

# *Strategy for Special Educational Needs Inclusion*



*Raising Standards for all Children  
2004 - 2008*

*September 2004*

*Strategy for Special Educational Needs Inclusion:  
Raising Standards for all Children 2004 - 2008*

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# Part A - Background

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## Guiding Principles

The Council's vision for Gateshead is set out in its document Towards 2010. The strategy for special educational needs inclusion supports this vision and, in particular, the outcomes identified for children and young people. These are for "children and young people to be empowered and supported to develop to their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society". Specifically, the SEN Inclusion Strategy sets out the means by which the Council's SEN<sup>1</sup> and Inclusion Policies are to be realised.

The Council, through its SEN and Inclusion Policies, is committed to the principles of inclusive education and has endorsed the Salamanca Statement<sup>2</sup> on special needs education. Through these policies, it supports the principle of entitlement for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum with high expectations for all and seeks to ensure that its policies and its procedures, advice, guidance and resources support inclusion.

To achieve its vision, the Council aims to provide the highest quality of education for all children and young people and to

offer a continuum of educational provision that:

- Promotes and supports inclusion and ensures children's needs are met in as inclusive a setting as possible;
- Involves parents, carers and the children themselves in planning, developing and implementing provision;
- Celebrates diversity and is responsive to individual needs and differences;
- Provides equality of opportunity and ensures all children are valued equally;
- Promotes the highest standards of achievement for all children and is directed to the development of the child's abilities to their fullest potential; and,
- Recognises that learning is a continuous process that goes on throughout life.

The Council recognises that it cannot meet this challenge alone and must work closely and in partnership with all those who have a stake in the education service in Gateshead.

<sup>1</sup> *Special Educational Needs*

<sup>2</sup> *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, UNESCO (1994)*

## National Context

In February 2004, the Government published a new long-term strategy for SEN "Removing Barriers to Achievement". Key themes and areas for development identified in this government strategy are incorporated in Gateshead's strategy.

They are:

- early intervention;
- removing barriers to learning;
- raising expectation and achievement; and,
- delivering improvements in partnership

Early priorities will include:

- delegation of SEN resources to support early intervention and inclusive practice;
- reducing reliance on statements;
- strategic planning to ensure a spectrum of provision to meet the needs of local children, including special school reorganisations;
- improving the availability of specialist advice and support to schools;
- improving information to parents on arrangements for SEN by the LEA and in local schools; and,
- reducing the bureaucracy associated with SEN.

The recent Children Bill published in May 2004, which followed the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters', articulates further the government's vision for children to fulfil their potential. This strategy seeks to address some of the measures proposed within the Bill.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 promotes the right of children with SEN to attend a mainstream school. This right to mainstream education is further supported by the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (1999) and the revised framework for the inspection of schools, Evaluating Educational Inclusion (2000).

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, 2001 sets out guidance on policies and procedures. The principles of the Code are as follows:

- 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.

Also, the Audit Commission in 2002 produced three guidance documents:

- Special Educational Needs: A Mainstream Issue.
- Statutory assessment and statements of SEN: in need of review?
- Managing Special Educational Needs: A self-review handbook for LEAs.

These documents suggest that there are many children for whom the SEN label might no longer be appropriate or necessary as schools become more adept at responding to the diversity of needs in today's classrooms. This strategy seeks to address this issue.

## Local Context

### The Borough

Gateshead is geographically the largest of the 5 local authorities in Tyne & Wear, with an urban centre and rural surroundings. It has a population of 190,700 (mid-2002 population estimate, ONS<sup>3</sup>), although the population has been in decline in recent years. Currently, there are 46,100 people aged between 0 and 19 years, with a school population of 29,500. The number of young people is expected to fall over the next 10 years.

There is a rising number of people from black and minority ethnic communities living in Gateshead. In 1991, only 0.8% (Census 1991) of residents belonged to these groups. In 2001, this had risen to 1.6% compared to the national average of 9.1% (Census 2001). In addition, there is a large orthodox Jewish community which is estimated to have a population of around 4,000.

A diverse range of socio-economic factors affect the different communities that make up the borough. As with other parts of the North-East, industrial decline in mining and heavy industry left a legacy of unemployment and low income. Consequently, while the overall unemployment rate of 3.4% in Gateshead is approaching the UK average of 2.8% (June 2004, TWRI<sup>4</sup>), individual wards experience unemployment levels of up to 7.8%. Around 30% of all households are in receipt of council tax benefit. The ODPM<sup>5</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 shows that 10 of Gateshead's 22 wards contain areas that fall within the 10% most deprived in England for income. The same index gives Gateshead a rank of 26 for the average deprivation score, out of 354 districts in England (where 1 is the most deprived).

Despite these challenging circumstances, the borough is fiercely proud of its achievements and is aspirational for its community. There are growing high-tech and service industries and significant investment has been attracted to provide regeneration in employment, sports and cultural facilities. The Gateshead arts and cultural area is expected to attract £300m of investment. The development of the Gateshead Quays with the opening in 2001 of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the Baltic Centre for the Contemporary Arts in 2002, and the Sage Music Centre Gateshead, due to be completed in 2004, all provide exciting opportunities for future development.

