

**REPORT TO:** Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children & Young People Directorate

**SUBJECT:** Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN  
- Review

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide information on the progress towards the implementation of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) That the Board considers progress to-date; and
- (2) Supports the continued direction of the Strategy as a key lever to narrowing the gap in learning outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In 2003 the Executive Board supported the development of a Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN. That Strategy sought to re-align the deployment of SEN resources across the infrastructure of funding formula, structural arrangements, service structures and critically identification and assessment processes to ensure that those children and young people with special educational needs had their needs identified and addressed earlier. The context to the Strategy was Halton's position as having a high percentage of children with Statements of SEN and a high percentage of children attending special schools both in and outside of the Borough. A key focus of the Strategy was to improve the ability of the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory functions with regard to SEN, to secure value for money in this and to improve the capacity of mainstream schools and other settings to better meet identify and meet the needs of children with SEN in their setting.
- 3.2 Since 2003, significant progress has been made in implementing the Strategy and the Board has received, periodically, updates on developments.

- 3.3 Implementation of the Strategy posed significant challenges, not least in addressing long-standing practices across agencies, within schools and within Local Authority services also.
- 3.4 Attached at Appendix 1 is a review of the Strategy, that summarises progress to-date and sets the strategic direction for the next 3 years.
- 3.5 Key achievements over the preceding 3 years have been:
- A reduction in the reliance upon Statements of SEN as the means to securing additional resources for children;
  - A reduction in the % of children with Statements of SEN (Annexe 1 and 2);
  - Release of resources earlier without the need to recourse to a Statement;
  - Performance in the top quartile in the issuing of proposed statements within 18 weeks;
  - A reduction in the number of children being educated in special provision out of the Borough;
  - A re-cycling of fees saved from out of borough placements to schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEN earlier (Annexe 3);
  - Continued evidence of narrowing the gap in attainment for the most vulnerable learners, particularly at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Narrowing the gap in educational outcomes for vulnerable children is a priority within the Children and Young People's Plan. While a focus of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN has had to be upon tackling the infrastructure and funding mechanisms to address children's needs, a test of the Strategy from here must be upon the extent to which the changes to infrastructure now support and promote improving the learning outcomes for those pupils.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Progress is now being made in recycling resources previously deployed to fund expensive placements out of borough, to address the needs of children earlier and in their local school settings. It is anticipated that implementation of the identified actions contained in the revised strategy will enable the further release of SEN resources to need earlier.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The focus upon 'narrowing the gap in educational outcomes for vulnerable children' gives a framework now against which the success of the Strategy can now be measured. Historically SEN indicators

have focussed upon process measures which have not then enabled a focus upon outcomes for the children and young people themselves.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Not applicable.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Not applicable.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Not applicable.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Not applicable.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

Failure to implement the Strategy will result in pupil's SEN not being identified and the gap in attainment widening for vulnerable children and value for money not being secured.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The Strategy promotes equality of opportunity and access to high quality learning provision that can meet the needs of children with diverse needs within their local community.

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
SEN Review, including SEN Strategic Plan 2003-2006	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher
LA OFSTED Inspection, 2004	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher
SEN Review – Executive Board, Jan 2006	Municipal Building	Committee Services
SEN Review – Executive Board, March 2006	Municipal Building	Committee Services
Children and Young People's Plan	Grosvenor House	Lorraine Butcher