

STRATEGY FOR THE INCLUSION OF PUPILS WITH SEN – REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe Halton's progress over the last three years in establishing an ethos of inclusive learning for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) in Halton. It will describe what work has been undertaken in shaping service provision within the borough. It will also highlight the areas which require further development in ensuring Halton establishes a graduated approach where Special Educational Need (SEN) provision is no longer seen as an 'add on' but as part of an overall strategy to facilitate and promote the learning opportunities and improved outcomes of all children and young people in Halton. Critically, it has as its revised focus a stronger emphasis upon "narrowing the gap" in attainment and achievement for those most at risk to achieving poor learning outcomes.

The C&YP Directorate, with partner agencies, has worked hard to establish structures and relationships with professionals, agencies, organisations and most importantly schools through regular consultation. This has provided solid foundations upon which to further develop inclusive learning in Halton. These developments and aims became Halton's Revised Strategy for Inclusion of Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities that will then become aligned to the developing **Learning Halton Strategy**.

It is acknowledged that this is a complex task, and professionals remain committed to establishing a transparent process through this strategy and action plan by providing both the acknowledgement of success achieved so far as well as offering the direction Halton must take over the coming months and years if it is to succeed in developing a range of provision that is responsive to the continuum of need experienced by children and young people within the borough and which can strengthen conditions for further "narrowing the gap" in attainment and achievement.

Therefore this document must be viewed as an enabling strategy where we remove the concept of Special Educational Needs and replace it with the personalised learning agenda and where children and young people are seen primarily as learners because children's needs must be defined by the environment in which they learn as well as by their individual needs.

Learning Halton Strategy:

This strategy embodies the principle that everyone in Halton must be seen as a learner and establishes the following aims:

- *To improve achievement attainment attendance participation and life chances for all in Halton#*
- *To improve opportunities for the Halton community to embrace the every child matters agenda*
- *To develop a unified strategy for all phases of education*

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Children Act 2004 heralded the arrival of services for children and young people with the promise of joined up and coherent services for children and their families. This is of especial importance to children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Underpinning this act are the aims of Every Child Matters and 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' (DfES: 2004). This publication is a long-term strategy for special educational needs. The Government, through this publication sought to encourage the promotion of the idea that a child or young person with LDD is first and foremost a member of the school community and in this, is no different to any other pupil.

The goals of Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004) are.

- *To see schools with the confidence to innovate and with the skills and specialist support they need to meet the needs of all pupils successfully*
- *To see special schools providing education for those children and young people with the most severe and complex needs and sharing their specialist knowledge to support inclusion in mainstream schools*
- *To see schools working together to support the inclusion of all children from their local community backed up by good quality specialist advice from the local authority and health services in line with every child matters*
- *To see parents with confidence that in choosing a mainstream school their child will receive a good education and will be a valued member of the school community.*

PRESENCE:

Is concerned with where learners are educated and whether they attend regularly and arrive punctually. In line with Government policy, we believe wherever possible, all learners should be enabled to receive their education in a mainstream setting

The principles and aims of Removing Barriers are now embodied in the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (DDA) which amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to include the provision of education. The DDA requires that schools:

- Not to treat disabled children less favourably
- To make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage

These aspects were translated into practice regionally by the North West Regional Partnership for SEN, which adopted the principles of Presence Participation and Achievement.

PARTICIPATION

Is concerned with the equality of educational experiences of all learners. It includes their feelings of involvement and value. It also concerns listening to their views of the quality of the services they receive

'Promoting inclusive education involves identifying and removing barriers to the presence, participation and achievement of all children and young people. We believe that this commitment embraces a fundamental responsibility to place a particular emphasis on those learners who may be at risk of underachievement marginalisation or exclusion.'

HALTON CONTEXT

In essence the factors noted in the previous section combine to ensure that retained services and outreach support should primarily be supportive of the school, its staffing and its systems rather than simply providing direct support to children. Only then can Halton deliver a programme of personalised learning that embodies the flexible curriculum so outcomes for children and young people with LDD are improved.

Halton has embraced the key objectives in Removing Barriers in its Inclusive Strategy for LDD and in its review of SEN in Halton. These include:

- *Early intervention through improved early years provision and through reduced reliance on statements in mainstream schools*
- *The develop of specialist provision and services*
- *Ensuring a continuum of provision embracing both special and mainstream schools*
- *Improved monitoring accountability and self-evaluation by schools.*

ACHIEVEMENT

Is concerned with the learning outcomes across the whole curriculum. It includes activities inside and outside of the classroom and therefore judgements should not be made solely on the basis of test and examination results

In attempting to deliver this programme Halton has:

- **Built increased confidence in schools** to use the totality of resources open to them when managing the diversity of learning needs within their school community. In doing this we have already **seen a reduction in the number of requests of statutory assessments in the borough and a reduction in the overall percentage of pupils with statements (Annexe 1)**. As a result of this reduction in statutory assessments we have been able **to re-invest the savings in earlier intervention such as School Action Plus Enhanced**. This has supported children in maintained pre school settings, as well as in the earlier years of primary education.
- Undertaken an assessment of performance from 2003 against the 2006 Key Stage 3 in English, reading, writing, maths and science. This showed that the gap is continuing to narrow with a high percentage of those achieving below the national standards at key stage 2 subsequently progressing beyond expectation at Key Stage 3. Therefore **reduced statements in the borough has not had a detrimental effect on pupil achievement**
- Monitored the learning outcomes of the most vulnerable learners and succeeded in narrowing the gap.