### Educational Provision in Gateshead

There are 75 mainstream schools providing for primary aged pupils in Gateshead. Of these 5 are infant schools and 5 are junior schools. 46 of the schools have nursery classes and there is one nursery school. In addition, there are 20 playgroups, 18 full day-care nurseries, 2 childminders and the Jewish Nursery all accessing the education grant. All of these pre-school settings have a SENCO<sup>6</sup> attached.

The 7 primary schools, two junior schools and one infant school listed below are additionally resourced to provide for pupils with statements of special educational needs:

- Crookhill Community Primary School  
Moderate learning difficulties  
(Key Stage 2)
- Glynwood Community Primary School  
Moderate learning difficulties  
(Key Stage 2)
- Lindisfarne Community Primary School  
Speech and language difficulties/  
Autistic spectrum disorder  
(Key Stages 1 and 2)

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics

<sup>4</sup> Tyne and Wear Research and Information

<sup>5</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

<sup>6</sup> Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

- Kells Lane Primary School Specific learning difficulties (Key Stage 2)
- Harlow Green Infants School Visual Impairment (Key Stage 1)
- Harlow Green Junior School Visual Impairment (Key Stage 2)
- Roman Road Primary School Moderate learning difficulties (Key Stage 2)
- Rowlands Gill Junior school Moderate learning difficulties (Key Stage 2)
- St Wilfrid's RC Primary School Moderate learning difficulties (Key Stage 2)
- Tyne View Community Primary School Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (Key Stages 1 and 2)
- Furrowfield School. Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (Key Stages 3 and 4)
- Gibside School. General learning difficulties/ Autistic spectrum disorder (Key Stages 1 and 2)
- Hill Top School. Moderate learning difficulties/ Autistic spectrum disorder (Key Stages 3 and 4)
- The Cedars School. Physical difficulties/ communication difficulties (Reception to Year 11 with an assessment nursery class)

There are 10 secondary comprehensive schools of which the two listed below are additionally resourced for pupils with statements of special educational needs as a result of moderate learning difficulties:

- Hookergate School (Key Stages 3 and 4)
- Thomas Hepburn Community Comprehensive School (Key Stages 3 and 4)

The following six special schools make provision for those children in Gateshead with the most severe and complex special educational needs:

- Dryden School. Severe learning difficulties (Key Stages 3 and 4)
- Eslington Primary School. Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (Years 2 to 6)

The LEA provides support to schools to assist them to meet the special educational needs of their pupils through its Psychological Service, SEN Support Service, Behaviour Support Service and Inspectors and Advisory teachers. There is also a Learning Support Service that provides services to primary, junior and infant schools on a 'buy-back' basis.

## Special Educational Needs in Gateshead

In January 2004, 3,245 children in Gateshead schools were reported to be at School Action (12.4% of pupils) and 811 children at School Action Plus (3.1% of pupils). [PLASC<sup>7</sup> data]

Also in January 2004, 982 children were the subjects of statements of special educational needs which is approximately 2.1% of the population of children and young people aged 0 to 19 years [DfES<sup>8</sup> Form SEN2 data]. This is a little below, but close to, the average for the region. The figure has risen steadily over most of the last 9 years (the years for which comparable figures are available) from 742 in 1996, although the current figure represents a small decline since January 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Pupil Level Annual School Census

<sup>8</sup> Department for Education and Skills

Of the 982 children with statements, 467 attended special schools (48%), with 83 of these attending non-maintained or independent special schools.

Overall, funding for SEN in Gateshead, both statemented and non-statemented, is marginally above the regional average. However, within this, funding per pupil in special schools is very favourable and sits at the upper end of the regional range.

During the year to 31 December, 2003, the number of children for whom a statement of SEN was made for the first time was 130 which is in line with previous years (130 in 2002, 134 in 2001, 155 in 2000 and 126 in 1999). As this is associated with an increase in the total number of children with statements, it suggests that there has been an increase in the average time for which statements are maintained either because they are made earlier in a child's school career or because more children with statements are staying on at school beyond the age of 16 years.

There is a rising trend in the number of requests for statutory assessment made by parents.

Over the last 8 years, just over 6 statements on average have been formally discontinued per year (i.e. for reasons other than school leaving or transferring to another LEA's area). An average of just under 3 children per year have moved from a special school placement to a mainstream placement. In both cases, there is wide variation from year to year but the figures have tended to be higher in more recent years.

## Trends in Special Educational Needs

Analysis of the categories of the statements made over the last 6 to 8 years highlights a number of key trends. The most significant change has been the number of children with statements for autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). After rising sharply in 1997 it has remained fairly constant at around 10 children per year. However, this increase is only now feeding through into the secondary school phase so the total number of children with statements for ASD could, therefore, be expected to continue to rise for at least another 3 or 4 years.

