



Buckinghamshire County Council

Report

School Organisation Committee

AGENDA ITEM 4

Date	25 April 2001
Title	SEN PROVISION STRATEGY
Author	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
Electoral Divisions Affected	All
Recommendation	The Committee is asked to NOTE this report as part of the continued preparation of work related to the SEN Policy and Strategy.
Resources Appraisal	
Summary	The purpose of this paper is to give an update on recent developments.

Supporting Information

SEN Provision Strategy

Introduction

1. The Education Committee on the 19th October noted the results of the consultation on the SEN policy and strategy and agreed, as a result, a programme of work which included:
 - Consulting on delegating funding for Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) to all mainstream schools instead of to specific departments
 - Creating 2 consortia of special schools and planning new complex provision schools in each

- Setting up clusters of mainstream schools within which existing SEN mainstream departments would provide (with Special Schools and Learning Support) outreach support
- Set up new departments to support identified need at each phase of education in mainstream schools
- Identify how Out of County provision could be reduced
- Improve training for Learning Support Assistants
- Provide guidance of the new Code of Practice (when it is issued)

MLD/SpLD Delegation

2. In January the council consulted with headteachers and governors on the delegation of funding by formula to all schools. The outcome was that it was agreed that over a five year transitional period children would be placed in their local school if they have MLD or SpLD needs. All current departments are protected fully for the next academic year but will lose protection as each year of pupils leaves. These categories of pupil will be educated locally with all funding at stage 3 and 5 available to the school alleviating the need for a statement to unlock immediate resourcing

Special School Consortia

3. Two consortia of special schools have now been formed and are discussing new models for the future design of special schools and appropriate multi-agency support mechanisms. It is hoped to bring forward by December 2001 detailed plans for a move away from separate Severe Learning Difficulties, Moderate Learning Difficulties and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (less severe) schools to Complex Learning Need Schools which will be either primary or secondary and have the ability to respond to the changing needs of a pupil. These schools will work with local mainstream schools in a cluster.

Mainstream Clusters

4. The council is in the middle of consulting on how mainstream schools might work more closely together using their SEN department staff to support and train other teachers in the cluster. These departments (to become "Support Centres") will also link much more closely with their local special school consortium. Once agreement has been reached on these clusters, which will be geographical, further planning will be undertaken to ensure that each cluster has a range of SEN departments to support the local needs of children (who will be educated in their designated department or in a local school with support). It is hoped to bring forward a detailed plan for new departments linked to clusters by September 2002.

SEN Department Developments

5. Each year a detailed review of stated provision is made – the last complete figures being for 1999 (2000 calendar year currently being completed). Using these figures an SEN Departmental Forecast 2000/4 was made (attached as appendix 1) showing the need to expand numbers for:

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- Secondary
 - Language
 - Severe Communications Difficulties
 - Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- Junior
 - Language
 - Emotional and Behavioural
 - Physical Handicap
 - Severe Communication Difficulties
- Infant
 - Severe Communication Difficulties

These increases will be offset by the withdrawal of MLD/SpLD department status (although funding will still be available to all schools with an extra £1.3 million in delegated budgets for this category) and a real reduction in expected numbers of MLD/SpLD pupils.

Current Planned New SEN Departments

6. Last year a number of new departments were identified as required for this September

- Icknield Combined - Social Communication Department
- Elmhurst Junior - Social Communication Department
- ?* Primary - Social Communication Department
- Princes Risborough - Social Communication Department extended to cover all years
- Holmer Green - Language Department (fully running in 2002)
- Misbourne School - Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Department

(* School not yet identified)

Further details are given in appendix 2 with present department capacities shown in appendix 3.

Future SEN Department Requirements

7. In addition to departments already identified in paragraph 6 above there is an urgent requirement to have in place by September 2002 the following additional provision:

- A second Language Department in secondary
- A further SCD department in the south
- A secondary Hearing Impaired Department
- A Physical Disability Department (Grange School) secondary
- Two primary Language Departments (one north, one south)

This provision is currently being explored with individual schools but in the future would be part of cluster planning.

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Future Reports

8. It will be necessary to regularly provide further reports to this Committee in order to gain approval for new departments or for reorganisation of special schools and to ensure that the process of statutory notices are followed.

Background Papers

1. Capacities and Usage 1999 – 2002
2. 5 year forecast
3. Education Committee, 19 October 2000, Agenda item 9

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