

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET
MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2000 AT 10.00 A.M.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2000 AT 2.15 P.M.**

Agenda Item No:

2

REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

Report of the Director of Education

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Executive Member: Keith Emsall

1. Purpose of the report

To summarise consultation responses to the revised SEN Policy and seek approval for a final policy.

2. Summary and comments from SEN Panel

On 17 July the Education Committee authorised consultation on a revised SEN policy. The SEN Panel has considered the results of the consultation.

The SEN Policy is based upon 4 key objectives:-

- (i) To work with mainstream schools to develop their capacity to meet the widest possible range of individual needs and raise the achievement of all pupils
- (ii) To work with special schools to develop a dual role in providing directly for pupils with the greatest level of need and in supporting mainstream schools in their work with individual pupils.
- (iii) To identify and respond to needs as early as possible.
- (iv) To promote partnership and parental involvement.

The outcomes of consultation meetings and questionnaire responses received have been almost universally in favour of the proposals with 96.8% agreement or strong agreement with the aims, principles, objectives and targets.

Consultees raised a number of issues about implementation - notably the need for adequate resource levels; the importance of recognising individual differences; quick access to appropriate advice and support, and appropriate training for teaching, classroom support and other school staff.

The SEN Panel considered responses received at its meeting of 20 October and recommended that an amended version of the consultation draft be put to the Cabinet for approval, subject to any last minute changes being cleared with Education Spokespersons. Panel members and school representatives felt that it would be helpful for the policy to be available to schools and other stakeholders by the beginning of the Spring Term. 40 further responses have been received since the Panel meeting. As all of these are consistent with earlier comments and consequently approval is sought for publication of the document attached as Appendix A to this report.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 The revised SEN Policy has been well received by schools, governors and voluntary organisations.
- 3.2 Following discussion by the SEN Panel the Cabinet needs to consider whether to forward the policy to the Executive Committee for approval and distribution to schools and other stakeholders at the beginning of the Spring term.

1. Background

- 1.1 The SEN Panel agreed a revised policy for special educational needs at its meeting of 4 July 2000. This was authorised for consultation by the Education Committee on 17 July. The SEN Panel discussed the responses received at its meeting of 20 October. A further 40 questionnaires have been received since that time, all of which are consistent with those received by the date of the Panel meeting.
- 1.2 The proposed policy was distributed to County Councillors, all schools, voluntary organisations, health authorities and staff in both Education and Social Services Departments. Four public meetings were held to discuss the policy, and separate sessions were arranged for the Parent Advisory, SEN Management Partnership and Inclusion Task Groups.

2. Outcomes of Consultation

- 2.1 Individual questionnaires were received from 86 schools and voluntary organisations. A collective response was also received from the Special School Headteacher Forum:

Nursery	2	First	2
Infant	7	Junior	8
Primary	45	Middle	3
Secondary	10	Special	3
Independent	0	Voluntary Organisation	1
Other	5		

Table 1 Summary of respondents to consultation

- 2.2 The composition of the groups responding was as follows :-

Headteacher	43%	Governor	24%
Teacher	27%	Parent	2%
Non-teaching staff	2%	Other	2%

Table 2 Analysis of groups responding

- 2.3 The reaction to the proposals has been overwhelmingly positive with 96.8% of responses indicating agreement or strong agreement. :-

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Underlying Principles	35	42	47	57	1	1	0	0
Aims	42	47	46	52	1	1	0	0

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Objective 1:								
• Work with mainstream schools to develop their capacity to meet the widest possible range of individual needs and raise the achievement of all pupils	43	54	32	41	4	5	0	0
• Action for schools	37	46	41	51	3	4	0	0
• Action for the LEA	39	49	36	46	4	5	0	0
Objective 2:								
• Work with special schools to develop a dual role in providing directly for pupils with the greatest level of need and in supporting mainstream schools in their work with individual pupils	38	46	40	49	3	4	1	1
• Action for special schools	31	40	42	55	3	4	1	1
• Action for LEA	27	37	42	58	2	3	2	3
Objective 3:								
• To identify and respond to needs as early as possible	64	74	22	26	0	0	0	0
• Pre-school provision	49	62	29	37	1	1	0	0
• Work with older children	46	57	34	42	1	1	0	0
• Statutory Assessment	37	49	34	45	3	4	2	3
Objective 4:								
• To promote parent partnership and parental involvement	50	58	33	38	3	4	0	0
• Action for schools	42	51	40	49	0	0	0	0
• Action for Local Education Authority	37	46	43	54	0	0	0	0
Targets	119	43	143	52	11	4	2	1
Total	736	49.5	704	47.3	40	2.7	8	0.5

Table 3: Analysis of consultation responses

2.4 In addition, 4 consultation meetings were held for heads, SENCOs, governors and parents. These were attended by 157 people. There was again a welcome for the plan with most questions focussing upon clarification, implementation and resourcing issues. An analysis of the messages arising from the questionnaires and consultation meetings has been distributed to Panel Members and is available on request.

