

Every Special Child **Matters**



Special Educational Needs Task Group: Final Report

Children and Young People's Services Overview/Scrutiny Committee

Report CX/07/118

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Preface

By Councillor Saxon Spence



Chair, Special Educational Need Task Group, Children and Young People's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

I am very pleased to be able to present this Scrutiny review of SEN. It has been a great privilege to chair such a committed Task Group. This has been a far-reaching and moving study at a critical point in the current national debate about how society recognises and supports children and young people with SEN.

Baroness Mary Warnock, the author of the groundbreaking Warnock Report that influenced SEN policy for 3 decades, now says, "We have got things terribly wrong". The main political parties are producing new policies supporting special schools. The Education & Skills Select Committee Report "SEN: Assessment and Funding" recommends separating assessment and funding so that local authorities are not responsible for both, to meet parents' concerns regarding fairness.

So interesting times for SEN! We hope our recommendations will contribute to the debate in Devon, including the very welcome consultation on SEN being undertaken throughout the County. Its commitment to "services around the child and family – not child and family around the services" reflects what the Task Group's believes to be at the heart of improving policy and practice.

The most telling comment from a parent was how thankful she was that someone wanted to listen to her. Perhaps that is the main message: Is it possible to put children with SEN and their families at the centre of policy? Keeping to budget is a duty for Devon County Council, but the priority should be meeting these needs in partnership with families. Making sure that every Devon special child really matters is the challenge to us all.

Councillor Saxon Spence

Special Educational Needs Task Group Final Report: Every Special Child Matters

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Task Group — Councillors Saxon Spence (Chair), Roger Croad, Andrea Davis, Anne Fry and Vanessa Newcombe — would like to place on record its gratitude to everyone who contributed to the review by providing information and/or being interviewed. The Task Group welcomed the responses from the

public and in submitting its recommendations has sought to ensure that its findings are supported with evidence and information to substantiate its proposals.

1.2 The Task Group's terms of reference:

1. To use the work of the Children's Trust Scrutiny Panel to inform the review process.
2. To evaluate the number of children who have SEN in the County.
3. To examine the cost of providing education and support to those children with SEN.
4. To assess whether the needs of pupils with SEN in the County are being sufficiently met.
5. To evaluate the response from schools in Devon to the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act.
6. To make detailed recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the Task Group.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The recommendations have been drawn up using the evidence obtained from witnesses, site visits and background material.

Recommendation 1

That funding for special school outreach is increased.

Rationale

- More expertise needs to be provided to all teaching staff in terms of meaningfully including children with SEN in mainstream classes.
- Resources are stretched and it is a challenge for SEN departments in mainstream schools to be trained to meet all the needs of individual children, especially those with complex needs.
- Inclusion therapists from Special Schools should be going into mainstream schools to do outreach work.
- Mainstream schools need to be encouraged to take up the outreach which is available.

Recommendation 2

That there is increased provision of speech and language therapy for SEN pupils in mainstream and Special Schools and an early identification of hearing problems.

Rationale

- It is crucial that children with a Specific Language Impairment are provided with an appropriate educational environment in order to reach their potential.
- These children need learning opportunities of small group teaching and integrated intensive speech and language therapy.
- The earliest possible diagnosis of hearing impairments should be available.

Recommendation 3

That there is an increase in funding for Portage beyond pre-school to give continuing home support to families.

Rationale

- The quality, success and cost effectiveness of the Devon Portage team is impressive but there are waiting lists and the work that currently can be undertaken is limited by budget.
- Children with complex needs require a partnership between home and school—the Portage system could give this home support and lead to improved social and

educational outcomes, reduce stress and enable more children to stay in the home environment.

Recommendation 4

That Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) undertake an urgent re-assessment of special schools and unit provision within mainstream schools in the County. This review should establish whether the Council invest-to-save to provide a wider range of in-county placements to reduce reliance on out-of-county placements, and the consequent budgetary implications. Where specialist provision cannot be made available in the County, it should be procured on a regional basis to achieve better value for money.

Rationale

- Members share parents' concerns that at present there are gaps between theory and practice in the Council's inclusion policy.
- Some children's needs are so complex they have to be met outside mainstream schools.
- Lack of suitable placements has led to these being sought out-of-county, and placed undue pressure on the budget. Significant savings may potentially be realised if the provision of special schools is increased within Devon.

Recommendation 5

That CYPS undertake a review of communication with parents. Further development of the role of the Devon Parent Partnership (DPP) should be considered and the possibility of incorporating it within the remit of the Customer Service Centre to ensure greater independence in advising and supporting parents and carers. The new cadre of Choice Advisers should also make working with parents and carers of children with SEN one of its top priorities.

Rationale

- There are significant problems in the way in which agencies communicate with parents. It is vital that staff listen sympathetically and act upon concerns and complaints. Where schools fail to connect with parents families can feel isolated.
- DPP is not felt to be independent in working with parents. The Customer Service Centre might provide a better link between parents and schools, particularly for those parents less able to articulate the needs their child might have.
- There is a significant role for Choice Advisers in helping parents to select the most suitable secondary school for children with SEN.

Recommendation 6

That CYPS review the scope for some mainstream schools within a learning community to specialise in catering for children with a particular special educational need, and the way in which these schools are funded.

Rationale

- It does not seem practical that every mainstream school can provide specialist support for all SEN children.
- Evidence indicates that across the County some schools are already fulfilling a role as centres of specific SEN within a learning community.

Recommendation 7

That schools admitting children with SEN have a clear and consistent approach in line with Devon's Accessibility Planning Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This approach needs to be adopted by all members of staff and any physical adaptations that may be necessary within the school should be installed. When planning any new school building features such as disabled access, sound systems and adequate toilet facilities should be incorporated in the design and

schools encouraged to use their capital improvement funding to make the school fully DDA compliant.

