officers and schools to produce practicable solutions. Extensive work has been done in consultation with schools on modelling an integrated pattern of inclusive provision. While the shape of future developments is clear, there is as yet no logistical plan, underpinned by an appropriate financial strategy, showing the implications for schools and services. This contributes to continued anxiety in schools.

110. The pattern of special school provision continues much as before. There is an imbalance in favour of provision for moderate learning difficulties and a shortage of provision for emotional and behavioural difficulties, the latter exacerbated by the need currently to free places in pupil referral units for pupils with no school place. A complete solution is dependent on the logistical plan that the LEA is determined to produce by the end of this school year.

Recommendation

In order to develop the LEA's strategy for special educational needs and inclusion:

- agree firm plans for the future of special schools, units and relevant central services.



Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

Giving Every Child the Opportunity to Succeed

The Dudley Strategy for children with Special Educational Needs

“Putting learning first for Dudley”

30 March 2005

John Freeman
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Foreword

The OFSTED Inspections of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council in 2000 and 2002 highlighted the need to develop a long-term strategy for providing high quality education for children with special educational needs in Dudley.

Existing provision for children with special needs, in mainstream schools, in special schools, and in other units and centres, was seen as having developed over time without a clear overall direction. OFSTED found that there was some excellent practice and provision, but also some poor provision with an inconsistent framework for assessment and placement of children with special needs. Overall the education system was not seen as serving these children well. These judgements on the Council's provision have been confirmed by OFSTED judgements on individual schools and centres.

The Council has consulted extensively on the principles and practice that should be adopted in developing the strategy framework. The responses to the consultation have been extensive; from parents, from teachers, from governors, and from other stakeholders. As with all changes in educational provision, these proposals are very sensitive, and we have been careful to take account of all the issues raised. We are grateful for all the responses to the consultations as they have enabled us to develop and refine the strategy to reflect both community and professional expectations.

The time has now come to end the uncertainty for parents, professionals, and communities, and this strategy does that. For the first time in three years, schools will be able to plan for the long term with confidence. We are committed to an evolutionary approach, and to continuing to work closely with parents, teachers and governors to ensure that the strategy is implemented so that there is no unnecessary change for individual young people.

The strategy is centred on the interests of young people with special educational needs, so that they can be healthy and safe; enjoy their education and achieve their potential, and make a positive contribution to society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Adams'.

Councillor Angus Adams
Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Introduction

1. The Council is committed to an education system which provides all children with the opportunity to meet their full potential. Wherever there are barriers to children's learning they must be removed to ensure that they achieve the best possible educational outcomes. All children should be educated in their local community with their peers unless their special educational needs make this impossible.
2. The Council is committed to providing an excellent education service for all, with the aim of 'Putting learning first for Dudley'. This strategy will ensure that educational opportunities for children with special educational needs are enhanced and they are helped to realise their full potential.
3. This strategy has been developed following extensive consultation and taking into account the valuable feedback received from parents, teachers and other stakeholders. The strategy also takes account of current research into good practice across the country, and the national and local framework.
4. The strategy has been revised to take account of concerns that children in special schools would be subject to great change over a short period, and that parental choice would be reduced. The revised strategy takes account of these concerns by maintaining special schools on the present model, with the additional development of Additional Resource Centres that will cater for the needs of children who can benefit from some elements of mainstream school provision, but are not able to cope with all aspects of mainstream school life. This extension to provision will allow increased parental preference.
5. The strategy takes into account the fact that Dudley was not included in Waves Two or Three of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. We anticipate receipt of BSF funding in Wave Four, but this will probably not be until 2009/10 and we must improve the physical condition of our specialist provision before then.
6. In previous consultations we proposed the Borough-wide development of 'campus' models similar to that at Campus 21 with Bromley Hills Primary School, Crestwood School (secondary), and The Brier School (special) located on the same site. Without the immediate prospect of BSF funding we are unable to rebuild our special school provision on this basis. However, we remain strongly committed to the need for greater and positive links between

mainstream schools and special schools. As a first step, we will redevelop the redevelopment of Old Park School on a mainstream school campus.

