



Cambridgeshire  
County Council



# Special Educational Needs Strategy

Cambridgeshire's strategy for  
promoting inclusive education

Inclusive practice arises from a philosophy which views diversity of strengths, abilities and needs as natural and desirable, bringing to any community the opportunity to respond in ways which lead to learning and growth for the whole community, and giving each and every member a valued role.

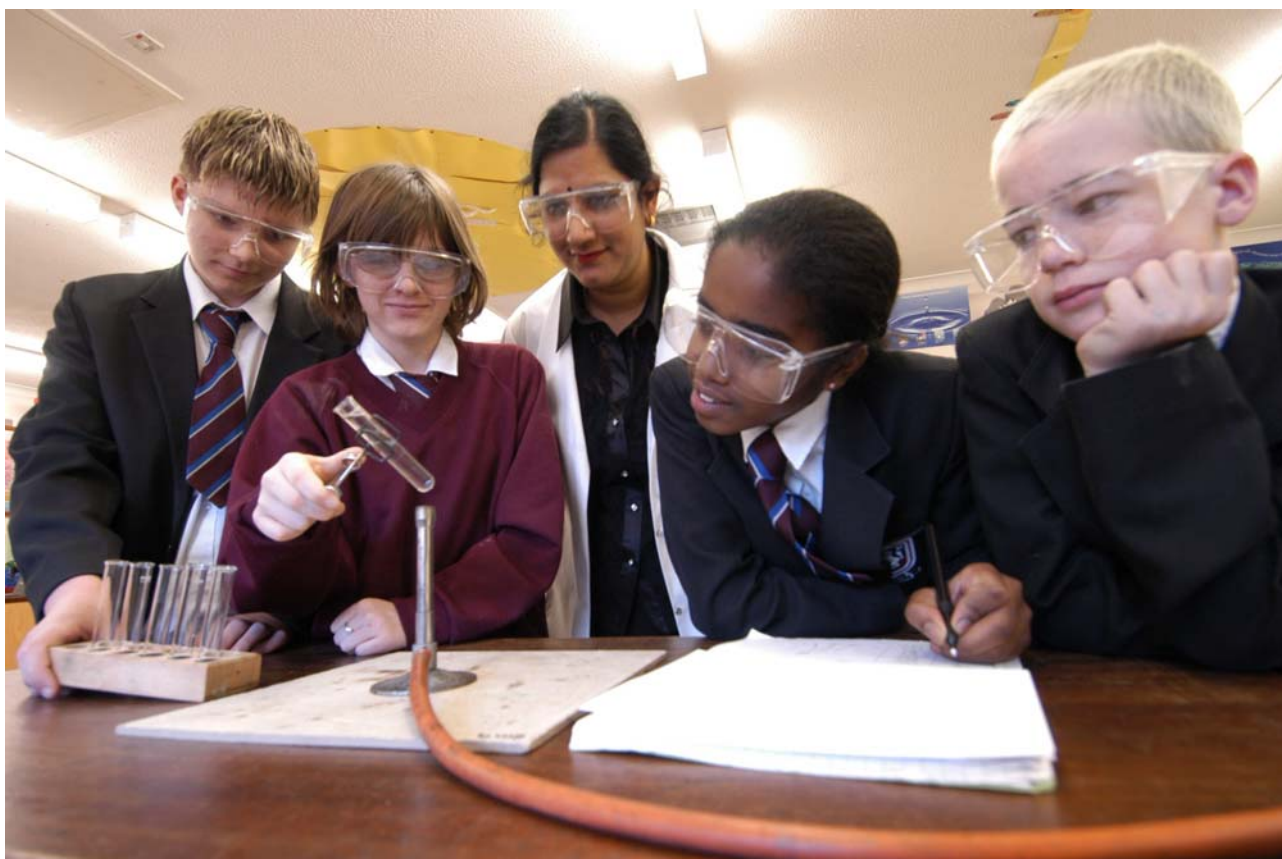
An inclusive school expects all students within its community to be educated alongside each other. It sees the diverse needs of students as a rich vein of opportunity to develop its approaches to teaching and learning and thereby achieve excellence for all learners.

The goal of inclusion is not to erase differences, but to enable all students to flourish within an educational community that validates and values their individuality.