Rationale

- School environments need to be appropriate to meet children's needs as evidence received on sound systems and disabled access demonstrated.
- Necessary adaptations are not always carried out before a pupil who may require them enters the school.
- Teaching staff do not always have sufficient specialist training to ensure the appropriate environment.
- Members do recognise that it is a significant challenge for schools to meet these demands within their budgets, however if pupils are to be successfully included within the mainstream then it is vital that these adaptations are made.

Recommendation 8

That the Council mainstream the benefit entitlement pilot project for families with SEN which has proved so successful in the Local Public Service Agreement 2 (LPSA2).

Rationale

The success of the work undertaken by Devon Welfare Rights has helped families with children with SEN across the County to access a hitherto unmet benefit take up. It is essential that this project is continued.

Recommendation 9

That the SEN framework be mandatory for all schools to ensure that they are more accountable for the way in which they allocate their SEN budget.

Rationale

- The Council's new role is simply to advise and monitor what schools are doing.
- Significant disparities in the way in which schools approach pupils with SEN need to be addressed.
- The Council needs to lead in promoting consistency, ensuring that governors are appropriately trained and are aware of their responsibilities and encouraging schools to work together to share good practice.
- Schools must be more accountable to both the Council and parents over how they spend their money.

Recommendation 10

The Schools' Forum should be asked to review the effect of the new SEN funding proposals to ensure larger primary schools and those with higher than average numbers of children with SEN are not disadvantaged by changes in SEN funding.

Rationale

- Devon schools showed a wide disparity, between 2% and 60%, in the numbers assessed by them as requiring support through Schools Action, Schools Action Plus and statements (see Appendix 3).
- There must be continual assessment of the allocation of SEN funding to ensure that all schools are treated fairly.

Recommendation 11

That schools and education professionals are alerted to the need for improved recognition of dyslexia, particularly where the condition is not associated with behavioural problems.

Rationale

- If dyslexia goes unrecognised without timely intervention this could lead to serious secondary behaviour and emotional problems which could eventually demand a greater resource provision.

- Identification at primary level is essential with appropriate intervention before secondary transfer when the pupil will be expected to deal with more subjects and more teachers.
- To follow the Devon Dyslexia Association advice that all children should be screened routinely in primary school.

Recommendation 12

That the Council set up a register of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) which would list their specialities, training and experience. There should also be a review of LSA pay scales to allow for greater opportunities for career progression.

Rationale

- The Council needs to employ the highest calibre staff to work with children with SEN.
- LSAs need to be appropriately trained, with more status given to their experience and qualifications and remuneration accordingly.
- Schools and head teachers should be able to access the register in order to recruit the most suitable LSA to match a child's needs.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 Members have been impressed with the level of response from the public to this enquiry. The Task Group recognises that parents happy with their child's education are less likely to have made representations to the review; nevertheless there were positive reports from parents about mainstream schools and their child's inclusion as well as the excellent work being undertaken in special schools across the County. The majority of parents, however, who provided testimonies to the Task Group, felt that too often there was a failure to identify and to meet their children's needs.
- 3.2 Members recognise that tensions between what is affordable to the Council and the provision parents feel that their child is entitled to are inevitable. However, there were many representations from parents using battle analogies to describe their experience seeking what they regarded as adequate educational provision for their child. Officers need to work closely with parents using clear rationale in every aspect of the Council and school's decision making to help to avoid parents resorting to expensive independent advice that may lead to costly and distressing tribunals.
- 3.3 For inclusion to succeed, significant work needs to be undertaken to provide a package of support tailored to the individual pupil. The Task Group is concerned that successful inclusion of a pupil with SEN in a mainstream school depended largely on the school regime, particularly how positive an approach the teaching staff have to working with children with SEN. Evidence indicates that there are many schools in the County trying hard to address the needs of pupils with SEN, while regrettably there are others failing to manage inclusion effectively. A number of parents reported to the Task Group that their child, whilst ostensibly being included within a mainstream school environment, was in terms of learning and relationships with peers, being educated separately.
- 3.4 Although there is an obvious link between inclusive education and social inclusion, this is not in itself justification for a blanket inclusion policy. Evidence indicates that while there are many successful inclusions, there are a number of individuals for whom inclusive education is never going to be appropriate. Some students with severe learning difficulties or extreme behaviours will not find it possible to learn alongside mainstream peers. Special schools are able to manage pupil behaviour in a way that mainstream schools cannot do in terms of environment, resources and staff. There is also a need for more collaboration between special and mainstream schools, as well as a greater provision of resources to cater for the increasing complexity of needs.

- 3.5 There are considerable waiting lists for many of the County's special schools. The lack of such places causes an enormous amount of anxiety to parents. The Task Group agreed that locally based special school provision needs to be maintained and developed by refocusing the budget in order to minimize the need for expensive independent and out-of-County placements. It is also apparent that for some children with complex needs, an increase in special school capacity from 38 to 52 weeks a year is needed.
- 3.6 There are children in the current system whose needs are not being met and whose future prospects are bleak unless there is positive intervention. While there is a significant cost in providing SEN children with the appropriate level of support and education, the costs will only escalate if these young people are left unsupported. It is after all in everyone's interests for children to be educated to the best of their potential regardless of individual philosophies and budget pressures.
- 3.7 During the review some witnesses felt that Devon, as an authority was slow in recognising the need for changes in policy and too passive in its approach to SEN. The Task Group urges the Council to respond positively to this report and to act upon these recommendations in a timely fashion, building on some of the excellent work already being undertaken to ensure that there is an appropriate and cost effective provision of support to children with SEN across the County.