7. Our long term aim is to ensure co-location or close proximity of schools wherever this is possible. We will encourage links between mainstream and special schools for a variety of activities, including specialist provision for children and for staff development.
8. This strategy makes the best use of existing buildings and addresses the urgent needs for improvement or new build from capital receipts and existing capital allocations.

National Context

9. The provision of education for children with special educational needs remains a national focus. This is highlighted through such publications and legislation as:
- a) the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, which strengthens the right of children with special educational needs to attend mainstream school, unless their parents indicate an alternative preference;
 - b) the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Schools for 2002/03 which stated that:
 - some children with special educational needs continue to face barriers to participation and achievement; and
 - the general commitment by mainstream schools to an inclusive approach has grown;
 - c) the 2004 DfES report, 'Inclusion and Pupil Achievement' which concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the current national policy of maintaining children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, where possible, is likely to have a significant impact on attainment at national, Council or school level. The report also concluded that there is no reason for Councils not to continue the inclusion agenda and that schools should not feel anxious about becoming more inclusive.
10. The 2004 Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Children Act 2004 set out outcomes for all children; that they should be healthy and safe; that they should enjoy and achieve; that they should make a positive contribution to society; and that they should be enabled to contribute to economic well-being.

The Dudley approach to meeting special educational needs of all children

11. The Council recognises and respects the rights of parents to express a preference for the education of their children, and the rights of children with special educational needs to access a full, balanced and appropriate curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. These rights must however

be balanced with the needs of other children, and the requirement to ensure that all children achieve the outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'.

12. A full, balanced and appropriate curriculum may be provided in a variety of settings depending on the educational needs of the child. Many children with special educational needs are currently educated in mainstream schools. This provides benefits for these children as well as other children. Some children are best educated in specialist provision such as special schools. As children develop, their needs change and flexibility needs to be built in so that the education service can respond rapidly and sensitively to individual need.

Principles

13. High quality education should be provided for as many children as possible alongside their peers in their local community, with flexible access to a continuum of provision that meets the diversity of individual educational need.
14. The continuum of provision should build upon special schools as centres of excellence and expertise.
15. Flexible arrangements must be created around the specific needs of young people in partnership with their family, where possible the children themselves, and the relevant professionals.
16. Wherever possible, specialist provision should be geographically located to meet children's needs without excessive travel.
17. Specialist provision should be delivered by appropriately trained specialist teachers and classroom assistants, working in high quality fit-for-purpose buildings, and resourced and supported appropriately.
18. Existing quality provision should be retained and developed further, with a continuing commitment to the further development of classroom skills and training, and the strategic development of specialist provision to meet children's needs as fully as possible within their local community.
19. The widely-accepted principle of a campus model will be used as the basis for the further development of excellent provision for Dudley.

20. Where possible, specialist provision will be made in each of the townships, to complement and mirror the other initiatives and structures throughout the education service and the broader Council.
21. The implementation of the strategy will be monitored with regular reviews so that professionals, parents and children, and the Council, can be assured that developments take account of experience and best practice. The review process will take account of provision for individual children, parents, teachers' views, and statistical information relating to pupil outcomes in order to inform and shape future developments. The review process will also take into account any changes in the national environment, either through legislation or DfES guidance.
22. The strategy takes account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and sets out the arrangements to ensure that the Council and schools have appropriate provision in place for the education of young people with the full range of special needs and disabilities.

