

Part of Decision Makers Guidance Section 4

Statutory Guidance on SEN Provision

■ PROPOSALS FOR CLOSING SPECIAL SCHOOLS

For all reorganisation proposals there should be a clear statement of education intention, which, if appropriate, should provide the rationale for any special school closure. Proposals should reflect the LEA's strategic plans for school improvement as set out in their EDP, including plans for promoting inclusion; plans for providing school places as set out in the SOP; and any arrangements for the regional co-ordination of SEN provision promoted by the Secretary of State.

The above general considerations relating to special school reorganisation proposals apply. In addition, in the case of closure:

- it is important to ensure that appropriate full-time education will be available to all displaced pupils. Their statements may need amending and all parental rights must be ensured. Other interested partners, such as the Health Authority and Social Services Department, may need to be involved;

- arrangements for alternative provision should be clearly stated. A 'hope' or 'intention' to find places elsewhere is not acceptable. Wherever possible, the host or alternative schools should confirm in writing that they are willing to receive pupils, and have all the facilities necessary to provide an appropriate curriculum.

It may be necessary to consider more than one alternative should the initial placement break down. This is particularly important where pupils have emotional or behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviour.

All mainstream schools will need to make provision for pupils on their roll who have special educational needs. In addition some schools may be designated as having a specific role for supporting children within the local area or region who have a particular special need, such as hearing or visual impairment. Specialist provision may be provided within mainstream schools, or co-located on a mainstream school site. Such provision may take a variety forms, and terminology may vary from authority to authority, but some of the most common arrangements are:

a. Co-location - pupils are educated in separate special school facilities with separate staff but on a mainstream school site. There may be some interchange of staff and dual use of facilities;

b. Integrated Department - pupils are on the mainstream school roll with SEN staff supporting pupils in lessons where necessary;

c. Resource Base - pupils have a base for storage of equipment, some lessons and possibly break times etc.

d. Designated Unit - pupils are taught separately for much of the time.

Any proposals for the location of special need provision within a mainstream setting or on a mainstream site should be specific about the arrangements intended in each case.

The above general considerations relating to mainstream and special school reorganisation proposals will apply. In addition, proposals for the establishment of mainstream SEN designated provision should cover the following:

- details of the specific educational benefits that will flow from the proposals;
- a clear written statement from all the schools concerned supporting the proposals;
- plans and/or schedules to show that suitable accommodation will be provided;
- clear specification of the transport arrangements that will support appropriate access to the premises, and participation in the life of the school;
- clear specification of any physical adaptations to be made and equipment to be provided to meet the special educational and other needs of the pupils;
- clear specification of the funding and staffing arrangements, including access to external support services.

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