4.0 Findings

The Council's position in relation to its statutory duties, policies and budget for Special Educational Needs (SEN)

This section is an overview of the Council's policy on SEN as outlined by senior officers from CYPS during the review process.

4.1 The Council's Duty - Overview of SEN Policy

Officers explained that the Council is under a statutory duty to protect all children. Children with SEN are entitled to have access to mainstream education under successive Acts of Parliament and a DfES Code of Practice. Schools have a duty not to discriminate and are required to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate children with special needs. The expectation is of a continuum of provision which might begin with some extra help with reading and run through to full-time, one-to-one support. The Code of Practice stresses the importance of working in partnership with parents in all aspects of the pupil's education and of the pupil's participation in making decisions and exercising choice in relation to their own education.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amends the 1995 Act and places a duty on all public authorities, including maintained schools, colleges, Pupil Referral Units and nurseries to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. Included in the definition is a wide range of impairments including sensory, dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder, speech and language, and learning difficulties resulting from complex profiles of disability.

Most children have their SEN met by their school through School Action and School Action Plus. School Action involves further assessment, the employment of different materials and methods and occasionally additional adult support. The next stage is School Action Plus, if School Action has not aided a child to make adequate progress and the school seeks advice from the Council's support services, or from health and social care professionals, a new plan may be developed around ideas of how to work differently with this child to achieve progress. Sometimes a child's needs cannot be met even through School Action Plus and there may need to be a statutory assessment and, if appropriate, a multi-disciplinary assessment. As a consequence, the Council may proceed towards making and implementing a statement of SEN which will set out the child's needs in detail and their provision of support. The statement is reviewed at least annually.

The Council has a clear intention to move towards a system that would remove barriers to learning and raise the attainment of the lowest-achieving 20% of children; reduce reliance on separate SEN structures; and find new roles for special schools. However, provision for statemented children is expensive and it has been acknowledged nationally by the Local Government Association that this can become a source of tension between parents, schools and the Local Authority. Therefore the aim is to reduce reliance on statements and delegate money directly to schools (£10,400,000 annually at present) to enable them to plan their overall provision rather than make allocations for an individual child.

“Schools did not appear to be accountable with regard to their SEN provision” – Parent, North Devon

Officers reported that the strategy on inclusive education adopted by the Council was in line with DfES guidance. The term 'inclusion' is used to describe the right of children to access mainstream education alongside their peers. The focus is on the setting's ability to adapt to the needs of the child. An inclusive setting should

provide effective planning and different activity to meet these individual needs. OFSTED reports have highlighted that some secondary schools have found it difficult to respond to the Inclusive Education Strategy but others have been more successful.

The Action Plan for the Inclusive Education Strategy centred on four areas:

1. Development of specialist provision and the future role of special schools
2. The distribution of resources to support the education of children with special and additional needs
3. Monitoring
4. Partnerships

4.2 Number of SEN children in Devon

The table below sets out figures for Devon Maintained Schools/Units as of May 2007.

| Pupils on School Rolls 2007/08 | Number of SEN Children | Percentage of children with SEN | Statemented Pupils on SEN Register | Non-Statemented Pupils on SEN Register |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 94,660 | 18,773 | 19.83 | 2,983 | 15,790 |

The number of children being diagnosed with SEN is growing nationally, as children are increasingly surviving at birth with additional needs. Society has also become more aware that children will fail to achieve unless their needs are detected and supported at an early age. The Council collects data for pupils with SEN who have been statemented, and have a database of 3,000 children; however, for those pupils who are non-statemented but have SEN, schools are self-regulating, potentially creating wide discrepancies in the quality of the data available.

4.3 Cost of providing education and support to children in Devon who have SEN (Maintained and Out-of-County)

| Year | Total SEN funding within the school budget share | School Budget Share | Percentage of School Budget Share |
|-----------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2007/2008 | 35,050,339 | 313,642,227 | 11.18 |
| 2006/2007 | 31,217,310 | 298,254,295 | 10.47 |
| 2005/2006 | 27,571,734 | 270,172,916 | 10.21 |
| 2004/2005 | 24,568,303 | 252,445,052 | 9.73 |

“Broadclyst’s complete approach is excellent. The school provides fantastic support to the children, and there have been marked improvements in my son since he has been at the school” – Parent, North Devon

The above table shows the cost of SEN provision is rising well above inflation. Officers reported that it is extremely challenging to make all the required local SEN provision in a County as geographically large as Devon, coupled with the national growth in the number of children being diagnosed with SEN. In CYPS’s 2008/11 multi-year budget, officers advised that funding for SEN was the biggest issue, and it is not clear how costs and need can be balanced. Special schools are full and many are overspending. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the cost to the Council of placements with independent special schools. This cost

has risen from £4,400,000 in 2004/05 to £7,412,786 in 2007/08 with a projected overspend of £1.9m on independent fees within the Dedicated Schools Grant. The cost of statemented pupils has escalated from £6 million in 2002/03 to £13m in 2007/08.

Officers reported that evidence indicates the Council is not doing anything radically different in supporting special needs than its statistical neighbours. However, officers did advise that work is needed to reduce the dependence on out-of-county placements. The spend per 3-19 year old pupil in Devon maintained special schools is well below the national average at £120 compared to £173. This comparatively low spend is a key contributor to the need to send pupils to out-of-county placements and other providers.

4.4 Special School Provision

| Year | Net Expenditure of Special School Provision | Number of Children in Maintained Special Schools | Cost Per Place |
|-----------|---|--|----------------|
| 2007/2008 | 14,724,278 | 782 | 18,829 |
| 2006/2007 | 12,905,353 | 764 | 16,892 |

There are 10 maintained special schools in the County all funded on a per place basis. Many local authorities have closed down special schools catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, as these pupils' needs are largely being met in mainstream schools. Devon however has only closed one special school in this category in order that its funding might be reinvested: Hillcrest, which had been failing for some time. It is no longer government policy to close special schools and in future, they will increasingly be used to provide support and materials to sustain the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education. Officers reported however that a gradual reduction in the number of children in special schools was planned with more pupils being included in mainstream schools.