## **INTRODUCTION**

This development plan sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council's services, in partnership with others, will respond to the government's 10 year strategy for supporting children with special educational needs and promoting their inclusion. The content and structure of the Plan is based on the main priorities and themes set out in the government's strategy. The Plan covers the 20% of children and young people who may experience special educational needs at some time during their education. It is complementary to the multi-agency strategy for developing services for the 2-3% of children who have very significant and complex long-term disabilities.



# 1. EARLY INTERVENTION

## 1.1

**We aim to:** Improve support for children with special needs from birth, and their families in order to promote inclusion.

**What we do now:** There are already good examples of multi-agency work to support children with disabilities in the early years including the operation of Portage Services, the Vision Assessment Clinics and the universal neonatal hearing screening programme. The lack of information was raised as a key issue by parents in a survey of their views.

### **What we are going to do:**

- We will develop multi agency practice and procedures for working with children under 5 with disabilities and those with complex needs and their families, by reviewing the arrangements for securing co-ordinated service delivery through the use of ESP Audit Tool
- We will work with settings to ensure that they can identify and support children with moderate needs (Early Years Action)
- We will improve parent access to support and training in ASD and severe social communication difficulties

### **Success criteria:**

- Surveys of parents views show high levels of satisfaction with the information and services received
- Parent feedback from satisfaction survey shows 75% of parents regard the support and training in ASD and severe social communication difficulties as satisfactory or better

## 1.2

**We aim to:** Improve childcare for children with SEN and Disabilities.

**What we do now:** A comprehensive package of support is already available to EY settings to develop inclusive practices and to support children with additional needs. This includes EY Area SENCO support; a team of Sector Support workers; a comprehensive training programme and opportunities to access funding. The proposed Childcare Bill will impose a duty on the County Council to secure sufficient childcare places for children. These will be particular reference to children with additional needs and to narrowing the gaps in outcomes for identified groups (low income family and children with AEN). There will be strong links to the Extended Schools agenda.

**What we are going to do:**

- To implement, monitor and review a consistent and equitable process (across the county) for the identification and allocation of additional resources to school-aged children, (4+ to 14+) with complex needs in childcare
- Identify current levels of access to childcare for 4+ year-olds with complex and long term needs locally
- Develop additional provision to meet the needs of Early Years settings, local parents and their children (with SEN)
- Ensure that children with complex needs (ages 0-4yrs) have access to day care settings through a process of resource allocation that ensures consistency and equity across the county
- Identify current levels of access to childcare for (0-4yrs) with complex and long term needs locally
- Develop additional provision to meet the needs of Early Years settings, local parents and their children (with SEN)

**Success criteria:**

- Children with complex needs can attend local early years care settings and have their needs met appropriately

## 1.3

**We aim to:** Improve SEN advice and support to early years settings and raise the skills and awareness of staff in those settings.

**What we do now:** Early Years and Childcare, in conjunction with the Early Years Support Teachers and the Educational Psychologists, have provided a comprehensive SEN training and support programme to early years settings. In addition, each setting is required to have an appropriately trained designated person for SEN and a 3-day induction programme is provided.

### **What we are going to do:**

- Develop Early Years SEN Descriptors and Intervention Matrices for use by settings to support the process of identification of need, appropriate response, monitoring and review
- Development of a joint service plan to ensure the coordination of the support from and Area SENCos, Educational Psychology Service and Early Years Specialist Support Teachers. To have effective links to other agencies, services and voluntary sector
- Use existing monitoring and review arrangements to adjust and update SEN training delivered to EY settings for children aged from 0 to five, across the county

### **Success criteria:**

- SEN training on offer reflects ongoing evaluation of exiting provision, regular feedback from participants is responsive to identified training needs and the outcome of inspections



## 1.4

**We aim to:** Fund Early Intervention and Inclusive Practice.

**What we do now:** Cambridgeshire was in the first wave of local authorities in 2003 to implement guidance from the DfES which aimed to shift the balance of funding for SEN away from Statements to more preventative approaches.

**What we are going to do:**

- Review the additional educational needs (AEN) formula and its effect on practice
- Review the school level funding allocation process to nursery schools and classes
- Monitor the variety of funding streams available to early years (0-5) settings for SEN to ensure consistency and equity of entitlement
- Review and, if necessary revise, the mechanism for funding Secondary Schools to support better management of pupil behaviour

**Success criteria:**

- Schools develop consistent responses based on predictable funding



## 2. REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

### 2.1

**We aim to:** Widen the opportunities in mainstream education for all children.

**What we do now:** All schools have received an audit to support their consideration of access issues for children with disability, as part of their premises' planning. A rolling programme of adaptations has enabled children with disabilities to be included more easily. Training for inclusion has been delivered across the County.