2.5 The Policy was also discussed with the Parent Advisory Group of which involves representatives from the following organisations:

- MENCAP
- Visually Impaired Children
- Herts Deaf Children's Society

- St Albans and Harpenden Network 81
- Dyspraxia Foundation
- National Autistic Society
- Starscope/Network 81
- Parents of Lonsdale School
- Home Liaison
- Pre-School Learning Alliance
- ADHD Support Group
- Cerebral Palsy Support Group
- National Epilepsy Association
- Herts Dyslexia Association
- National Dyslexia Association
- AFASIC

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The revised Policy text is attached as Appendix A. The changes proposed by the Panel can be summarised as follows :-

Page 2 - Underlying Principles/Quality: “benchmark *our services*”. This reflects concern that we may be benchmarking the performance of individual children with SEN.

Page 3 – What schools need to do : add “*work collaboratively with LEA support services and, where appropriate, special school staff*”

Page 3 (i): third bullet point replace “autism” with “*autistic spectrum disorder (autism)*”. This recognises the full nature of the difficulty whilst allowing the abbreviated term to be used elsewhere in the document helping to make it more readable.

Page 4 (ii) :continuum of funding changed from “specialist unit” to “*specialist provision*”

Page 4 (iii) Promote the professional development of staff: third bullet point “provide teachers, classroom assistants *and other school staff* with advice, training”

Page 4 (iii): Fifth point add “accredited training for *and speech/language disorders*”

Page 6: Objective 2, add “*review the range and use of residential provision to ensure that it is used to maximum effect*”.

Page 6: Objective 3 to read “*To identify and respond to needs as early and as quickly as possible*”. This more accurately reflects the activity proposed under this objective.

Page 6: Pre-School Provision: add “*parents and voluntary organisations*” to first point (groups to liaise with).

Page 6: Pre-School Provision: Point 3 to read “*Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships*”.

Page 6: Pre-School Provision: Point 5 add “*pre-school*”.

Page 6 Pre-School Provision: Point 6 to read “*parent and toddler groups, home visiting (0-2) or sessional attendance at Opportunity Classes (2-4)*”

Page 6: change heading from “Work with older children” to “work with *school-aged children*” and make first sentence read “*Children of statutory school age*”.

Page 6: Work with older children: First point add “*This to be enhanced by targeted work by local Behaviour Support Teams with children who have extreme and complex emotional or behavioural difficulties*”

Page 8: Objective 4: Management partnership arrangements: amend to read “headteacher, governor *and early years partnership groups*”.

Page 8: Objective 4: Voluntary organisations : add 4th bullet point “*supporting voluntary organisations and preventative services*”.

Page 8: Objective 4: Interagency collaboration: amend 3rd bullet point to read “working with Social Services, Health *and voluntary organisations*”.

Page 10: Objective 2: Target 4, add “*in consultation with the Specialist Advisory Service*”

Page 10: Objective 2, Target 5 to read “95 % *special school pupils leaving schools with an accredited qualification*”.

Page 14: Delete numbers/place from Primary SpLD bases and add:
“*Please note that primary bases provide an outreach assessment and advisory teacher service to local schools.*
Secondary bases in North and South provide an agreed number of places to pupils who are registered on the roll of the school plus an outreach service. A pilot study in the East has provided specialist training for a member of staff in every secondary school and enhanced levels of support at 6 designated secondary schools. The implications of this model for secondary provision in other areas of the County will be explored in 2001”.

This text reflects the pattern of support provided by Specific Learning Difficulty Bases

3.2 The Panel recommended that a glossary is included in the final policy.

3.3 Targets and activities to achieve them will be reviewed annually through the Education Development Plan planning and consultation process.

4. Resource Implications

None. The services described in the policy are provided within the approved budget.

Background material referred to by the author while compiling this report

SEN Panel 4 July : Proposals for a Revised SEN Policy

SEN Panel 20 October : Review of SEN Policy

If you require further information about the issues referred to in this report please contact:

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