4.5 Independent Special Schools

Devon has a number of high profile independent sector providers such as Vbranch House, West of England and the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education. Approximately 200 children are placed in schools not maintained

“Queen Elizabeth’s Community College in Crediton has a good reputation for supporting ASD pupils and has developed a centre for dyslexic children separate from the main school. The benefit of this centre is such that several of its pupils had gone on to university” – Teacher, Exeter

by the Council. As detailed in 4.3, there has been a significant increase in recent years in the costs for independent special school placements. This is probably as a result of this comparatively low level of expenditure by the Council on Devon’s maintained special schools. The Council’s expenditure for fees for independent schools is £89 per pupil compared to the Council’s statistical neighbour expenditure of £71 per pupil. Officers reported that the Council is working in partnership with independent special schools to reduce unit costs with economies of scale. It is anticipated that the developing commissioning strategy for children with SEN will result in a significant reduction in the number of children placed in the independent sector and also those in out-of-county placements.

The breakdown of the £7,412,786 cost to the Council for 2007/2008 independent placements are detailed overleaf:

| Type of Placements | Number of Placements | Cost Per Place | Total Cost |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Sole Funded Day | 113 | £24,613 | £2,781,300 |
| Sole Funded Weekly Residential | 27 | £39,796 | £1,074,494 |
| Sole Funded Termly Residential | 15 | £78,035 | £1,170,535 |
| Joint Funded Weekly Residential | 6 | £40,626 | £243,755 |
| Joint Funded Termly Residential | 10 | £51,232 | £512,322 |
| Joint Funded 52 Week Residential | 31 | £52,592 | £1,630,380 |

4.6 Commissioning around Special Schools

The Council has set up the first central purchasing body under UK public contract regulations for children's placements with the support of the regional commissioning forum. This enables the Council to work closely with other authorities in the South West. The project began by concentrating on placements for children in care, but is now extending into SEN. The central message behind this project is that market controls alone are not enough, there is a need to improve choice and quality in the market. The Council has some of the best developed market management nationally and compares well in managing unit cost increases.

An important policy development for the Council is the use of special schools as hubs around which integrated services for children and young people with severe and complex needs can be developed. If special schools are to provide an integrated framework of support there needs to be a move away from traditional funding arrangements and greater flexibility to use budgets to commission services, such as nursing, counselling or physiotherapy.

“Children with severe disabilities are being placed at schools who are not equipped to meet their needs because they are not being flagged up in advance of the child arriving” – Parent, North Devon

4.7 Monitoring Schools SEN Funding

The SEN framework sets out a school's context in a concise way and is a document to be used for day-to-day planning, organising and monitoring the needs of pupils. It is important for schools to be able to recognise what they are doing regarding SEN funding and provision, and for the Council to have an overview of what is happening in schools across Devon to help ensure the appropriate use of SEN resources.

The SEN Framework is not a statutory requirement, but has been sent to all schools in the County. Officers will visit those schools with large numbers of pupils with SEN, or where specific problems have been identified. An Educational Psychologist will also take part in these visits, as they are more familiar with the schools and able to do the necessary follow up work. The SEN Framework has a key role in helping to raise the attainment of the lowest 20%.

4.8 Detailed Arrangements

Detailed Arrangements funding is allocated on the basis that most schools have some pupils who are not statemented but have low to medium level special needs. £2.3m is currently allocated to primary schools, and £3.3m to secondary schools. It is expected that there will be a significant increase in such funding from April 2008 when schools will be obliged to provide for statemented pupils below 0.6 out of their main budget.

The new system for detailed arrangements has been formulated in response to head teachers not accepting schools' individual registers of SEN as being a fair method of distributing funding. The formula for primary schools is now based on 60% SATs, 20% indices of multiple deprivation and 20% free school dinners. Often the prime instigator behind a statement is the school, and if the money is already in the budget then there will be less incentive to seek additional funding through statementing, which also cost in the region of £5,000 to develop. Less fluctuation in school SEN budgets will help to enable earlier intervention. Exceptional arrangements funding has to be spent on the pupil it is assigned for, while with detailed arrangements schools could spend the money how they liked.

4.9 Joint Agency Teams

There are five Joint Agency Teams (JATs) across Devon, with jointly funded and co-located staff from health and social care for children with SEN and learning disabilities. Since "Every Child Matters", all health and social care support services should be jointly managed in an integrated way. There are three Joint Agency Support Frameworks across the County, which seek to use expertise to best possible effect, sharing skills and good practice.

4.10 County Special Educational Team

By law there are separate school admissions processes for children with a statement and for those without. County Special Educational Team (CSET) is

"Parents of SEN children get a reputation as being troublemakers because they fight and campaign for their child's education" – Parent, North Devon

an administrative team for statemented children, which coordinates information from professionals. CSET and the Schools Admissions team have been brought side-by-side to improve the process for parents, and provide a more joined up service. The new structure and link between CSET and other Schools Access services will help to give more support to parents of children with SEN. Officers within Adult and Community Services are also working to align CSET more closely with the JAT in order to provide appropriate support to children and families in and out of the school environment.

4.11 Axs Pathways

Axs Pathways encourage collaboration between agencies and families, and the build up of a greater capacity of services across the County. A multi-agency team work closely with parents to identify needs at an early stage. There are nine Pathfinders across Devon based within learning communities, and nineteen Pathways. The ambition is to have most of these Pathways core staff based in children's centres and schools, with the majority of therapy staff co-located within special schools.