The vision for 2007

23. We will have in place a model of flexible provision that meets the majority of our children's special needs within their local community, including local special schools.
24. We will retain special school provision across the Borough building on best practice and ensuring that all special schools are of the highest quality.
25. Most children with special educational needs will attend their local mainstream school, as at present. Some children will require more intensive levels of educational support for part or all of their school career, and this will be provided in their local mainstream school, a special school or other specialist provision.
26. We will have developed, or be working towards the development of, special schools and specialist provisions in 'state of the art' purpose-built or specially-adapted buildings. All will be centres of excellence for the whole Borough.
27. These centres of excellence will make direct provision for some children and support outreach provision for others, depending on their needs. The special

schools and specialist provisions will also be centres of professional development for education staff and others from across the borough.

28. A small number of children with exceptional and complex needs will require educational provision outside Dudley. This will be increasingly rare, as the special schools and specialist provisions develop their capacity to educate children with these complex needs while living in their local community.
29. We will continue to work in partnership with parents and children, and with schools, to consider each child's placement through the Annual Review process, respecting the rights of parents to express a preference either for their child to move to a mainstream school, or to access specialist provision. Undue changes for children will be avoided, though some schools and children will move location over the period.

The outline of provision by 2007

30. This section describes in outline the provision that will need to be built, refurbished or redeveloped. We need to develop high quality provision within well resourced and purpose built or refurbished accommodation that facilitates good teaching and learning. Further details are given in subsequent sections.
31. At present Dudley has two special schools providing for children with more complex needs, four special schools for children with moderate learning difficulties and one special school for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. We will retain these, and by September 2007 we will have refurbished or rebuilt those that need it most.

The continuum of learning needs

The special schools

32. The special schools for children with learning needs, all of whom who will have Statements, will be as follows:
 - **Old Park School** will continue to meet the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, and with complex needs (PMLD and SLD). Old Park School will be relocated in new build accommodation on a campus model alongside mainstream schools. The site has yet to be identified.

- **Pensmeadow School** will continue to meet the needs of pupils with PMLD, SLD, and complex needs on its current site.
 - The schools for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) will continue on their current sites:
 - **The Brier School**
 - **The Sutton School**
 - **Woodsetton School**
 - **Halesbury School** (to be refurbished)
33. Each of these special schools will develop provision for children with complex language and communication needs.
34. In addition to the Borough-wide special school provision, and moving along the continuum of need, there will be specific local support within the five townships. Each township will have two **Additional Resource Centres** (ARCs). The ARCs will be hosted by mainstream schools, and each township will have one secondary ARC and one primary ARC. Within each township, schools will be consulted on the location of the ARCs, in order to tailor provision to meet local needs. The ARCs will make provision for those children with Statements who can benefit from part of a mainstream curriculum but are not able to operate fully within a mainstream environment.
35. The ARCs will be managed by the host school on behalf of the township. ARC provision across the Borough will be coordinated to ensure consistency of provision and management, and to encourage interaction and development between the ARCs. Funding for each ARC will be devolved to the host school through a service level agreement based on planned places. The service level agreement will encourage flexibility of staff deployment between special and mainstream schools together with outreach and dual placement.
36. Admission criteria and arrangements for the ARCs will be set in agreement with headteachers. Placement of children will be through the statutory assessment process, and will enable increased parental preference within the continuum of learning difficulty.
37. In addition to the ARCs and other provision set out below, each township will be the base for a multi-professional team. This will include elements of the Educational Psychology Service, the Education Welfare Service, other

specialist special educational needs support services, and will be supported by a named SEN casework officer. The management arrangements for these services will be discussed and agreed with the township headteachers and the lead professionals. In time, we anticipate that other partners such as Health and Social Services will support the townships, and that other professionals may be co-located.

38. In addition to the proposals set out above we will continue to develop other Borough-wide provisions to cater for specific needs for which there is insufficient demand to justify locality-based provision.

The Continuum of Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

- **Rosewood School** for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties will be expanded to provide for 56 secondary children as well as outreach provision for eight primary children on the roll of the school but educated off-site. These children will all have Statements.

