

## SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

### SEN INCLUSION POLICY

#### 1. THE STATUTORY CONTEXT

##### (i) Relevant legislation

SEN and Disability Act (2001)

SEN Code of Practice (2002)

Statutory guidance: 'Inclusive Schooling – Children with SEN' (2002)

Education Act (1996)

Disability Discrimination Act (1985)

Disability Discrimination Act: Code of Practice for Schools (2002)

Accessible schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils (July 2002)

National Curriculum 2000: statutory inclusion statement

The Children Act (2004)

##### (ii) Definition of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

'Children have special educational needs if they have a *learning difficulty* which calls for *special educational provision* to be made for them.

Children have a *learning difficulty* if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- (b) have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority;
- (c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do if special educational provision was not made for them.'

(The Education Act 1996)

##### (iii) Children with a Disability

'A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

(Section 1[1], Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

The Code of Practice (Schools) in relation to The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, states that, 'the definition of children with learning difficulties includes children with a disability where any special educational provision needs to be made. It means that all children with a disability have special educational needs if they have any difficulty in accessing education and if they need any special educational provision to be made for them, that is, anything that is *additional to* or *different from* what is normally available in schools in the area.'

(Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Part 4; Code of Practice for Schools, 3.17)

## **2. INCLUSION**

Current legislation strengthens the rights of children with SEN to be educated in a mainstream school.

Shropshire Council is committed to developing an inclusive education system where the majority of pupils will be fully integrated in their local school. A parent's wish to have their child with a statement educated in the mainstream will only be refused in the small minority of cases where the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children. This will enable pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum, whilst minimising the effects of their special educational needs, maintaining equal opportunity and ensuring that the rights of the child are not infringed. However, it is recognised that a small number of pupils, whose needs are exceptional, will still benefit from access to a more specialist environment.

## **3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

The fundamental principles of Shropshire Council's SEN Inclusion Policy reflects those described in the SEN Code of Practice (2002):

- a child with special educational needs should have their needs met
- the special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools or settings
- the views of the child should be sought and taken into account
- parents have a vital role to play in supporting their child's education
- children with special educational needs should be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including an appropriate curriculum for the foundation stage and the National Curriculum

## **4. AIMS OF THE SEN INCLUSION POLICY**

- to have regard to the SEN Code of Practice for the identification, assessment and provision of pupils with SEN;
- to support all schools to comply with the SEN Code of Practice;
- to ensure all pupils with SEN have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, including the National Curriculum;
- to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, race or religion;
- to ensure that schools provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils with SEN which prepares them for an active role in adult life;
- to ensure a commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools subject to the needs of the individual and of other pupils, parental representations and the efficient education of other children
- to sustain a commitment to working in partnership with parents which takes account of parental wishes wherever possible.

- to maintain close collaboration with all agencies (including the Primary Care Trust [PCT], Social Care and Safeguards, schools and pre-school settings, governors, voluntary organisations) involved with the pupil in order to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of the individual;
- to recognise that there should be a continuum of provision from mainstream school through to special school placement as appropriate to meet the individual pupil's needs through continued development of links within the mainstream and special school sectors;
- to maintain the continued provision of special school places for the small number of pupils whose needs cannot be met in mainstream schools;
- to ensure that resources are monitored and managed efficiently and effectively to secure quality provision for SEN;
- to recognise good practice in schools and other settings and celebrate the success of pupils with SEN;
- to work in all five of the key outcome areas of the Every Child Matters agenda to enable children and young people with special educational needs to:
  - be healthy
  - stay safe
  - enjoy and achieve
  - make a positive contribution and
  - achieve economic well-being.

## 5. IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Shropshire schools, early years settings and the Local Authority (LA) have a commitment to, and a good record of, early identification of pupils with SEN. Shropshire LA follows the guidance set out in the SEN Code of Practice in respect of the identification, assessment and provision for children with SEN as follows:

### (i) **Early Education Settings** (Pre-school: meeting children's special educational needs before statutory school age)

The PCT generally identifies children with the most severe or complex learning difficulties or disabilities at a very early age. The children and their families are initially assessed and supported through attendance at Child Development Centres in Shrewsbury and Telford.