What is working well

4.12 Devon Portage

Parents reported that Devon Portage is a very helpful service, providing weekly home visiting to 150 pre-school children in the County with special needs and their families. Portage does not dwell on what the child cannot do; rather it is a positive service, where each week workers break down programs into much smaller goals, so that confidence can be built. Portage operates in conjunction with those from a wide range of other agencies, and is subject to Ofsted inspection. It costs approximately £2,000 per annum per child. However there are 25 children currently on the Portage waiting list, equivalent to 2.5 full-time Portage workers and the service is term-time only, which is problematic for children with complex needs that have to be addressed. Devon Portage is also identifying many deprived, under stimulated children, presenting with a learning difficulty that may not actually have one.

4.13 Communication and Interaction Resource Bases

Communication and Interaction Resource Bases (CAIRBs) are predominantly for children on the autistic spectrum but also for children with significant communication difficulties. The major focus of this work is to develop communication, understanding and appropriate social behaviour in order to maximise the chances of children accessing mainstream education. The flexible approach of CAIRBS means that a large proportion of children in the County who might have needed specialist education can now be included in the mainstream. CAIRBS differ significantly from special units/classes in the way that it reflects the Government's inclusion programme being based around a specialist teacher and LSA model. Officers reported that evidence indicates CAIRBS are an effective provision measured in terms of cost, inclusion, pupil's progress and satisfaction.

"In trying to include a pupil with ASD into the mainstream classroom, there can be issues about two levels of accepted behaviour" – Teacher, Exeter

4.14 Provision for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

The County provides 10 Primary Resource Bases for children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Each base serves the schools within its learning communities and they help to align schools' work on behavioural problems. Countywide these bases have been located according to need rather than geographical spread. Together with the former Behaviour Support teams, they constitute the Primary Behaviour Network and have proved useful in helping other services related to children (such as CAIRBS) to link and promote the schools' ability to cope with behavioural problems on a day-to-day basis. Each base costs £50,000 per annum, with part of this funding being used to release LSAs and support them in implementing six weeks of training, which has been well received by the schools.

4.15 Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

The new Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials offer a common framework for managing behaviour. This framework has been received positively by schools in the Learning Communities and it offers an opportunity to work proactively in the area of emotional development and well-being. It teaches young people behavioural skills in specific lessons which they can then begin to apply to other areas of their school and home life. Work is currently being undertaken to see how SEAL can be extended to support the needs of children with more complex SEN.

4.16 Integrated Working

The Task Group received evidence from professionals that the “Every Child Matters” agenda had generated a much greater desire by agencies to work together more collaboratively and this had improved both integration and accountability. An example given was of a joint project “Understanding and Promoting Mental Health” between CAMHS and the Primary Resource Base. Officers reported that education and social care are now working in a more formally integrated way and this greatly aided communication with parents.

4.17 Early Intervention

The pastoral support service has opened up pathways for early intervention and inclusion. Workers can support families holistically, providing empathy and understanding to the neediest of children. In some cases this is having very positive outcomes, as the Task Group witnessed at Southbrook Special School for instance. Officers also reported that a Devon parenting strategy is under review and will be operational by summer 2008, which will help to strengthen partnership work with parents and aid early intervention.

A successful intervention for ASD children has been the EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus programmes provided by the National Autistic Society. EarlyBird supports parents between diagnosis and school placement, and helps facilitate children’s social communication and behaviour. EarlyBird Plus specifically aims to support children aged 4–9 in a school setting.

“It is far from clear who is responsible for statementing. There needs to be proper accountability to ensure that statements are carried out correctly” – Parent, South Devon

4.18 Respite

Social care respite is being aligned with the work of special schools. Parents and carers are being offered respite care within their own homes for two nights a week and often this is sufficient to help them and other family members to feel able to cope. This programme means that each child will have an allocation based on a points based assessment, with allocations on bands between £500 to £20,000 according to need, being used as funding breaks. These sums will be offered as direct payments to parents and carers. The JAT is also now running a voucher scheme for young people with SEN throughout the summer as part of a carers’ breaks initiative.

4.19 Parent as Key Worker

Many parents are now their child’s key worker. This is valuable and mutually beneficial as it means that a parent has more control, can access their child’s JAT record, call reviews and organise equipment and services once assessments have been carried out by professionals. The JAT provides professional help for those families where more support is needed or it would be inappropriate for parents to act in this capacity. It was noted that it is important parents undertaking a key worker role should be treated as equals within the JAT setting, receiving regular updating about developments.

What could be improved

4.20 From a Parent’s Perspective

A number of representations were made to the Task Group by professionals and parents indicating gaps between strategy and reality, implying that not all needs of children with SEN in the County are being met. Parents complained that SEN children were often allowed to fail before any help was offered to them. They said that it was difficult to make any kind of challenge to the system and they often felt physically exhausted and emotionally drained from the process. They claimed that although they knew their children best they were not always listened to or respected by the teaching staff and professionals involved. Parents did not feel teachers viewed them as partners, or wanted to work together with them, which made it difficult to get information.

Some parents also complained of a lack of communication about the latest developments and strategies which would affect a school and in turn their child's education. Particular reference was made to re-commissioning and school closures and they complained that rumours seemed to circulate, creating anxiety as no-one seemed to know what was going on (e.g. proposed closure of the Speech and Language Unit at Newtown Primary School).

There was also no clear evidence that once a statement had been issued there would be an automatic referral and some evidence indicated that there were significant gaps in passing on records both between schools and within CYPS. Parents indicated that in some schools SENCOs did not appear to have the requisite skills and training to be able to undertake their role and sometimes considerable conflict had developed.