**What we are going to do:**

- Use the DfES self review and development tool to update the OCYPS Accessibility Strategy and to produce and implement an action plan in response to identified areas for development
- Children and young people will have appropriate ICT arrangements to ensure access across different learning contexts
- In order to continue to build capacity in schools, we will review Cambridgeshire's current Inclusion Development Programme
- There will be a link with the Extended Services programme, Early Years and Childcare Service to identify additional funding and appropriate, effective support in order to improve access to out of school activities and study support for children and young people with SEN
- Ensure that there is updated advice and support available to schools, childcare/playworkers and early years settings on children with medical conditions and needs

**Success criteria:**

- OCYPS Accessibility Strategy published and re-launched
- 100% of schools have a published accessibility plan

## 2.2

**We aim to:** Transform our Special Schools.

**What we do now:** Through the development of area special schools and the review of provision for children with behaviour difficulties, Cambridgeshire has made a commitment to the continuing availability of high quality local special school places for children with the most significant and complex needs.

**What we are going to do:**

- All area special schools will fully meet the aspirations set out in the **Brief for Area Special Schools** by 2015
- Implement measures to support staff recruitment and retention in special schools
- Develop co-ordinated delivery of outreach provision within the county which includes special schools and takes account of the structure within OCYPS
- Secure an appropriate funding stream to underpin strategic developments in area special schools

**Success criteria:**

- Special schools contribute fully to support guidance and advisory programmes to schools, pupils and parents in collaboration with all other partners



## 2.3

**We aim to:** Develop local communities of schools for local children.

**What we do now:** Cambridgeshire was an early pioneer in promoting the concept of local communities of schools for local children.

### **What we are going to do:**

- To ensure that the needs of children with SEN and disabilities are fully taken into account in extended school cluster and locality developments
- Establish clear processes to provide support so that all children can attend local out of school provision
- Provide training for out of school staff in SEN/Medical/Physical needs
- The provision of appropriate equipment and facilities in out of school care settings that enables access for children with complex needs
- Make available training for providers of childcare 4+ to 14+ in playwork and the development and delivery of appropriate activities
- Continue the work initiated with secondary school headteachers to review the way in which schools respond to pupils who present with challenging behaviour

### **Success criteria:**

- Systems in place to respond to and moderate requests for equipment to ensure that settings can enable children to access local provision which has appropriate facilities to meet complex needs



## 2.4

**We aim to:** Improve the provision of specialist advice and support for schools.

**What we do now:** Cambridgeshire has central teams of Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers at both primary and secondary levels. The specialist teaching services were reviewed during 2003 and subsequently reorganised to be coterminous with PCT boundaries in order to facilitate multi-agency working. Although all schools have allocations of time from the support services, a larger element of support has been targeted at areas of need. Through inclusion projects, special schools have also been in a position to support a small number of mainstream schools.

**What we are going to do:**

- All central support services will use the DfES generic minimum standards for SEN Support services
- Specialist teacher, Educational Psychologists and Area Special Schools will work together to form Support Partnerships for mainstream schools, childcare providers and early years settings for children with long term and/or complex needs
- Using the materials from the Behaviour and Attendance pilot, we will improve the emotional literacy and ethos in schools by offering the Social Emotional Aspects of Learning programme to more schools year on year
- OCYPS support services will provide more targeted advice and support for those children in receipt of a Statement of SEN
- We will work with the Primary National Strategy Consultants, in a co-ordinated way, to reduce the number of schools that have 10 or more children in year 3 at risk of not achieving level 4 in year 6 in both English and Maths
- We will develop methods for helping schools to identify children in year 2 who may be 'at risk' of not achieving level 2 in the year 2 SATs
- Develop programmes that schools can use for the identified children in year 1
- Support the development of inclusive practice in settings and schools at primary level by delivering training focused on inclusion

**Success criteria:**

- A co-ordinated system for central SEN services and area schools to work together to provide effective support for mainstream schools is in place
- No settings or primary schools to have inclusion/SEN identified as an issue in their Ofsted inspections

### 3. RAISING EXPECTATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### 3.1

**We aim to:** Personalise learning for children with Special Educational Needs.

**What we do now:** Although data indicates that Cambridgeshire pupils with additional educational needs and special educational needs do at least as well, and often better, than pupils in their statistical neighbours, the Local Authority will continue to seek further improvement to address the low attainment and under-achievement of a minority of pupils.