This approach will enable a more individualised, flexible and responsive approach for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

There is insufficient space on the present site of Rosewood School to enable this expansion on site. It is anticipated that, as resources become available, and in line with strategic planning across the Borough, a new site will be identified for the school in a more central part of the borough.

- The **Pupil Referral Units** (PRUs) will continue to provide for children who are permanently excluded from school prior to reintegration, and for short-term medical needs. Children who attend PRUs do not in general have a Statement of SEN. The Pupil Referral Units will be developed to promote flexibility, and the effective and rapid return of excluded children to mainstream education. In addition, we will increase support to schools for children at risk of exclusion through a new PRU model. These developments will be reviewed further in full consultation with schools. Within the review we will review the criteria for admissions to the Home and Hospital PRU.

Provision for 'Low Incidence' Special Educational Needs

39. Existing provision for children with **hearing impairment** is good, with effective inclusive practice. However, the geographical location of the primary and secondary provisions does not secure effective progression from primary to secondary provision with non-impaired peer groups. This would require the primary and secondary provisions to be located so that children can transfer with their peers, which is not at present the case. The Hearing Impaired Unit at Ashwood Park Primary School will continue to provide for children with hearing impairment at primary age but we will seek to develop a new secondary provision within the locality to provide greater social continuity for children at transfer to secondary school. The Hearing Impaired Unit at Redhill School will be moved to a new secondary school site as resources become available. Some hearing impaired children will still choose to attend a school local to their own home and community; where this is the case we will continue to provide outreach advice and support to the school from the peripatetic support team.
40. Provision for children with **visual impairment** is made in local mainstream schools, and this will continue to be the case, with specialist outreach support and advice from the peripatetic support team.
41. Provision for most children with **physical impairment** and **complex medical needs** has been made by making appropriate adaptations so that they are able to attend a local school. Some children with the most severe and complex needs have had to attend out-of-borough schools. We will continue to ensure that the majority of children with physical disabilities are able to attend a local school by making adjustments and adaptations in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).
42. We will work with schools to continue a rolling programme of building adaptations and improvements, which will take into account predicted placements of children with specific needs, as well as anticipating the requirements of the DDA to develop all schools to provide access for disabled children. Some children with physical disabilities also have medical needs; these will be addressed with training and advice for school staff, delivered by the peripatetic support team. The DDA requires schools and the local authority to make 'reasonable adjustments' for all disabilities, not just physical, and we will continue to work with schools to meet this requirement, so that, whenever possible, children are able to attend their local school.

43. In recent years, the Thorns Community College has made significant adaptations to provide for children with complex physical disabilities. This provision will be formalised with clear funding, management and governance in line with the establishment of the ARCs. This provision will cater for up to 15 physically disabled children. Placement will be through the special educational needs framework. This arrangement ensures we make the best use of local resources and investment.
44. Children with **Autistic Spectrum Disorder** (ASD) vary greatly in their level of need and therefore we will ensure that a continuum of provision is developed.
45. At primary age, children who have **Asperger's Syndrome**, at the less severe end of the autistic spectrum, are likely to have their needs met effectively in their local mainstream primary school, with outreach support and advice from a newly-developed peripatetic Autism Outreach Team. Others, with higher levels of need, may be placed in the Language and Communication provision at one of the special schools.
46. For some children with ASD who have been successfully included in primary school, the transfer to the more complex environment of a secondary school provides challenges that are too great. We will therefore develop five **ASD Support Units** in secondary schools, one within each township, in addition to the ARCs. The location of these provisions will be negotiated with the schools in each township.
47. The existing **Language Units for Key Stage 1 children** will be relocated to two new sites, one in the north and one the south of the Borough, each located in a two-classroom base with speech therapy and specialist teacher input. Each Language Unit will make provision for Key Stage 1 children with expressive or receptive language needs. Placements will be either part-time or full-time.
48. The two Language Units will also provide outreach support and advice to primary schools for children who have less intensive language needs at Key Stage 1 or who still have some needs at Key Stage 2.
49. Criteria for placement at the Language Units will be agreed with the Speech and Language Therapy Service in the Health Service, headteachers, and the

Directorate. Placements will be made through a new Speech and Language Placement Panel.