Similarly, the number of children with statements made for specific learning difficulties showed a significant increase around 1997 and 1998 and has remained at that higher level since. As with ASD, the increase has yet to feed through to all the year groups and the total number of children with statements for specific learning difficulties could, therefore, be expected to continue to rise for at least another 2 to 3 years.

The majority of statements made are either for behavioural, emotional or social difficulties (BESD) or general learning difficulties. While the number of statements made for children with general learning difficulties has been fairly constant, year on year, the number for children with BESD has shown a small rising trend.

## Completion of Statutory Assessments

Gateshead LEA has generally a good record of completing statutory assessments within the required timescale. Not including allowable exceptions, over each of the years between April 1996 to March 2000 the number of assessments completed within the time allowed only dipped below 90% once, a figure of 89% being recorded. Much poorer figures were recorded over the next two years, which could partly be attributed to difficulties recruiting to fill a number of vacancies that had arisen in the Psychological Service. The lowest figure was recorded in the year 2001 - 2002 when, not including allowable exceptions, 46.7% of assessments were completed in the time prescribed. This amounted to 20.6% of all assessments for that year. The situation improved markedly in 2002 - 2003, reaching 84% when allowable exceptions were excluded, but further improvements have, so far, proved difficult to achieve with the figure for 2003 - 2004 dipping to 79%.

## Appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal

During 2002, 8 appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (SEN Tribunal prior to September 2002) were registered by Gateshead parents. In 2003, there was a significant increase in appeals with 16 new cases being registered during the year. Of the 24 appeals notified during the two years, 12 were withdrawn by the parents, 2 were unopposed by the LEA, one was struck out and one dismissed. The remaining 8 appeals were upheld, at least in part. Of these 8 appeals, two were against the LEA's refusal to carry out a statutory assessment and a third

against the LEA's refusal to make a statement. Only one of the remaining decisions required more than relatively minor changes to the special educational provision to be made for the child. The increase in appeals to the SEN and Disability Tribunal seen in 2003 has not, so far, continued into 2004 with only 3 appeals being registered in the first 6 months of the year. Two of these appeals have, subsequently, been withdrawn by the parents.

## Development of the Strategy

In order to develop this strategy, a small working group of LEA officers carried out an audit of the provision, procedures and arrangements made for children in Gateshead with special educational needs.

In carrying out this audit and developing the strategy, reference was made to a number of key documents including the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Excellence For All Children: Meeting SEN (1997)
- Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action (1998)
- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001)
- Inclusive Schooling: Children With Special Educational Needs (2001)
- SEN and Disability Act (2001)
- Removing barriers to Achievement: The Governments Strategy for SEN (2004)

The audit included the following:

- A process of self-review based on the Ofsted Grade Criteria for Inspection Judgements
- An analysis of needs identified through statutory assessment
- An analysis of the provision made for children with statements of SEN
- A review of appeals made by Gateshead parents to the SEN and Disability Tribunal
- A review of Ofsted reports on Gateshead schools in relation to SEN.
- An analysis of performance against the LEA's targets in relation to SEN.

## Strategic Priorities

As a result of the audit described above, a range of strengths, weaknesses and areas for development were identified which were grouped under seven strategic priorities. These seven priorities are as follows:

### 1. Increased inclusion and improved attainments amongst children with SEN.

Providing an inclusive, effective, holistic and consistent approach to meeting individual needs across the Borough and raising the attainments of children with SEN.

### 2. Resources that are allocated fairly and give good value for money.

Ensuring that resources are allocated in a fair and transparent fashion and in a way that supports inclusion, prevention, early intervention and higher levels of achievement.

### 3. Flexible and timely responses to meeting children's special educational needs.

Ensuring that procedures are flexible and efficient and support good practice. Promoting trust between parents, schools and the LEA.

### 4. Availability of good quality information about the deployment of resources and the outcome of intervention that is used effectively to inform practice.

Monitoring and evaluating the progress of children with SEN. Working with schools to monitor and evaluate special educational provision and the deployment of resources.

### 5. Resources that support inclusion and are well matched to the range of special educational needs amongst children in Gateshead.

Developing provision to support inclusion. Responding effectively to trends in special educational needs. Reducing the number of educational placements in schools outside Gateshead.

### 6. Effective partnerships.

Ensuring that there is a trusting partnership with parents/carers in meeting their children's special educational needs. Working closely and effectively with the health and social care services and the voluntary sector.

### 7. A skilled workforce within schools and the LEA's support services that meets the needs of children with SEN effectively and ensures their educational progress.

Ensuring staff in schools and support services have the expertise they need to implement inclusive approaches to meeting special educational needs. Ensuring that high quality staff are recruited and retained within the Borough.