**What we are going to do:**

- Audit a sample of schools and settings to assess extent of personalised learning, identify good practice and establish a baseline
- Complete and disseminate a 'best practice' review based upon audit outcomes
- Develop, plan and deliver a programme of Continuing Professional Development on personalised learning
- Provide clear guidance and evaluation framework to schools and settings
- Ensure central Support Services including outreach from Special Schools. Promote personalised learning for children with SEN

**Success criteria:**

- Schools provide personalised learning opportunities for children with SEN



## 3.2

**We aim to:** Make better use of information on how well children with SEN are progressing in school.

**What we do now:** The education service in Cambridgeshire has made significant progress over recent years in the effective use of management data to support improvements in performance. Increasingly sophisticated data and related analyses are now available to support schools' efforts to address concerns relating to the underachievement of groups, including where appropriate those with special educational needs.

### **What we are going to do:**

- To provide schools Standards and Effectiveness and School Improvement Partners with school level SEN data to enable school self-evaluation and challenge
- Provide officers, members and schools with CSA level comparative data across range of SEN indicators, including finance
- Development of IT that can record Annual Review information for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs

### **Success criteria:**

- Data analysis leads to practice that creates improvement in indicators, eg pupil progress, attendance



### 3.3

**We aim to:** Develop a flexible curriculum and recognised qualifications for all.

**What we do now:** Teacher ingenuity and curriculum modification and innovation are constant features of provision for pupils with additional or special educational needs. There is scope for increasing the range of provision to better provide for these pupils at each stage of their education. The Local Authority will take a leadership role in identifying, encouraging and disseminating new and effective strategies and curriculum that improve the life chances of pupils with additional or special educational needs.

**What we are going to do:**

- Improve the access to and the quality of learning within curriculum entitlement
- Work with schools to provide more creative solutions in accessing the curriculum for children with SEN
- Develop the potential and use of joint-placements and shared provision within locality clusters
- Audit and disseminate guidance on 14-19 curriculum and qualifications and the celebration of pupils' success at any age

**Success criteria:**

- Guidance papers for schools are published
  - On qualifications 14-19
  - On celebrating success and motivating learners



### 3.4

**We aim to:** Involve children and young people with SEN in decision-making.

**What we do now:** We encourage and support schools to involve children with special educational needs in a consideration of their own Individual Education Plan. We seek the views of all children with the most significant special educational needs on how they would like these to be met.

**What we are going to do:**

- We will liaise with the County Participation Group on developing practical tools for consulting and involving children and young people in the development of school and childcare/activity policies and authority-wide strategies for improving local services
- Maintain and develop consultation arrangements with vulnerable children/young people during and after the Children's Services formal consultation period
- Extend the influence of children/young people's voices in school settings

**Success criteria:**

- Children's views are used to inform policy associated with school and integrated childcare/activity provision



### 3.5

**We aim to:** Improve the opportunities for progression beyond school for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

**What we do now:** Close collaboration between OCYPS and Connexions staff has seen the establishment of a 14+ transition process that has been acknowledged nationally as an example of good practice.

**What we are going to do:**

- Establish an agreed multi-agency process to support smooth transition into adult services
- Work with the Learning and Skills Council to ensure that there is a broad range of SEN further educational provision (FE) post school
- Establish clear routes of progression into FE for young people in the two new area special schools
- Review pupil views on transition planning and use them to amend processes
- Provide training for professionals on good practice for transition planning

**Success criteria:**

- Young people move seamlessly into adult provision which supports their needs and provides progression
- Surveys of parents/carers and young people reveal that at least 95% express satisfaction with the progression into FE

## 4. DELIVERING IMPROVEMENTS IN PARTNERSHIP

### 4.1

**We aim to:** Monitor Progress and Supporting Improvement in Schools.

**What we do now:** Cambridgeshire's Inspectorate review annually the work of all schools, with reference to the school self-evaluation. The attainment of different groups of students is taken into account. The impact of funding for Additional Educational Needs (AEN) is also monitored annually, with processes being refined and developed.