Summary

50. A continuum of provision ranging from out-of-borough placements through special schools to local provision in mainstream school will meet the diversity of children's needs.
51. The Council will continue to work towards 'campus' provision with mainstream and special schools on the same site as resources permit. This will be the case for the imminent relocation of Old Park School.
52. Serving each township there will be:
- one **primary Additional Resource Centre**
 - one **secondary Additional Resource Centre**
 - one **secondary Autistic Spectrum Disorder Support Unit**
 - **township-based Educational Psychology provision**
 - **township-based SEN specialist support services**
 - **township-based Education Welfare Service**
 - **an allocated central SEN casework officer**

Over time, these services may be enhanced by health and social care support.

53. Cross-Borough provision will comprise:
- two **Language Units for Key Stage 1** (north and south)
 - provision for **hearing impaired, visually impaired and physically disabled** children
54. **Old Park School** will be relocated on a new site on a campus model.
55. **Halesbury School** will be refurbished.
56. **Rosewood School** will be expanded to 56 places for secondary children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, moving to a new site. Eight primary children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties will be on the roll of the special school but located at a Pupil Referral Unit.

55. A new model for **Pupil Referral Units** will be developed for all Key Stages in partnership with schools.

The process of assessment and criteria for placement in all units and special schools

56. Assessment and placement processes will be reviewed in line with the SEN Code of Practice 2001 and the Common Assessment Framework. There is, at the time of writing, some ambiguity on joint agency assessment as outlined in the Children Act 2004. We will take DfES guidance into account as it is published.
57. In line with the Children Act 2004 and 'Every Child Matters' we adhere to the principles of school-based early assessment and intervention. Most assessments of children should take place in their current educational provision to determine how they learn and interact with their peers, adults and the environment. Not all assessments lead to statutory processes or statementing. We must ensure that assessments are timely, and that they inform teachers effectively of the needs of children and how to best address those needs in the learning environment. Assessments must involve the parent or carer.
58. All specialist provisions maintained by the Council will have clear criteria for both entry and exit for children. The Council has a statutory duty to operate the statutory assessment process and to make resulting placements. Revised criteria are being drawn up and consultation will follow.

Pupil numbers

59. An analysis has been undertaken of current actual pupil numbers within special schools and other specialist provision. The trend over the past three years has shown a significant under-use of planned places. Currently, therefore, we are not making the best use of these resources across the Borough.
60. This strategy aims to realign the number of planned places across all specialist provision to ensure that we make best use of the Council's resources and have adequate and appropriate specialist places across the continuum of need. This will largely be addressed through a review of the special school funding formula.

61. With the projected reduction in the overall pupil population, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the number of children with special educational needs requiring specialist provision. However, there is a significant trend, both locally and nationally, towards a higher proportion of children with more complex needs.
62. The realignment of the total number of planned places for children with special needs is concerned with raising standards in education through the removal of capacity where not needed and the development of new capacity where required. This will enable the better use of limited resources to ensure the development of excellent and sustainable provisions in thriving educational communities.
63. Planned numbers will remain under annual review, in order to ensure that changes in the number of children with special educational needs and the types of those needs, as well as patterns of parental preference, can be responded to flexibly.

