



**ISLE of
WIGHT**
COUNCIL

**Directorate of Education and
Community Development**

POLICY

FOR

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

January 2000

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY (LEA)

In respect of Special Educational Needs (SEN), the LEA has a responsibility to:

- plan its overall special educational provision and review it periodically
- assess those pupils whose special needs may require a Statement of SEN
- ensure that the provision specified in the Statement of SEN has been made available
- initiate annual reviews of every Statement of SEN
- monitor the performance of its maintained schools and Support Services
- identify, assess and, when appropriate, make provision for all pre-school children who may have special educational needs.

The LEA also has a duty consult with schools, Health and Social Services and voluntary organisations over its SEN Policy, which it must publish and keep under review.

THE LEA POLICY MODEL

The policy model adopted by the LEA has three key elements:

- **Philosophy:** relevant basic beliefs
- **Principles:** broad guidelines – general statements derived from the beliefs which can be interpreted by policy users to guide practice
- **Procedures:** practical details – operating routines and actions derived from the principles which cover the most common areas of policy application or critical events.

Updating of the policy and evaluation of its implementation will be undertaken through annual review by the LEA's SEN Management Group, with due reference to SEN initiatives contained within the Education Development Plan and associated planning documents.

Philosophy and Principles, consistent with the Statement of Principles and Purpose for the Isle of Wight Education Service, are presented within this document.

Procedures are contained within separate publications including the Pathway and Annual Review manuals.

THE DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Isle of Wight LEA recognises that all children have learning needs and that for some these individual needs become special educational needs.

Whilst it is recognised that children with SEN are not a readily defined and discrete group, for the purposes of its policy the LEA adopts the legal definition provided by the 1996 Education Act:

"A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LEA
- c) is under five and falls within the definition of (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for the child.

A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- a) for a child over two, educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for the child's age in maintained schools, other than special schools, in the area
- b) for a child under two, educational provision of any kind."

Part IV, Section 312, Education Act 1996

The LEA recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs which should be reflected in a continuum of provision and that good practice in special needs goes to the very core of good teaching and learning.

Only in a small minority of cases will a child have special educational needs of a severity or complexity which require a Statement of SEN.

PHILOSOPHY

The key values and beliefs which underpin the Isle of Wight SEN Policy are:

- equal value and respect for all
- recognition of individual differences with special regard for children with special educational needs
- equal opportunity for all
- life-long development through the provision of appropriate learning opportunities
- a constant search for improvement in the quality of service
- commitment to both the spirit and statutory requirements of legislation, including partnership between pupils, parents and professionals

PRINCIPLES

Identification and Assessment

- Identification and assessment of special educational needs will follow the guidance within the Code of Practice.
- There will be clear guidance for parents, professionals and the voluntary sector on the identification and assessment of children and young people with special educational needs, including arrangements for statutory assessment in accordance with the 1996 Education Act.
- Administrative procedures will be kept as simple as possible with paperwork being kept to a minimum.
- Early identification of special educational needs and intervention will be a priority.
- Procedures for inter-service and cross-agency referrals will be agreed mutually and reviewed regularly.
- Every consideration will be given to the views of parents in the assessment and decision making processes. Children and young people with special educational needs will also be consulted whenever possible.

The Role of Mainstream Schools, Support Centres and Special Schools

- The LEA is committed to an inclusive approach to education in which all children and young people with special educational needs have an entitlement to education within the Island community. They will attend their local mainstream schools where parents want such placements and appropriate support can be provided.
- Where special school facilities are required, these will, wherever possible, be provided on the Island. Specialist provision, whether arranged within mainstream schools, support centres or special schools, will be broad enough to cater for students with a wide range of special educational needs.
- Special schools and support centres should be closely linked with mainstream provision with staff working together to maximise inclusion.
- There should be continuity and progression within and between the different phases of education and across mainstream school, special school and support centre provision. To facilitate the exchange of information and to avoid duplication, an agreed form of special educational needs recording should be used.
- Children and young people with special educational needs should have a broad, balanced, appropriately presented and intellectually stimulating curriculum. It should be relevant to their needs with the fullest possible entitlement to the National Curriculum. Where additional support is required, it should, in most circumstances, be deployed within the classroom and in support of the class/subject teacher.
- All schools should have a policy for special educational needs, approved by governors who should also be mindful of their duties under the 1996 Education Act. Flexible and responsive whole school approaches will need to be developed which ensure coherent patterns of provision.
- There should be a commitment to staff development within the field of special educational needs. The value of collaboration between schools should be recognised and the resources within special schools and support centres should be seen as a community provision.
- Schools should seek the active support and participation of parents.

Co-ordination and Management of Support Services and Collaboration with other Agencies

- There will be clearly identified procedures to enable schools to gain access to outside specialised support and advice when they require it.
- The LEA will seek operational links with other agencies in planning, managing and developing Support Services to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
- The development of LEA Support Services will be co-ordinated to offer coherent support to schools and to children and young people throughout the age range.
- All SEN Support Services will collaborate in offering partnership with parents.
- Schools should take a central role in the co-ordination of any external support.
- As far as possible SEN Support Services will aim to foster effective practice in the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

Children at Independent Schools, in Hospital or at Home

- Independent, non-maintained or other LEA special school placements will only be considered where Local Authority resources and arrangements cannot provide the essential support and facilities required to meet the pupils' needs within the Island community of maintained schools.
- Where children are educated away from home, steps will be taken to maintain contact with the home, the local community and where appropriate the local school.
- The arrangements for pupils being educated in independent and non-maintained special schools will be regularly monitored by appropriate LEA staff to ensure that:
 - the schools and institutions are effective and maintain appropriate standards
 - the full range of the pupils' needs are being met through a broad, balanced curriculum and range of activity
 - access to the National Curriculum is maintained as far as possible
 - the provision is as normal and unrestrictive as possible and the pupils are not isolated
 - planned re-integration occurs wherever feasible
- The arrangements for pupils being educated in hospital or at home because of health or other reasons, including exclusion from school, will be regularly monitored and have regard to:
 - any identified special educational needs
 - the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum within the constraints of the individual pupils' circumstances
 - the need for curriculum continuity
 - the relative isolation which may be experienced
 - the re-integration of pupils within mainstream settings wherever possible
- It is recognised that children being educated at hospital and at home are at a disadvantage educationally and that proper care will be taken in order that learning opportunities are not limited by their situation. Particular regard will be given to their needs when they reach the end of statutory schooling.

Monitoring of Performance

- There should be internal monitoring of each school's SEN arrangements and curricular provision against published criteria. Such monitoring will take account of the school's development plan and SEN policy, the LEA's SEN policy and the finance delegated under LMS arrangements.
- In carrying out its responsibilities towards children with special educational needs the LEA will:
 - monitor how effectively schools and governing bodies fulfil their duties
 - keep its arrangements and provision for SEN under review
 - review the effective use of its resources
- The work of the Support Services will be regularly reviewed against service level statements and declared objectives.
- Where the LEA determines special educational provision through a Statement of SEN, such provision will be clearly specified and arrangements will be established to ensure that it is appropriately implemented.
- For children with special educational needs but without a Statement of SEN, the appropriateness of provision should be ensured through the school's arrangements for individual education planning and reviewing, including parental and Support Services involvement.
- All schools should establish procedures to ensure regular monitoring and review of pupils with special educational needs, whether or not they have a Statement of SEN.
- The LEA will secure arrangements in accord with the Code of Practice to ensure that all pupils with a Statement of SEN are reviewed at least annually.
- The views of the parents and children will always be sought within the statutory review process as well as those of the professionals involved.