



Meeting Individual Needs

Special Educational Needs Policy 2005

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1 Introduction

This paper outlines the key components of the LEA's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy to enable Leicester City Council to take forward a modern inclusive agenda to support all pupils with SEN.

It outlines its adopted key definitions of inclusion, principles and statutory responsibilities. The policy will underpin any future developments relevant to the meeting of Special Educational Needs in Leicester.

The policy builds upon principles previously agreed by Council, together with relevant government legislation and guidance.

Meeting Special Needs is one of the Education Department's four agreed purposes. This means supporting all schools to respond even more effectively to the demands of pupils with special educational needs, both those with and those without statements.



2 *Inclusion*

The LEA aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve, through meeting individual needs, promoting attainment and progression across their school careers. This will occur within a continuum of provision.

The LEA accepts the UNESCO Salamanca Statement on Special Educational Needs and the principle of inclusion set out in DfES documents “Excellence for all Children : Meeting Special Educational Needs”, and “Removing Barriers to Achievement” as the cornerstone of its policy. The LEA’s SEN Policy is consistent with the requirements of: the SEN and Disability Act 2001; the SEN Code of Practice 2001; and the Children Act 2004.

By inclusion, the LEA means “not only that pupils with SEN should, wherever possible receive their education in a mainstream school, but that they should join fully with their peers in the curriculum and life of the school” (DfES Excellence for All Children – Page 44).

Consequently, the LEA aims to develop an inclusive ethos that will extend the opportunities for all pupils to benefit from teaching and learning of the highest quality. The quality of skills and experience within specialised provision will be used, wherever possible, to benefit all children.



3 Principles

The SEN policy is derived from the LEA's vision of learning and success for all, namely, "the need to invest significantly in raising achievement, safeguarding the public and creating a sense of well-being across all communities". It underpins Education and Lifelong Learning strategic goals, set out in the Strategic Plan, in the following ways:

A. Raising Educational Standards

The SEN policy is an integral part of achieving excellence for all children educated in the city. Special Educational provision will be designed to assure progress and personal achievement for all pupils through early identification and assessment, intervention, regular review and responsiveness to pupils' changing needs.

B. Transforming and modernising provision across the city.

The LEA seeks to ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs are able to participate in the full range of learning opportunities. The nature of special provision within the City of Leicester will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is responsive to the changing needs of individual pupils and the developing capability of all schools to meet their needs.

The wide-range of need will be reflected in the broad spectrum of provision which builds upon that available in the child's locality. Decisions about the deployment of resources will focus primarily upon matching the curriculum and other provision to each child's needs, regardless of settings¹, rather than placing pupils into categories.

C. Improving outcomes for children and young people

Leicester's SEN Policy is based upon valuing individuals and responding to their diversity. This includes pupils' different cultural backgrounds and experiences, their different learning styles and patterns of attainment.

All children and young people should have equal entitlement to the opportunities offered by education. This includes an entitlement to a broad, balanced curriculum (as outlined in the LEA Curriculum Policy) which incorporates the national curriculum and is relevant to children's individual needs.

Decisions about the deployment of resources will reflect Leicester City Council's commitment to equal opportunities, to achieve the provision of inclusive education so that, wherever appropriate, pupils will be educated within local mainstream schools.

This means that all educational provision will be organised and developed in a manner that provides maximum access for all pupils.

D. Widen Participation

The education process in Leicester will involve children and young people and their parents/carers fully in identifying and developing ways of planning and supporting individual need.

The LEA expects schools, services and officers to work collaboratively with other council services and, where possible, with the voluntary sector, Health professionals, early years providers and other agencies, to ensure that the best interests of all children are served.

E. Strengthen organisational capacity

The aim of the city's special needs policy is to increase the capability of all schools to meet the diverse needs of all pupils. Where placement at a special school is agreed to be in a child's best interest, the school will offer a broad range of inclusion opportunities as part of each pupil's educational experience.



¹ The term "setting" in this context is taken to encompass all provision where children receive education – mainstream and special classes, on/off-site provision, education otherwise and so on.



4 Statutory

Responsibilities

The LEA and schools have clear duties with respect to identifying and meeting special educational needs.

- A. The respective statutory responsibilities of schools and the LEA in meeting pupil's special educational needs are currently laid down in part four of the Education Act 1996.
- B. The general duties of school governing bodies towards pupils with SEN are covered by Section 317.
- C. The powers of the LEA to identify, assess and make provision for individual pupils with SEN are contained within sections 321 to 324 of the Act.
- D. The practical guidance for schools and LEAs to assist them in carrying out these functions, the SEN Code of Practice and the further requirements to have regard to the code in so doing, are provided for in Section 33.

In line with its statutory responsibilities, the LEA has:

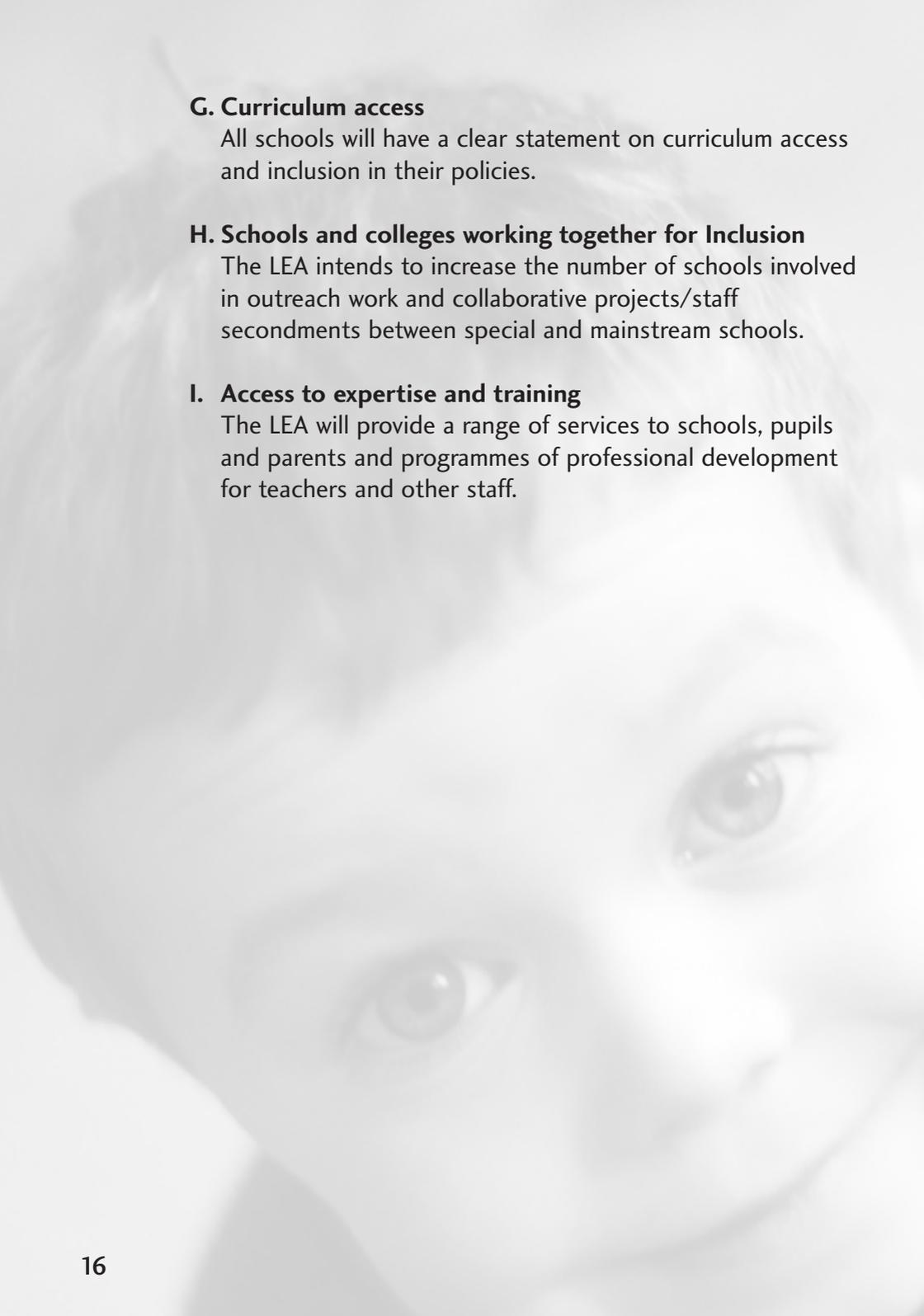
- introduced a financial system to support this policy. This reflects the recognition that effective SEN practices require a significant and transparent financial foundation to support the range of facilities and arrangements that the LEA anticipates from schools;

- established, in partnership with schools, a shared understanding that all schools will deploy and manage their delegated budgets to support their range of facilities and arrangements which meet the individual needs of their pupils;
- published and kept under review, its procedures and arrangements for identifying, assessing, monitoring and reviewing pupils with SEN. These outline the expectations, roles and responsibilities of LEA, services and schools;
- provided guidance to support the transition of pupils;
- made available clear information on the Parent Partnership scheme and mediation, procedures for appeals and for making complaints;
- worked with schools to ensure that they specify, within their SEN policies, the way in which they promote inclusion and offer all pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- This includes providing:
 - support and challenge
 - written advice, guidance and training
 - supporting schools in developing self-evaluation
 - promoting inclusive approaches to curriculum delivery

5 Aims

of the SEN Policy

- A. High levels of achievement for all**
To provide effective learning progress and development to enable all pupils to achieve high standards.
- B. Developing inclusive schools which meet diverse Special Educational Needs**
To meet pupil's needs increasingly within their own communities.
- C. To secure a range of provision to meet pupils' individual needs**
To put more resources into mainstream schools and to re-examine existing provision to ensure that an appropriate range of facilities is available.
- D. High levels of satisfaction and participation – pupils, parents and carers**
To develop parental and pupil involvement in education.
- E. Common vision and understanding; clear responsibilities; consistent practice and procedures.**
The Local Education Authority guidance sets out the roles and responsibilities of schools and the LEA, in supporting all pupils in City schools.
- F. Transparent resourcing**
Schools have more direct control over money for pupils with SEN, including those with Statements.



G. Curriculum access

All schools will have a clear statement on curriculum access and inclusion in their policies.

H. Schools and colleges working together for Inclusion

The LEA intends to increase the number of schools involved in outreach work and collaborative projects/staff secondments between special and mainstream schools.

I. Access to expertise and training

The LEA will provide a range of services to schools, pupils and parents and programmes of professional development for teachers and other staff.

6

Monitoring

and Reporting Arrangements

The policy and aims described here inform the LEA's priorities as outlined in its Meeting Individual Needs Strategy. This is monitored and reported on regularly.



Education and Lifelong Learning Department

Marlborough House • 38 Welford Road • Leicester • LE2 7AA

Tel (0116) 252 7807 • Fax (0116) 223 2685

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