**What we are going to do:**

- Ensure the rigorous review of provision and outcomes for pupils with AEN/SEN through the School Self Evaluation Form and the School Annual Review
- Ensure that all schools to re-submit their updated Accessibility Plan
- Monitor the use of AEN funding
- Develop an annual co-ordination meeting of OCYPS SEN Officers and School Improvement personnel to promote a common agenda and responses through the training/consultancy programmes offered
- Broaden the capacity of OCYPS to support to schools through a 'Support Partnership' approach managed at Locality Level

**Success criteria:**

- All schools to be provided with an annual SEN profile showing movements of children within the graduated response and providing comparative data against all Cambridgeshire schools

## 4.2

**We aim to:** Build Parents' and Carers' Confidence in Mainstream Education.

**What we do now:** The Parent Partnership Service (PPS) in Cambridgeshire has been operating as a statutory service since 2001. The service provides telephone support and advice in addition to individual casework with schools and families. The PPS also offers a range of literature and training and information sessions for parents and professionals alike underpinning its commitment to the parent-professional partnership.

**What we are going to do:**

- To increase the number of joint parent /professionals training and information sessions by 25% by July 2007
- To develop and extend school-based parent support groups as invited by schools via PPS initiative
- To develop school-based parental supporters
- Fully implement the model for area and countywide forums involvement and consultation with parents
- To develop the PPS Liaison and Advisory Network of groups focused on specific areas within SEN
- To build upon the success of the DfES – PiL project – in working with identified groups of parents in school

**Success criteria:**

- Increase in parental input to policy and practice

## 4.3

**We aim to:** Improve multi-agency support for children and organise services around the needs of children and their families.

**What we do now:** There are good examples of effective multi-agency working in Cambridgeshire, eg the operation of Visual Assessment Centres, support for babies and young children with hearing impairments, the development of a strategy for speech and language. The formation of the Office of Children and Young People provides an opportunity to integrate education and social care functions with an increasing emphasis on developing integrated working with other partner services.

**What we are going to do:**

- Develop, in accordance with the National Standards Framework and DfES circular Together from the Start, multi-agency assessments of children following from the diagnosis and identification of complex needs
- Consider how the government's requirement to have CAF in place by 2008 relates to other assessments currently in place for children with disabilities.
- Implement the government's early support programme for babies and very young disabled children
- Develop an integrated community equipment service across health, social services and education
- Develop multi-agency protocols that set benchmarks for the assessment and provision of children's equipment
- Consider the pooling of budgets using Health Act flexibilities
- Ensure an effective multi-agency Transitions Group including the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Connexions, Housing, Social Care, Education, Learning and Skills Council and voluntary organisations improves transitions to adulthood
- Reduce the number of children placed out of authority
- Implement the multi-agency speech and language strategy
- Create within the Council's Office of Children and Young People integrated SEN and Social Care teams at Area level
- Develop proposals for ensuring these Area Teams establish effective integrated working with colleagues in health services
- Development of multi-agency training opportunities to support the programme of integrated working
- Develop a co-ordinated approach to the provision of information to parents

**Success criteria:**

- Common Assessment Framework in place which meets the 3 key government objectives; supporting earlier intervention, improving multi-agency working and reducing bureaucracy for families

## MONITORING THE SEN STRATEGY

How will we know if we have been successful in meeting our main objectives of promoting and effecting the inclusion, in a variety of settings, of children and young people with special educational needs as well as improving our support for those children and young people and their families.

- Each activity or task in our strategy has an **expected outcome** related to the Every Child Matters agenda and we will be monitoring our progress against these outcomes on a regular basis within a senior officer group from the Office of Children and Young People's Services

In this document we have taken just one such outcome from each objective as an example of the sort of evidence we will require

- We will be scrutinising the **data** that shows how children and young people with special educational needs are achieving in our Cambridgeshire schools and comparing their performance to any available national or regional data

We will also be looking closely at the data on attendance and exclusions in order to identify any trends within schools which might suggest those with special educational needs were over-represented as a group

- We will continue to support schools to look critically at their own **data**
- We will monitor **Ofsted reports** on our schools to identify any good practice that is sited and to respond to any areas requiring development in the area of special educational needs
- We will use the Annual School Survey of the Audit Commission to gain the views of schools on our support services to schools
- We will, depending on the activity, seek the views of those most directly affected – parent/carer, child/young person, educational staff and external partners



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