## How we will know the strategy is working - key outcomes

If the strategy is working, then the key outcomes we would expect to see are:

1. Higher levels of achievement by children with SEN.
2. Schools that welcome all children and are skilled in meeting SEN.
3. More children with SEN attending their local school, if their parents want it, and getting the support they need.
4. Earlier intervention with fewer children having persisting problems.
5. Fewer children having to go to special schools outside Gateshead.
6. Better inclusion of children and young people in their local communities.
7. More involvement of parents in planning for their children and better support to help them to participate fully.
8. Increased trust between parents, schools and the LEA.
9. More involvement of the children and young people themselves.
10. Fairer sharing out of extra support.
11. More effective allocation of resources and better value for money
12. Quicker decisions.
13. More children with SEN getting the resources they need without a statement.
14. Special schools working in partnership with mainstream schools to support inclusion.
15. Better information about children's progress and the sort of help that is most effective.
16. Easier access to all the support services.
17. Closer working arrangements with the health and social care services and the voluntary agencies.
18. Young people developing greater levels of independence.
19. More successful transition to life after leaving school.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review

### Monitoring

Progress in relation to the SEN Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored termly by the SEN Inclusion Strategy Group. This is an officer group with membership as follows:

- Head of Access and Inclusion
- Access and Inclusion Manager
- Behaviour Support Service Manager
- Individual Needs Service Manager
- Link Inspector, SEN and Inclusion
- Pupil and Parent Service Manager
- Principal Educational Psychologist

## Evaluation and review

The impact of the SEN Inclusion Strategy will be evaluated against the key outcomes on an annual basis by the SEN Inclusion Strategy Group who will consult with head teachers, school governors, parents and other stakeholders. To facilitate this, an overarching set of targets and performance indicators will be developed as a key action during the first year of the SEN Inclusion strategy. (See Action Plan 2004-2005, Action 4.1).

Following evaluation at the end of each school year, a review report will be produced and used as the basis for updating the action plan for the following year.

## Targets

Performance indicators and targets relevant to this strategy that are included in the Council's Annual Performance Plan are as follows:

Reference	Performance Indicator	Target 2004/5	Target 2007/8
BV 43a	Percentage of statements of special educational needs (SEN) issued by the authority in a financial year and prepared within 18 weeks, excluding those affected by "exceptions to the rule" under the SEN Code of Practice	93%	97%
BV43b	Percentage of statements of special educational needs (SEN) issued by the authority in a financial year and prepared within 18 weeks, including those affected by "exceptions to the rule" under the SEN Code of Practice	75%	78%
Local L2	Pupils 0-19 with statements of SEN as a percentage of all children.	1.87%	1.8%



## Part B - Strategic Priorities

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1. Increased inclusion and improved attainments amongst children with SEN.
2. Resources that are allocated fairly and give good value for money.
3. Flexible and timely responses to meeting children's special educational needs.
4. Availability of good quality information about the deployment of resources and the outcome of intervention that is used effectively to inform practice.
5. Resources that support inclusion and provision that is well matched to the range of special educational needs amongst children in Gateshead.
6. Effective partnerships.
7. A skilled workforce within schools and the LEA's support services that meets the needs of children with SEN effectively and ensures their educational progress.

## PRIORITY 1: Increased inclusion and improved attainments amongst children with SEN.

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### Where we want to be:

- The Council, Schools, Early Years Settings, the LEA Services, and partner agencies have a common understanding of the meaning and importance of inclusion and commitment to it, both as a goal for all children and as a basis for raising attainment.
- Individual needs are, as far as possible, met locally and in the mainstream sector.
- Parents have the necessary trust that an inclusive approach will be able to meet their children's individual needs effectively.
- Parents are fully involved in planning for their child's individual needs.
- Children are fully involved in all decision-making affecting them.
- The respective roles and responsibilities of schools, the LEA's services and other agencies in relation to meeting SEN are clear and well understood.
- The special educational needs of children are identified as early as possible and intervention is put in place to meet those needs.
- The needs of children with the most significant difficulties or disabilities are met in a highly effective, responsive and holistic fashion in close partnership with the parents and other agencies involved with the children and their families.

### Where we are now:

- Clear policies on SEN and Inclusion have been ratified by the council.
- Many schools show full commitment to inclusion but there is still variation in the level of commitment across the Borough as a whole.
- While some parents of children with SEN are strongly in favour of mainstream provision for their children, a significant number express a preference for special school placement. Many parents of children placed in special schools are strongly in favour of special school education.
- Special schools have established links with specific mainstream schools, although a broader role in relation to inclusion and outreach support remains to be established.
- The Council provides a full range of support services targeted on the needs of individual children. The services have a clear role to support inclusion, although issues of capacity and demand often prevent the early intervention required.
- Posts of Link Inspector (Inclusion and SEN) and Senior Educational Psychologist (Inclusion) have been established.
- There are two early excellence centres, one of which is a specialist centre for SEN, but both of which follow inclusive principles. With the development of children's centres a more joined up approach to the identification of SEN will be established for children in the age range 0 to 5 years.