Pre-school provision

64. In recent years, there have been a number of significant developments in pre-school and early years, both nationally and locally. We are working with key partners to redesign local provision and entry routes to ensure that we have a cohesive system where all settings are appropriately supported in meeting the diverse needs of our children.
65. The extended Sure Start programme and the DfES 'Ten Year Childcare Strategy' and 'Early Support Strategy', the Children Act 2004 and the Common Assessment Framework are shaping much new work. We will need to ensure that:
 - the developing Children's Centres and current enhanced nurseries are drawn together to provide cohesive strategy for meeting special educational needs in early years settings,
 - staff in the variety of early year's settings (including school-based, voluntary and private) receive appropriate training and advice to identify and support children with special needs;

- the diverse assessment processes of health, social services and education are brought together effectively;
- the statutory assessment process for special educational needs is put speedily in place where appropriate;
- appropriate funding streams are identified, and, where appropriate, multi-agency pooled budgets developed;
- early identification of special needs leads to suggested mapping of appropriate schooling, allowing parents and professionals to consider properly suitable future placements;
- parents have access to a diverse range of provision and advice to help them to meet their child's individual needs; and
- the change from pre-school to primary school is handled effectively so that the transition appears seamless to parents and children.

16-19 provision

66. In partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and the further education colleges, and the special schools, we will continue to provide education between the ages of 16 and 19, including the small number of young people with complex needs.
67. The transition from school to post-16 provision for young people with special educational needs can be stressful. For some young people the transition is very difficult, and for a small minority impossible. We will work closely with local colleges, the Connexions Service and partners to provide a continuum of local provision that meets the individual needs of all young people with special needs after the age of 16.

Developing new funding mechanisms

68. Overall funding for meeting special educational needs is expected to remain at current levels.

69. From April 2006 the overall budget for meeting special educational needs will form part of the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB), the single government grant for all school funding. The DSB and its deployment, and in particular the balance between mainstream and special education funding, is subject to statutory consultation with the Schools Forum.
70. Existing funding arrangements are proving increasingly inadequate with the need for *ad hoc* and unsatisfactory adjustments to the LMS Formula and other funding mechanisms to secure stability.
71. The special schools, the ARCs, and the other Units will be funded for an agreed number of pupil places through a new LMS Formula for SEN. The current LMS Formula provides for children with special educational needs at mainstream schools, including those at School Action, School Action Plus and with Statements. We are developing a new LMS Formula for SEN ('Matrix Funding') backed up by a 'Matrix of Need' model to remedy the existing deficiencies of the LMS Formula.
72. The new LMS Formula for SEN is currently being devised in partnership with the Headteachers Consultative Forum and its Budget Working Group and Access and Inclusion Working Group. The new Formula is being developed for implementation from April 2006 alongside the new arrangements for the Dedicated Schools Budget.
73. The Matrix Funding arrangements are being designed to be open and transparent, flexible and responsive, and to enable the Directorate, mainstream schools, special schools, and other specialist provisions to account for the use of the available funding. Monitoring of the effectiveness of funding will be important to ensure cost-effective use of the Council's resources.
74. The Matrix of Need will apply uniformly to all children with special educational needs in any of the mainstream schools, special schools or other specialist provisions.

Capital funding

75. The rebuilding of Old Park School will be the subject of a major bid to the DfES through the Targeted Capital Fund. The refurbishment of Halesbury School, the relocation of Rosewood School, and the development of the

ARCs, will be carried through within existing capital budgets augmented where necessary by land sale receipts.

Governance

76. Governing bodies of mainstream and special schools, and the Management Committee for the PRUs, will have a crucial part in implementing the strategy, and we will work closely with the Dudley Association of Governing Bodies.

Personnel

77. We wish to retain the quality and expertise of existing staff in the new model. The revised version of the model will allow most staff to remain in their current posts if they wish to do so.
78. The new model of provision for children with special educational needs will provide opportunities for many staff to extend their current skills and experience through a range of training activities just as there will be many opportunities for new and extended roles within the new arrangements.
79. The strategy creates opportunities that will offer a secure and supported future for our staff in raising the achievement of Dudley's children in the most appropriate environment.

