

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Central Dudley Area Committee – 27 October 2003

Report of the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

The Dudley Inclusion Strategy Consultation Document

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee about the Revised Inclusion Strategy Consultation Document and the Parents Consultation Document, which are out for consultation from 1 September 2003.

Background

2. The 2002 OFSTED Inspection of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council highlighted the need to develop a new model of provision and urged that uncertainty for schools and parents be ended by publishing and consulting on the Inclusion Strategy to implement the Inclusion Policy as soon as possible.

Extensive consultation took place between October 2002 and January 2003 on the initial version of the Dudley Inclusion Strategy, which set out a number of principles and a proposed model through which greater inclusion of children with Additional Educational Needs within mainstream schools could be achieved. The draft Inclusion Strategy built on work undertaken by the Inclusion Strategy Group, a group of colleagues with a range of professional backgrounds, including headteachers from special and mainstream schools, and parental representatives. The Inclusion Strategy Group worked with representatives from Birmingham University to help develop the key principles and possible models of provision for Dudley.

Following the consultation period, during which 2,741 responses were received, an internal independent analysis of the responses was undertaken; this analysis was published on 16 June 2003.

This Revised Dudley Inclusion Strategy 2004-10 has been prepared in light of the consultation responses. The Revised Strategy sets out a vision and the planned framework of educational provision to maximise educational and social inclusion. Following this second consultation, an Inclusion Strategy Action Plan will be published by the end of January 2004 to implement the new arrangements between 2004 and 2010.

The consultation on the Revised Inclusion Strategy will run from 1 September 2003 to 28 November 2003. As part of the consultation, which will be undertaken according to the Consultation and Communication Policy, a summary document will be distributed to parents or carers of all children attending Dudley schools.

The Inclusion Strategy Group will be re-convened to consider the revised proposals and to contribute to the development of the Inclusion Strategy Action Plan.

Finance

3. There are no financial implications for this consultation. The longer-term costs of the implementation of the proposed model will be carefully considered in the drawing up of an action plan. This is being considered currently and will be completed upon the conclusion of the consultation process.

Law

4. The main provisions relating to Special Educational Needs are:
 - SEN Code of Practice 2001
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2000
 - SEN Disability Act 2001
 - School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Equal Opportunities Policy

15. This report endorses equal entitlement of access to a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils in their local community.

Recommendation

16. The Area Committee is asked to consider and comment upon the Inclusion Strategy.



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Background Papers

SEN Code of Practice 2001
Disability Discrimination Act 2000
SEN Disability Act 2001
School Standards and Framework Act 1998