- Voluntary agencies, such as the Pre-School Learning Alliance and Barnados collaborate and use their complementary skills in terms of provision and practice for meeting individual SEN.
- There are two area SENCOs working with 45 SENCOs in non-maintained early years settings. They enable the SENCOs to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as described in the SEN Code of Practice.
- The council and its partners have been awarded Children's Trust Pathfinder status. Implementation will initially focus on the needs of children with disabilities, but will move on to include child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and, ultimately, all children's services. From the outset, the Trust will also have a strategic role to play in the planning of all children's services.
- Enhance arrangements for involving parents in planning for their children and introduce improved methods for engaging children in decision-making affecting them.
- Achieve a clear agreement between schools and the LEA about their respective responsibilities for children with SEN and, particularly, the levels of support that should be made available at different levels of need.
- Ensure the delivery of services gives priority to early intervention, prevention and inclusion.
- Develop a system for the identification, recognition and celebration of good inclusive practice in schools, possibly based on a "Charter Mark" model.
- Work jointly with partners in the Council, Health and the voluntary sector to develop a Children's Trust. As part of this work establish a holistic approach to meeting needs, which will include a single point of access to services for parents of those children with the most significant difficulties and disabilities and common models of assessment<sup>9</sup>.

### **What we need to do:**

- Develop a shared understanding of inclusion amongst all stakeholders, including parents, through broadly based debate, effective communication of the strategic goals relating to inclusion and the promotion of inclusion through conferences, training courses and other high status events.

<sup>9</sup> This is the initial element of the Council's programme to establish a Children's Trust

## PRIORITY 2: Resources that are allocated fairly and give good value for money.

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### Where we want to be:

- The allocation of resources promotes early intervention and supports inclusion.
- The allocation of resources is based on objective criteria and carried out transparently and fairly, according to need. It is based on evidence of what is most cost effective in meeting needs and raising attainments and has the trust of parents, schools and other stakeholders.
- Wherever possible, the responsibility for resource allocation is devolved to the local level.
- Fewer children depend on formal statements of special educational needs to receive the support they require. Resources are allocated flexibly in a way that is not dependent on a heavily bureaucratic system.
- The number of children placed in out of Borough placements is much reduced because good quality provision is available within the Borough.
- There is close collaboration between the Learning and Culture services, including schools, the Community Based Services, the Health Trusts and others partners over the allocation of resources to children with the most severe and complex educational, social care and health needs.
- Effective financial and resource monitoring systems are in place making full use of ICT where appropriate.

### Where we are now

- Demand for resources to meet special educational needs is under continual pressure as a result of both increasing numbers of children with complex needs and increased expectations.
- Current arrangements for funding special provision in mainstream schools, support bases and special schools are inflexible and do not facilitate inclusion.
- Special provision in mainstream schools based on statements of SEN is individually negotiated and is able to take into account individual needs as well as the school context. However, it is not normally specified in detail in the statement and, as such, is not readily subject to scrutiny and evaluation.
- There has been a review of social disadvantage funding and funding for special educational provision that has established a clear formula for the allocation of non-statemented delegated funding.
- A banding system for allocating resources to meet individual children's needs has been agreed in principle but it remains to determine how this will be implemented in practice so as to avoid perverse incentives and to support inclusion.
- Other than those statements that lapse following a child's move out of Gateshead or the child leaving school, few statements are discontinued each year. At present, there are no clear criteria for ceasing to maintain a statement.

- Support from the Psychological Service is allocated on the basis of a proxy indicator of need. Support from the other LEA support services is largely based on a referral model or through statements of SEN.
- Learning and Culture and Community Based Services work together in planning for the most difficult to place children. There is a joint Educational Review Panel involving staff from both groups.
- Learning and Culture, Community Based Services and the Health Trusts have a common aim to reduce out of Borough placements, particularly those in distant schools, although further work is required on how this might be achieved in practice.
- While the number of children with statements is increasing, the number of statutory assessments initiated each year has remained constant but with a trend towards assessment at younger ages.
- After almost 2 years without any appeals to the SEN Tribunal being registered by parents there was an increase to 8 appeals in 2002. The rate continued to increase in 2003 with 16 being lodged during the year.

## What we need to do

- Map the distribution and manner of use of existing resources to inform future decisions about allocation.
- Agree the criteria for the allocation of funding for special educational provision and establish a transparent, fair and effective system for allocating funding according to these criteria.
- Review current arrangements for monitoring the use of funding for additional needs and special provision and act on the review.
- Review arrangements for the allocation of support from the Behaviour Support Service, the Psychological Service and the SEN Support Service to ensure that allocation does reflect the level of pupil need in each school or early years setting.
- Agree and implement clear criteria for ceasing to maintain statements and promote an expectation that statements should only be maintained where this can be fully justified.
- Maintain an ongoing review of appeals made to the SEN and Disability Tribunal to ensure they are kept to a minimum consistent with fairness.