“Extreme forms of ASD are very difficult for mainstream schools to deal with” – Head teacher, Exeter

There were significant numbers of parents whom themselves had dyslexia and other SEN and were not able to articulate their child's needs. Those less articulate families were not getting the appropriate provision for their child, unless the child's needs were extremely complex. Head teachers reported that a greater number of children with professional family backgrounds presenting at special schools than ever before; parents who knew the type of provision they wanted for their child and could articulate their demands. Head teachers of special schools reported feeling uncomfortable with this because for every pupil in the school there were many other children who they felt might benefit from the type of provision special schools could provide.

Many parents with SEN children included in mainstream schooling were concerned about whether their child was getting the appropriate level of provision. The comments below indicate some of their concerns:

- Does “inclusion” mean merely a child's physical presence within a mainstream school, or are they being equipped to be included in society and have the best chance in life?
- SEN children are often seen as naughty or challenging; are mainstream schools just content to minimize difficulties?
- Are LSAs in some cases simply providing child care to SEN children not education?
- How can autistic children who need small quiet units cope in mainstream secondary schools?
- SEN children need more time to learn than their mainstream peers—is this always taken into account?

Parents reported that the shock of diagnosis could be very profound, and some felt this almost like a death, in the loss of previous expectations they might have had of their child, regardless of whether such a diagnosis was made early in the child's life or much later. It can for instance take many years before autism is finally diagnosed, and although parents and extended family may have some awareness of the condition for a long time, it is still a shock when the label is attached. Training for staff in helping families come to terms with this special type of loss would be beneficial for some families who can be torn apart.

4.22 Advocacy Service

There is evidence to suggest there would be benefit in having an advocacy service, as currently parents felt that not 'every child' mattered and professional support is needed to change this. Schools often seem happy just for children to get by and behave. Parents need information readily available on the role of various specialists, and what they can expect from having their child statemented, particularly in terms social and emotional behaviour.

4.23 Respite

As highlighted in the report on 'Transition between Children's and Adult Services at age 18', submitted to the Community Services Overview/Scrutiny

"There have never been so many parents who want to get their child into a special school" – Head teacher, Exeter

Committee on 24 July 2007, respite is of real concern for parents. Respite is essential for parents' continuing health and ability to look after their child. It is significantly cheaper for the authority to provide one or two nights a week respite than to give full-time residential care, and it is often in everyone's best interests to give parents the necessary break so that they are able to continue to look after their child within the home. Evidence indicates that the Council does not currently have an adequate provision of respite services, with a particular need for more respite attached to special schools. The Joint Area Review had been critical about the Council's provision of respite care and the need to bring about a rapid improvement; some efforts however are being made to address the issues of respite care as specified in 4.18 (page 17).

The Task Group received evidence to suggest that during school holidays LSAs, escorts and drivers would need little supplementary training to become highly effective respite carers. It would therefore seem to be a good use of money to develop this group into a bank of carers whom parents could call upon when needed. This would also develop the scope of LSAs, escorts and drivers to offer a better service during term time. Their appreciation of the difficulties that families face in the holiday periods would enhance their provision and understanding of the value of services.

Often the need for residential placement of an SEN child is not educational but because the family is unable to cope with the time outside school and at home. Not addressing the needs of these families is costly, and increases the likelihood of a family breakdown. It is essential that the needs of these children are met closer to home.

4.24 Tribunals

A significant number of parents complained that they had had a long battle to get their child assessed and as a consequence they had resorted to private assessment. In North Devon after waiting two years for their son's assessment a parent had gone privately. Parents who are either unhappy about their child's

progress in mainstream or consider they have waited too long for an assessment proceed to tribunal. As the figures in the tables below illustrate, the cost to the Council of tribunals is rising. Often the outcome of these tribunals is to award a child a place at a special school but even after an agreement is made, it can take still take months for an appropriate placement to be found.

| 2006/07 | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Appeals | LA con- ceded | With- drawn | Partial verdict | Parents' favour | Dismissed | Ongoing | Cost £ |
| 35 | 16 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 370,113 |
| 2005/06 | | | | | | | |
| 35 | 3 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 260,951 |

“The emphasis of mainstream schools with SEN children is on managing a child’s behaviour, not on what a child could achieve in terms of learning potential” – Parent, South Devon

4.25 Adoption

Parents felt that the Council’s attitude to be that adoption was in itself the solution to any problems a child might have. This is manifestly not the case as a multitude of complex problems are not going to be suddenly resolved by a child’s being adopted. It is vital the Council continues to support young people and parents after the adoption process has been completed. It was also reported that foster parents are often left to their own devices and are often totally bewildered with an SEN child.

4.26 Devon Parent Partnership

A number of parents reported to the review that they had not been made aware of the Devon Parent Partnership (DPP). The role of this service is to offer parents and carers of children with SEN support and accurate information. DPP try to recognise the journey that parents are involved in and work with them to allay any fears and frustrations they may have. Figures from CYPS reveal that whilst 76% of parents reported that they had been informed about DPP only 12% advised that they had actually contacted it.

4.27 Inclusive Education

The reason behind an SEN child’s difficult behaviour at some schools is often that they are ‘a square peg in a round hole’. Inclusion is individualistic and will only work when there is appropriate support available. Children face a constant struggle if they are being pushed through an education system that is not in any way suited to their needs. A number of parents reported that they cannot envisage their child making progress in their present mainstream school environment; rather they are being set up to fail. Where inclusion does not work, it is not only a child’s education that suffers, but their emotional well being and family life also.

Children with very complex needs are usually picked up and provided with an appropriate level of support. The problem is often the grey area of pupils who are just getting by, and slowly dropping behind in their class. Parents also feel that there is a need for more understanding of young people with behavioural problems. Sensory and physical needs are often more readily dealt with, as they are more obvious than those with psychological demands.