A number of children are subsequently referred to the Portage Programme, supervised by the Educational Psychology Service, which aims to help parents acquire the skills to encourage their child's development. Children are referred to the Portage Programme through the Child Development Centres.

A Nursery Assessment Unit is available for children with a wide range of significant learning difficulties and disabilities, based at the Severndale School in Shrewsbury.

For most young children with special educational needs the most effective pre-school provision is attendance at a local pre-school setting.

All early education settings in receipt of government funding are required to have regard to the SEN Code of Practice. The graduated approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children who are not making appropriate progress should be firmly based within the setting, using *Early Years Action* and *Early Years Action Plus*.

- **Early Years Action** – when a child's needs are identified as requiring interventions that are *additional to* or *different from* those provided as part of the setting's usual curriculum;
- **Early Years Action Plus** – when a child's needs are identified as requiring the involvement of specialists from external support services;
- **Statutory Assessment** – in a very small number of cases, when the help provided through *Early Years Action Plus* is not sufficient to enable a child to make adequate progress, it may be necessary to request that the LA initiates a statutory assessment of special educational needs;
- **Statement of Special Educational Needs** – when the LA considers that the special educational provision necessary to meet the child's needs cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to the setting. The LA will then determine the special educational provision required and will make and maintain a statement of the child's special educational needs.

Shropshire has a particularly diverse range of early education settings. The Early Years and Childcare officer works closely to bring together private, voluntary and independent settings in receipt of government funding, with LAs, Social Care and Safeguards departments, health services and parent representatives in the planning and provision of services in the early education sector. All early education settings must identify a member of staff to act as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Area SENCOs are also employed to provide advice and guidance on issues relating to SEN to the non-maintained settings.

## (ii) School Based Stages of Assessment

All Shropshire LA schools are required to have regard to the SEN Code of Practice. And should follow the model of intervention for the identification and assessment of special educational needs as set out in the Code. The graduated approach to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils who are not making appropriate progress should be firmly based within each school, using *School Action* and *School Action Plus*.

- **School Action** – when a pupil's needs are identified as requiring interventions that are *additional to* or *different from* those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum;
- **School Action Plus** – when a pupil's needs are identified as requiring the involvement of specialists from external support services;
- **Statutory Assessment** – in a very small number of cases, when the help provided through *School Action Plus* is not sufficient to enable a pupil to make adequate progress, it may be necessary to request that the LA initiates a statutory assessment of special educational needs;
- **Statement of Special Educational Needs** – when the LA considers that the special educational provision necessary to meet the pupil's needs cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to the school. The LA will then determine the special educational provision required and will make and maintain a statement of the pupil's special educational needs.

## 6. **SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT *EARLY YEARS ACTION* AND *EARLY YEARS ACTION PLUS***

Local guidance has been drawn up and is in place in all settings. It provides advice on how to meet a child's special educational needs at *Early Years Action* and *Early Years Action Plus* and upon the LA's revised statutory assessment criteria (see *Annex A*).

## 7. **SUPPORTING PUPILS AT *SCHOOL ACTION* AND *SCHOOL ACTION PLUS***

Local procedures have been agreed and implemented in all schools. The procedures provide advice and guidance on how to meet a pupil's special educational needs at *School Action* and *School Action Plus* and upon the LA's statutory assessment criteria (see *Annex B*).

## 8. **STATUTORY ASSESSMENT, STATEMENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND ANNUAL REVIEWS**

A small number of children will have special educational needs of a severity or complexity that requires the LA to determine and arrange the special educational provision that their learning difficulties require. In such cases a statutory assessment will take place and a decision will be made whether to issue a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Where a statement is issued, this will be subject to an Annual Review. An Annual Review will assess a child's progress towards meeting the objectives specified in the statement in accordance with the guidance in the SEN Code of Practice and determine whether the statement continues to need to be maintained.