## **PRIORITY 3: Flexible and timely responses to meeting children's special educational needs.**

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### **Where we want to be:**

- All statutory procedures comply fully with the SEN Code of Practice and all timescales are met for all children.
- Procedures promote high levels of trust between parents and, schools and the LEA and are understood by all those who may need to make use of them.
- SEN procedures ensure that each child is treated as an individual. Procedures are flexible and support fast responses and "managed moves" when needed
- SEN procedures are consistent with and support the procedures of other agencies that have a role in supporting and providing for children with SEN.
- Early action ensures that pupils with statements because of behaviour, emotional and social difficulties are less likely to be excluded while waiting for appropriate special educational provision.
- Schools and other relevant agencies are involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the procedures.
- Information is available for parents about the statutory assessment procedures. Enhanced versions, based on a model developed regionally, are being prepared for distribution later in the year.
- New steps have been initiated to improve the recruitment of a team of independent parental supporters for parents of children with special educational needs.
- A sophisticated computer-based workflow management system supports the statutory assessment procedures.
- All schools have been circulated with a regionally developed CD-ROM, 'Transplan', which gives extensive guidance on transition planning for pupils in year 9 and above.

### **Where we are now**

- Procedures have been fully reviewed following the publication of the revised SEN Code of Practice. A revised Professionals' Handbook has been distributed to schools, the support services and partner agencies. This includes guidance on practice in relation to all aspects of special educational needs and updated criteria for the initiation of statutory assessment.
- Maintain a constant overview of compliance to the statutory timescales, so as to identify sources of delay at an early stage and to take effective remedial action.
- Review procedures for allocating resources so as to reflect changes in the funding arrangements for SEN and the proposal for more devolvement of responsibility.
- Ensure that annual reviews of statements of SEN for children transferring to secondary school are completed according to expected timescales.
- Develop improved procedures for supporting transition between schools and from school to employment or further training.

- Continue to develop an effective Parent Partnership Service to ensure that parents have the support they need with SEN procedures
- Continue to develop formal arrangements with Community Based Services and the Health Trusts to ensure effective co-ordination where there are shared responsibilities for children with SEN.
- Establish a stakeholder group to monitor the implementation of the SEN procedures and to help moderate decisions.

## **PRIORITY 4: Availability of good quality information about the deployment of resources and the outcome of intervention that is used effectively to inform practice.**

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### **Where we want to be:**

- The LEA and schools share responsibility for monitoring and evaluating provision.
- All schools carefully evaluate the progress of individual pupils as a basis for matching intervention to need.
- The LEA monitors and evaluates the progress of children with SEN, their attendance and rate of exclusion on the basis of high quality data and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions and the special educational provision being made.
- The LEA monitors and evaluates the use of delegated funding for additional educational needs and SEN.
- There are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and the value-for-money of the LEA services. Professional practice is evidence-based.
- A member of the SEN Support Service has responsibility for monitoring the special educational provision made for children with SEN in mainstream schools. However, systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision are needed to support this activity.
- It is difficult to collect the evidence needed to compare effectiveness across different provision.
- Systems for monitoring trends as a basis for long-term planning remain to be established.
- The LEA has been involved in the regional initiative (PINE) to develop performance indicators for SEN and an agreed dataset to support benchmarking. The guidance produced is now available to support monitoring and evaluation within Gateshead.
- The LEA is involved in a regional initiative to monitor and evaluate the use of "out of borough/out of county" placements as a basis for regional planning.

### **Where we are now:**

- Increasingly good data is being made available through the Council's information management systems.
- The LEA's response to schools of concern is highly effective and involves all LEA services, as appropriate.
- The LEA has promoted the use of PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting) to enable effective monitoring and targeting of children with SEN.
- Ofsted reports on Gateshead schools are monitored closely to ensure SEN issues are identified and addressed.
- SEN is a core element of the LEA's Education Development Plan (EDP) and the developments included in the plan are closely monitored and evaluated as part of the overall monitoring and evaluation of the EDP.
- Education Otherwise and Home to School transport have been subject to Best Value review and are monitored and evaluated under Best Value procedures.

## What we need to do

- Work with schools to develop rigorous monitoring arrangements of their work on SEN inclusion based on “supported self review”
- Carry out a best value review of SEN services.
- Enhance current systems for monitoring and evaluating service delivery by the LEA’s central SEN services and their impact on SEN inclusion. (Behaviour Support Service; Learning Support Service; Parent Partnership; Pupil and Parent Services; Psychological Service; SEN Support Service). Establish improved arrangements for obtaining user, including parent and child, feedback.
- Make effective use of data from the use of PIVATs and other sources to monitor and evaluate the progress of individual children. Develop and implement a PIVATs moderation process, in partnership with schools. Ensure that the data collated supports an evidence-based approach to meeting SEN.
- Develop practice to make effective use of school performance data on SEN.
- Collect attendance data and data on permanent exclusion in relation to children with SEN to inform planning to enable children with SEN to join as fully as possible in the life of their school.
- Work with schools, the Health Trusts and other agencies, as appropriate, to identify trends in relation to special educational needs to support forward planning.