The Task Group received evidence about some schools that had seemingly no experience or understanding of how they might accommodate certain SEN students in the mainstream. Parents reported how one school had focussed on adapting the physical environment for their son, thinking that by doing that he was now included, when in actual fact he was not being included in any meaningful way. One parent reported that her son had a physical disability and his school has had no real idea how to include him in PE classes; Teachers at the school have undertaken research on the internet to find ways that he might be accommodated, although it makes more sense if the Council disseminates such information to schools as part of the inclusion policy.

One parent advised that two of his SEN children had been included successfully, but another had problems because he was misplaced in the mainstream and had not had the speech and language therapy he needed, leading to frustration, behaviour problems and talk of exclusion. Since he has

“It is very difficult to make any kind of challenge to the system” – Parent, South Devon

been at a special school, he has made tremendous progress. The Task Group also learnt of instances where parents have moved their child with SEN to an alternative mainstream school which understands the needs of their child better. Parents are then in a position of having to transport their child at their own expense to school both limiting their ability to work and adding to the stress of living with a child with SEN.

4.28 Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools

Progress towards an inclusive education system needs to be paced so that the skills and resources in mainstream schools are developed in advance of SEN children being placed there. The Task Group received a number of representations from parents with concerns over their child's transition from primary to secondary school. This transition is difficult for most children, but particularly so for those with SEN. The success of the transition varied markedly from school to school, depending largely on the attitude of head teachers as to how much work was undertaken preparing a child for their move. It is apparent that all secondary schools in Devon should allow SEN pupils to come into the school before they start in order to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The primary school ethos of nurturing lent itself better to the inclusion policy than secondary schools, where it can be difficult to have effective inclusion. Primary schools have a different emphasis on teaching pupils, and not teaching specific subjects as in secondary schools. Many youngsters with SEN have problems identifying with secondary schools where the environment is different to that in primary schools, and there are more distinct social groupings. By having a full time LSA pupil's with SEN are singled out as being different and can feel that more acutely than they would in a special school. It was reported that mainstream secondary schools, can be the worst case scenario for autistic children, as these children need small, quiet units.

4.29 Special Schools

The Task Group received a number of reports indicating a lack of places for children in special schools across the County. Head teachers reported that there have never been so many parents wanting to get their child into special schools. Devon is a net 'importer' of children, and some families move to Devon specifically to send their children to one of the County's special schools.

Parents told the Task Group that it was a common misconception that special schools were all well resourced; some operated without basic occupational

therapy or nursing support, and only limited speech and language therapy. This was a great concern, as many of these children needed this additional support if they were to be educated. Members felt that it was a false economy for the Council not to resource special schools adequately, as evidence indicated that placements break down if there was not the provision of specialist support, and parents/carers might then seek to move their child to an independent school. There were also problems with some mainstream schools not being prepared to take significant numbers of pupils with SEN so children ended up going to independent special schools at far greater expense to the Council.

“Bratton Fleming Primary School is brilliant in including SEN children within the mainstream classes” – Parent, North Devon

There is a need for special schools to be able to operate for more than the 39 weeks of term a year. Some parents of children with complex needs find it difficult to cope through the school holiday periods. There is also a need for more 16–19 special school education, as there is currently a lack of provision and opportunities. 16 is not an appropriate age for many children to leave their special school and the possibilities of a more integrated 14–19 provision for children with complex needs should be developed.

4.30 Special School Split Placements and Outreach

It is important that secondary schools accept children from special schools for part-time programmes. Split placements are also important where a child needs peer interaction unobtainable in a special school setting and can also help to maintain ties to the child’s home locality especially where the special school is a long way from the child’s home. The benefits to the professionals are that it allows for the exchange of expertise that develops skills for both schools.

Outreach from special schools is vital in ensuring that SEN children’s needs are met in the mainstream. The notion of ‘permeable walls’ between special and mainstream schools is an important part of the Council’s Inclusive Education Strategy. There are a number of instances where pupils move between classes at a special school and an ordinary school such as between Bidwell Brook and Dartington Primary School. Special Schools can provide help, support guidance, differentiated curriculum and lesson plans as well as the practical resources to deliver lessons to particular pupils in the mainstream.

A lack of resources means there are insufficient levels of outreach available to support SEN children’s inclusion in a mainstream context. Special schools across the County each receive £8,000 a year for their outreach work. Evidence indicates however that although outreach support is beginning to develop, this is generally informal and difficulties are being experienced in establishing genuine partnerships. There were a number of reports from special schools that although they had an outreach strategy, providing training for LSA’s, strategic support and learning inclusion support, they are only able to provide outreach for the equivalent of one teaching staff day a week.

4.31 Early Intervention

Early assessment and intervention is essential if every child is to be given the possibility of achieving its potential. Early diagnosis makes a great difference to a child’s quality of life, since assistance could then be given in coming to terms with their disorder and managing the limitations it imposed. Some pre-school intervention initiatives have been set up across the County but there is a need to work more closely with Health on early diagnosis of ASD for instance.

Dyslexia is not always diagnosed at an early stage and these children sometimes become disillusioned with a school that is not meeting their needs and drop out of education. The consequences of this could be unemployment, and subsequent problems with drugs, alcohol and crime. It is readily apparent

“Joint Agency forms are too complicated and time-consuming to fill in” – Parent, Exeter

that early intervention could result in a reduction in youth offending. It is also clear that some children might only need a short period of intensive support while others would need prolonged support. A number of special schools told the Task Group that they often picked up SEN in children at year 6/7 and argued that if these cases had been picked up at Year 1 there might have been a greater chance that they could be included in mainstream education.