## 9. **MONITORING ADMISSIONS**

A child, with or without a statement, may not be refused admission to a school on the grounds that the school does not feel able to cater for their special educational needs. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are expected to be included in mainstream schools, therefore, a parental request for admission to a mainstream school will only be refused if the child's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

- **pupils with statements:** admissions are monitored through the statements by the Inclusion Services section of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate (CYPSPD) within the LA;
- **pupils without statements:** pupils with SEN must be treated as fairly as all other applicants for admission. Admissions are monitored through the admissions officers in CYPSPD to ensure that such children are considered for admission to a school in line with the school's published admissions criteria.

## 10. **FUNDING FOR SEN**

- **pupils without statements:** funding for non-statemented pupils with SEN is delegated according to a locally agreed formula.
- **pupils with statements:** funding for pupils with statements is either delegated to schools or, for those pupils with the highest level of need, it is devolved on an ear-

marked basis. In all cases, schools should ensure that the pupil's needs are met in accordance with the provision described in the statement

## **11. PROMOTING HIGH STANDARDS**

### **(i) Monitoring SEN provision in schools**

SEN monitoring officers visit every mainstream school within the LA in order to monitor the effectiveness of the provision for SEN pupils. A report is provided for the headteacher and the chair of the governing body, which recognises good practice and identifies aspects requiring further development.

Each special school has a School Improvement Partner (SIP) who, in conjunction with the headteacher and governing body, takes responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of provision and the progress of pupils.

### **(ii) Sharing good practice**

One of the outcomes of the SEN monitoring visits is to identify good practice in relation to SEN provision. With the permission of the headteacher, this information will be shared with other schools and published on the LA's website.

### **(iii) Training, advice and support**

- A comprehensive and ongoing programme for continuing professional development in relation to all aspects of SEN is provided by CYPSPD.
- Individual and group consultancies focusing on specific aspects of SEN are also available for schools on request. (*for further information refer to the Continuing Professional Development [CPD] brochure.*)
- LA inclusion support services also provide a range of services to schools and include the following:
  - Educational Psychology Service
  - Learning Support Advisory Teachers
  - Sensory Inclusion Service (for hearing/visually impaired pupils)
  - Schools Multicultural Development Service
  - Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service
  - Education Welfare Service
  - Looked After Children's Team
  - Outreach services from special schools
  - Specific Speech and Language Impaired Children's Team (SSLIC)
  - West Midlands Consortium Services for Travelling Children, Schools and Families.

## **12. SPECIALIST PROVISION**

### **(i) Special schools**

- Severndale School, Shrewsbury - caters for pupils aged 3-19 with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and associated physical disability. The school also offers an outreach service to support mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with a range of SEN, including autism, physical disability, moderate and severe learning difficulties.
- The Woodlands School, Wem - caters for secondary aged pupils (11-16) with severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school offers an outreach service supporting mainstream and primary schools to meet the

needs of pupils with autism across the age range and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties during the Yr 6/7 transition period.

**(ii) Mainstream Schools**

In accordance with the LA's policy of inclusion, it is expected that the needs of the majority of pupils with SEN will be met in their local mainstream school with support from the specialist services and/or outreach from the special schools where appropriate. For a small number of pupils some additional specialist provision is provided:

- Thomas Adam's School, Wem - has a specialist provision for statemented pupils aged 11-16 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

Wherever practically possible, the LA will endeavour to make a local mainstream school accessible for a pupil with a physical disability. The LA Asset Management Plan and the LA Accessibility Strategy set out the strategic approach to improving accommodation and facilities throughout the county for pupils with a disability.

**13. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Shropshire LA acknowledges that the needs of the parents and the individual child are paramount and places great value on building positive relationships, working in partnership with parents and pupils.

The LA works closely with the Parent Partnership Service which is based at Telford and Wrekin Council for Voluntary Services.

**14. VOLUNTARY SERVICES**

Links with the voluntary services are maintained through the Parent Partnership Service.

**15. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be subject to annual review.

*Updated 6.6.2009*