## **PRIORITY 5: Resources that support inclusion and are well matched to the range of special educational needs amongst children in Gateshead.**

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### **Where we want to be.**

- Mainstream schools are effectively resourced to support inclusion. Where a child does transfer to a different school to access special educational provision, the “home” school retains an ongoing commitment to that child.
- There is a well-established continuum of provision that accurately matches the range of special educational needs in Gateshead and is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children. The provision is managed both flexibly and responsively so that it can adapt rapidly to changes in demand.
- Special schools have a changed role that focuses on supporting mainstream schools to include children with SEN and on providing specialist placements to meet the needs of those children with the most complex needs.
- Local provision is in place to reduce the number of children who attend out of Borough schools.
- Systems are in place to monitor trends and to predict and plan appropriate provision. Research information, both from within and from outside the LEA, is used to inform decisions and to ensure developments are evidence-based.
- There are high-quality, value-for-money support services that have a focus on early intervention, facilitating inclusion and whole school/whole class approaches to meeting SEN.
- The LEA works closely with other LEAs in the region and partner agencies to develop provision for low incidence needs.

### **Where we are now**

- 6 Primary schools have nurture groups that provide part-time provision for pupils with BESD. Evaluation of the nurture groups has been very positive but funding in the long-term is uncertain
- A programme of upgrading schools to improve physical access is under way.
- The Behaviour Improvement Programme, the Key Stage 3 Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and the Primary Strategy are supporting the more effective management of behaviour difficulties.
- Ten mainstream primary schools and two mainstream secondary schools are additionally resourced to provide for SEN. The schools operate to a number of different models of provision and provide a range of examples of good practice. However, they have not been subject to a review to ensure that there is consistency in practice and that provision continues to match need.
- After a period of decline, the number of children attending Gateshead special schools is now increasing with the greatest pressure being on places for children with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD).
- A significant number of children attend schools out of the Borough. This number has been very resistant to efforts to reduce it. The greatest demand is for places for children with BESD and for children with sensory or physical difficulties.

- A new Key Stage 2/3 provision for children with Statements of SEN but either without a school place or awaiting placement was established in September 2003.
- Additional places in the LEA's two schools for children with BESD will be established during 2004.
- High quality provision has been established at Gibside and Hill Top schools to meet the needs of children with the most severe ASD. There is a mainstream support base for primary age children with ASD. A second primary school has been additionally resourced for children with ASD since September 2003.
- The balance of the work of the support services is strongly towards the provision of specialist advice and support in relation to individual children rather than towards support for whole school and whole class approaches to SEN.
- There is increasing demand for support and additional resources for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and specific learning difficulties.
- Neo-natal screening for hearing impairment is being introduced by Gateshead Health Trust which is likely to increase demand for early educational intervention.
- Trends in special educational needs are monitored in some key areas, particularly among pre-school children, but the system is not yet comprehensive.

## What we need to do

- Establish a more effective system for monitoring trends as a basis for the planning of new provision and the re-focusing of existing provision. Develop provision, particularly in mainstream schools, to address any gaps or trends that are identified.
- Develop the capacity of mainstream schools and early years settings to meet a wider range of needs.
- Carry out a comprehensive review of the role of and the provision made by additionally resourced schools, together with the criteria and procedures for admission.
- Build the commitment of schools to all the children with SEN in their locality including those children currently attending special schools.
- Review the role of special schools with a view to establishing an enhanced role for them with a focus on supporting inclusion in mainstream schools and providing very specialised services for children with the most complex needs.
- In partnership with Community Based Services and the Health Trusts, develop local resources to minimise the need for placement outside the Borough.
- In partnership with other regional LEAs, ensure that good quality provision is available regionally for children with low-incidence special educational needs.
- Review the roles, staffing and structures of the LEA's support services to ensure they can supply the expertise required to support schools and others to meet SEN in the most effective manner and can contribute to the development of a Children's Trust in Gateshead.

## PRIORITY 6: Effective Partnerships.

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### Where we want to be

- There is an effective partnership with parents and carers who are given the support they need to enhance the education of their children.
- There are effective channels of communication between the LEA, and parents and other stakeholders. Letters and other documents are clear and in plain English.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and other stakeholders underpin strategic planning. Parents have confidence and trust in the LEA.
- The LEA is a major participant in a system for the Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA/Passport to Services) of children in need, including those with SEN.
- There is a clear and well-understood role for the schools and the LEA's services in relation to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
- There are agreed responsibilities across the education, social and health services for any residential placements made out of the Borough.
- School staff, governing bodies, parents and carers, and staff of the LEA's support services and other agencies work effectively together to raise standards for children with SEN.
- The Children's Fund is supporting a number of health initiatives in schools including a service to promote the emotional well-being of children.
- A multi-agency pre-school panel ensures a joint approach to children with disabilities across the education, social and health services.
- A multi-agency ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) planning group has been established to support the development of services and provision by the Council, Health and the voluntary sector for children with ASD.
- There is an established Parent Partnership Service that provides support and information to parents in relation to statutory assessments of special educational needs and recruits and trains independent parental supporters.
- A senior officer group with Learning and Culture representation is driving CAMHS developments.
- There are four Sure Start areas in Gateshead which support close multi-agency working, early intervention and partnerships with parents. Plans are being drafted for the establishment of children's centres.
- The Council has established a set of corporate values that guide service delivery and provide a basis for effective partnerships with service users.