A new way of working

80. In light of the Children Act 2004 and the new model of provision for children with special educational needs in Dudley we will:
- need to retain and share the expertise that already exists in all our schools;
 - develop the expertise of all staff working in schools and raise their awareness of special educational needs issues as well as some detailed areas of need. We will therefore be positively encouraging attendance at a wide range of courses as part of development training. There will be significant extra funding available to sustain this training each year, as well as the funding that is already delegated to schools. Based on an audit of training needs across all schools and Directorate staff we will ensure that the training meets needs effectively;

- encourage people to learn while working; this will require additional funding as well as flexible thinking;
- put in place a clear rationale for placements with new criteria and clear processes that are shared and understood by all staff;
- provide clarity of funding mechanisms and transparency for school staff about how children's needs are met and funded;
- develop, with other agencies, the use of the Common Assessment Framework and information sharing processes as outlined in the Children Act 2004;
- have clear and supportive mechanisms for monitoring children's outcomes and school outcomes;
- encourage peripatetic teaching staff and specialists from other agencies to work together in specially allocated and equipped work rooms using them as regular bases for outreach and working together. We want to foster opportunities for all staff to work together formally and informally. We will encourage the development of multi-professional teams and promote their interaction with schools whilst retaining professional identity; and
- foster a clear working relationship between special schools, specialist provision and mainstream schools as well as other providers e.g. health care professionals.

Moving to implementation by September 2007

81. The Council will publish by July 2005 a detailed action plan to support the implementation of this Strategy.
82. The detailed action plan will ensure that all appropriate legal requirements are met and will allow for continuing opportunities for whole school and individual meetings to support staff effectively through the change process. The action plan will also set out a communication strategy so that all stakeholders are kept up-to-date with progress.

83. We will continue to work in partnership with all stakeholders on the implementation and development of the Strategy, recognising that the need for further developments may become apparent over time.
84. The Annual Review process, carried out in consultation with parents and carers, will be used to review the needs and placement of each child with a Statement of SEN.

Summary of Provision

Special schools

	<u>Planned</u> <u>places</u>	<u>2004</u> <u>numbers</u>
The Brier School (5-16, MLD)	135	126
Halesbury School (4-16, MLD)	120	90
Old Park School (3-19, SLD)	140	118
Pens Meadow School (3-19, SLD)	70	59
Woodsetton School (4-11, MLD)	110	85
Sutton School (11-16, MLD)	120	115
Rosewood School (11-16, BESD)	40	38

Planned numbers for 2007 will be set in the light of the Matrix Funding arrangements to ensure that the staffing and support required is adequate. Actual numbers for 2007 will depend on the patterns of parental preference and Statementing between now and 2007. However, major shifts are not expected.

Other specialist provision

At present there are 21 pupils attending primary INCs and 46 pupils attending secondary INCs. The planned numbers for 2007 are as follows. Actual numbers will depend on the pattern of parental preference and Statementing between now and then.

5 secondary ARCs	25
5 primary ARCs	25
5 secondary ASD support units	40
1 secondary physical disabilities unit	15

The numbers of children with other low incidence special educational needs are very variable. The various provisions will be resourced and staffed according to Matrix Funding.

Related documents

Dudley documents available on InsideDudley – Plans, Policies and Guidance:

AEN Strategy	2002
Inclusion Policy	2002
Schools in the Community Strategy	2004
Behaviour and Attendance Strategy	2004
Naming a School in a Statement	2004
AEN Monitoring Strategy	2005 (revised)
Matrix Funding	Consultation 2005

National and International documents:

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education
Salamanca, Spain, June 1994 (UNESCO)

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000984/098427eo.pdf>

‘All our children belong’ (A report compiled together by ‘Parents for Inclusion’, 2004
www.parentsforinclusion.org

Removing Barriers to Achievement (DfES), 2003

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy/publications/inclusion/883963

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES), 2001

Guide to abbreviations

ARCs	Additional Resource Centres
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DELL	Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
HI	Hearing Impaired
INCs	Inclusion Units in mainstream schools
LEA	Local Education Authority
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
PD	Physically Disabled
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
VI	Visually Impaired