- **Restructured services to ensure advice and support can be offered on a preventative basis**, this includes outreach support from special school settings, thereby making the best use of existing specialist provision including special schools.
- **Developed a system using Sure Start funding to support young children with additional and exceptional need in private and voluntary settings**. This ensures equality of support across learning provision within Halton.
- Undergone **recent OFSTED inspections, which have praised the support for pupils with LDD** in the majority of schools in Halton. Some have been described as outstanding. High percentage of schools graded as good or outstanding by OFSTED for progress of pupils with LDD.
- Made significant efforts, which has seen a **significant reduction in the number of pupils educated in special schools outside the borough (Annexe 2)**.
- Ensured the **saving of £427,645 has been recycled to meet the needs of pupils with SEN earlier**. Moreover this money has been distributed to those schools identified as having the greatest need (Annexe 3).
- **Signed up to the Every Disabled Child Matters Pledge**
- **Increased in the numbers of pupils having dual placements** so that they receive the specialist support as and when required as well as experiencing learning in a mainstream school community. This has been achieved through increased support and outreach from special schools.
- **A structure that requires the views of the child** to be obtained through their Statutory Assessment Reviews and Reviews of their Individual Education Plan.

EDCM pledge for Local Authorities is:

Families with disabled children to have ordinary lives

Disabled children to matter as much as all other children

Disabled children and their families to be fully included in society

All disabled children and their families to get the right services and support no matter where they live

Poverty amongst disabled children and their families to be eliminated by 2020

An education system which meets the needs of each child and enables them to meet their full potential

Disabled children and their families to shape the way services are planned, commissioned and delivered.

- Begun to **align the practices of supporting pupils with LDD to the aims of the developing Learning Halton Strategy**. This strategy supports parents and children and engages them in the planning for individual children as well as in the management of the provision. It will enable an openness and partnership to work between schools and the local authority.
- **Acknowledged that we need to re-focus under utilised provision** to ensure we meet the needs of low incidence LDD within a mainstream setting. This includes provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Language and Communication Difficulties, Hearing Impairment, Behaviour and Social and Emotional Difficulties, Nurturing and Assessment and Observation.
- **Recognised we must take the resource to the child to meet identified learning needs.**
- **LDD is identified as a priority** within Halton and therefore is embedded within Halton's Children and Young People's Plan.
- Acknowledged the importance of maintaining the support which exist between School Improvement Partners whatever the organisational structure and that this support is strongly linked to National Strategy partnership working.
- Recognise that the labels of SEN and LDD can become barriers to achievement as they look at concerns and problems, which prevent or alter learning. **Good practice in SEN and LDD should be good practice for all children.**

Halton still needs to

- **Identify areas, which need greater scrutiny.** In particular recognising we have provision within Halton that is under utilised. This provision must be refocused to ensure we have appropriate resources that are fit for purpose.
- **Agree process to recycle the resources in under used provision** to best meet low incidence needs within the mainstream school community. To achieve this we will involve and engage with Head Teachers throughout the process.
- **Develop resource bases that are flexible** to provide a small number of children and young people with full time or part time education
- **Develop awareness of purpose and expertise of resource bases** and the cohort of children and young people these bases are able to support, specifically low incidence needs.

Primary and Secondary Resource Bases are centres of expertise that will be sufficiently resourced and staffed to support children young people and schools both in the base. These bases can also support outreach work.

- **Continue to build partnerships** with schools which are based on trust and respect for the expertise and knowledge of all partners engaged in delivering the Every Child Matters and Personalised Learning agenda
- Acknowledged the need to **develop cross agency training**.
- **Develop the strategic coordination of all existing outreach support services** to avoid duplication
- **Promote the use of Halton's Integrated Commissioning Framework within all educational settings** to aid transparency and the continued provision of good quality services that provide value for money.
- **Continue to remove the concept of Statements** as the key to unlocking resources to meet the learning needs of the child.
- **Continue the development of systems and process that encourage evidence based needs assessment**. Thus enabling a transparent process for the application of additional support and resources to facilitate earlier intervention. This will be based on an inclusive model of managing the needs of all children.

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

We recognise that the relationship between all agencies and organisations working with children and young people with LDD is key to improving outcomes and “narrowing the gap”. No single agency can manage in isolation as each aspect has something unique and valuable to offer. Therefore the next phase of developing inclusive learning in Halton will be how to enable and empower these organisations and agencies to build on the accomplishments made so far and to then use this learning to embed both the principles and practices of inclusive education that will see support for children and young people with LDD shaped around their needs and wishes.

Halton has identified a number of objectives it must achieve to realise its goal of inclusive education. These strategic objectives provide the foundation for the action plans.

These objectives are:

- Improve the levels of educational achievement and attainment for pupils with LDD who may be at risk of underachievement.
- Maximise opportunities for all pupils to be educated in mainstream schools alongside their peers and to recognise this as their entitlement
- Specialist provision to facilitate and promote inclusive practice, in particular develop processes that ensure the voice of the child is represented in the design, delivery and planning for inclusive learning in Halton.
- Pupil needs met early and effectively in line with a graduated approach
- SEN resources including those held by the Local Authority and those delegated to schools are allocated consistently and efficiently
- Partnership with parents and carers and other agencies to deliver the Every Child Matters agenda
- Partnership with all agencies to ensure pupils with the most complex needs have access to appropriate highly specialised provision where necessary.

These strategic objectives will be met through the Service Plans and Team Action Plans.