### Where we are now

- Gateshead, in partnership with the City of Newcastle, is a Trailblazer for the implementation of Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA).
- The Council, in partnership with Health and the voluntary sector has been awarded Pathfinder status for developing a Children's Trust in Gateshead.
- The LEA's support services and the schools in Gateshead give a high priority to partnership with parents.
- The LEA is strongly involved in the regional SEN Partnership (FINE) through its representation on the NCEA SEN Sub-committee.

## What we need to do

- Review the roles and responsibilities of the LEA's support services and the operation of existing partnerships to ensure clarity of purpose and avoid duplication. Communicate the roles and responsibilities to all users in a clear and accessible form.
- Continue to develop the parent partnership arrangements and to recruit and train independent parental supporters.
- Review arrangements for communicating with parents and other stakeholders about developments in relation to special educational provision.
- Establish a process for parental participation in planning and evaluation of services and special educational provision, such as a parental forum.
- Review arrangements for resolving disagreements with parents about special educational provision so as to build trust and minimise the number of appeals against LEA decisions to the SEN and Disability Tribunal.
- Contribute fully to developments in relation to ISA and the Children's Trust. Build on these developments to ensure service delivery across agencies is well co-ordinated and there is effective joint working.

## **PRIORITY 7: A skilled workforce within schools and the LEA's support services that meets the needs of children with SEN effectively and ensures their educational progress.**

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### **Where we want to be**

- High quality continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities are provided for LEA and school staff and staff in early years settings addressing identified needs and priorities in relation to SEN and promoting the development of inclusive practice.
- There are opportunities to share good practice in relation to SEN and inclusion and for teachers and other professional staff to learn from each other.
- SENCOs are well supported to develop their expertise in managing SEN and school based provision.
- Developing the skills and confidence of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at identifying and responding appropriately to special educational needs is a core element of their induction year.
- Schools and the central LEA support services are able to recruit and retain specialist SEN staff with appropriate expertise.
- A series of guidance booklets are being produced for schools the first of which deals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The second booklet, which deals with Dyspraxia, is in production. Both these booklets were produced in partnership with staff from the health trusts.
- A series of annual conferences for school and central LEA staff has been established on the theme of inclusion.
- All special schools have established links with specific mainstream schools to enhance provision for children and to share good practice.
- There are joint training initiatives across the LEA's support services for SEN to develop and maintain expertise.
- Recruitment and retention of school staff is a priority in the LEA's Education Development Plan.
- Recruitment of specialist staff to the LEA's support services for SEN can be very difficult in some areas of expertise.

### **Where we are now**

- Schools are consulted annually to identify training needs.
- There is a well-established, Learning and Culture, CPD programme with a clear SEN thread.
- Extensive training has been provided for schools and partner agencies on the revised SEN Code of practice and to launch the revised Professionals' Handbook.

- "Investors in People" is being introduced by the Learning and Culture Group.

### **What we need to do**

- Continue to ensure that inclusive practice is a key theme within the SEN thread of the CPD programme.
- Provide targeted training for SENCOs in the effective management of SEN, including resource management, record-keeping and managing annual reviews.

- Work in partnership with Sure Start to ensure that relevant training opportunities are available to early years staff.
- Ensure that SEN and inclusion is a core theme in the in-service training provided for newly qualified teachers as part of their first year induction programme.
- Identify examples of good inclusive practice. Extend opportunities for sharing this practice.
- Extend the links between mainstream and special schools as a means of enabling staff from both sectors to learn from each other.
- Develop and implement a strategy to monitor and, where necessary, improve the recruitment and retention of specialist SEN staff.

## *Strategy for Special Educational Needs Inclusion: Raising Standards for all Children 2004 - 2008*

# Appendix

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## Consultation on the Strategy

Consultation on this strategy took place between December and May 2004 with potential stakeholders including the following:

- Mainstream schools
- Special schools
- School Governors
- LEA support services
- Diocesan authorities
- Gateshead Children and Young People's Partnership
- The Council's Community Based Services (Children and Families)
- Regional non-maintained and independent special schools

- Gateshead Primary Care Trust
- Gateshead Health Trust
- South of Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust
- Pre-school education providers and Sure Start
- Learning and Skills Council
- Parent groups
- Voluntary agencies
- Neighbouring LEAs

Briefing and consultation meetings were held for parents, head teachers and governors, LEA support services' staff, and staff from partner agencies. All were invited to submit written responses to the LEA.

The Strategy was redrafted in the light of this consultation and the amended version presented to the Council for approval in September 2004.



*Strategy for Special Educational Needs Inclusion:  
Raising Standards for all Children 2004- 2008*  
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