Support workers in both school and family settings can provide vital early intervention and help develop parenting skills, which could significantly improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their parents. Such initiatives are relatively inexpensive in comparison to what the costs might be over a lifetime. The Early Years Review advocated the need to support children at the earliest possible stage; supporting the domestic domain is essential and is inextricably linked with a child’s schooling.

4.32

Discrepancies

It is apparent from the representations the Task Group received that there are significant inconsistencies in SEN provision and funding in Devon. Although it is to be expected that there are variations across a rural and sparsely populated County such as Devon, the disparity in service provision appears to be particularly pronounced. It is also unclear whether the Council’s funding formula recognises the high number of SEN children at some schools and the subsequent difficulties this could cause. The Task Group was told that as children have become increasingly complex in their needs the funding has not increased accordingly, leaving some under funded pupils in both the mainstream and in special schools.

The Task Group is concerned at the wide variation in the number of children on roll on Schools Action, Schools Action Plus and Statemented pupils (see Appendix 3). This is less than 2% in some schools, whilst others show proportions of SEN children up to 60%, which is well over the 20% national average. Whilst some differences could be related to the associated factors of social deprivation, there are issues about whether the criteria for SEN are the same from one school to another. Members questioned whether schools that had low SEN numbers were avoiding taking their share of SEN pupils, or that there were different measures being utilized for establishing whether a young person had an SEN. Mainstream schools with a reputation for being good with pupils with SEN did appear in some cases to be overloaded, raising issues about the balance in a school when the number of pupils with SEN reached a certain level. Officers suggested that often the crucial factor in the apparent discrepancies was the school’s confidence in dealing with SEN pupils and being able to provide appropriate support.

Cases were reported to the Task Group of children with severe physical disabilities not being flagged up to schools in advance, and subsequently the correct facilities and amenities to meet these children’s needs not being put in place. It could then take a considerable amount of time to ensure a school is fully equipped to meet these pupils’ needs, which is fair neither to the children nor the staff involved. Once a statement is issued there should be an automatic referral. The service should monitor these children from entry to

***“It is worrying that there are parents in the County who did not know what resource provision is available for their child”
– Parent, Exeter***

school onwards. Communication between agencies including schools should be more effective, with continued training to create a more integrated and effective response.

4.33 Medication

Concerns were raised about the amount of medication some young people with SEN required, although it was apparent that in some cases there were young pupils who would not be able to stay on in the school without it. Head teachers at special schools reported that a lack of involvement from health services was evident not just in terms of administering medication, but also with speech therapy and physiotherapy for instance.

4.34 Out of Catchment Area Schooling

There are problems where pupils attend schools outside their catchment area, having to travel long distances, with daily journey times totalling three hours in some cases. There is a philosophical conflict between grouping students with similar needs, and local schools for local children. It could be difficult to be the only child in a wheelchair at a school, while it posed a different set of difficulties to be transported 20 miles away from home each day to a school with children with similar needs. Officers advised that they were addressing the long journeys that children with SEN were being required to make, which could lead to the need for investment in new provision in some parts of the County. There are occasions when a school may be chosen for a young person to attend that is out of the area, but which parents felt more suitable to their child's needs. It is then the parent's responsibility to transport their child to and from school.

There are a high number of ASD statemented pupils from out of the area attending Queen Elizabeth's Community College in Crediton for instance; 13 alone are from Exeter. Evidence indicates that this number is partly due to the school's excellent reputation in the ASD field, but it suggests the high intake of pupils with SEN is also because other schools in the region 'recommend' parents sending their child to the school.

4.35 Local Public Service Agreement 2

The Council has a Local Public Service Agreement target to improve the incomes of families of children with SEN and it aims to ensure that they receive their full financial entitlement by March 2008. The programme has already achieved startling results: by June 2007 408 families had been identified as having potential additional entitlement, of whom 196 had been successful and 212 were still awaiting a result.

This project is exposing significant unmet need in the County and, is on target to raise an extra £2m every year for families in need. This is life-changing money for these families. Few claims are made in the first five years of a child's life, partly because diagnosis can take time and partly because of lack

“Speech therapy is vital as it enables children to access learning, but it tends to be sidelined, as it is not a specific enough health need” – Head teacher, Exeter

of awareness of the available benefits. Families continue to report that the benefit system is difficult to understand and navigate; with forms too large and complex for parents who were already stressed and exhausted. It also tends to be underestimated how difficult it is for parents to describe what is wrong with their child in order to fulfil the evidence requirements.

4.36 School Exclusions

Concern was expressed by parents about the use of school exclusions. The Task Group however is mindful that a review of school exclusions was agreed by the Community Services Overview/Scrutiny Committee on 30 May 2007 and felt that issues relating to exclusions should be examined in detail by this separate Task Group.

“There are significant disparities in the way in which different schools approach pupils with SEN” – Parent, Exeter

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| Local Government Act 1972 List of Background Papers | |
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1.0 Appendix 1 - Evidence regarding specific conditions

1.1 Autistic Spectrum Disorder Children

There are approximately 700 children on the Autistic Spectrum Disorders register at present in Devon, 433 of whom are statemented for ASD. The numbers of young people with ASD are increasing nationally, but it is unclear whether this is due to better diagnosis or an actual increase in numbers of SEN. Children with ASD are particularly vulnerable to isolation and exclusion unless appropriate provision is made. They can be very bright, but often have an inability to tolerate their peers; this means that for some individuals it is difficult for them to be included in mainstream schools. At the other end of the scale are ASD children who sit quietly at the back of the class learning little. Some suffer from hyperacusis (highly sensitive hearing), which can leave them overwhelmed by background noise and unable to concentrate on the teacher's voice. Subsequently ASD children need to have information imparted to them in different ways and in different teaching environments. ASD pupils benefit from a calm atmosphere, tailored to their needs in order that they could focus better. For the neediest children on the Autistic Spectrum mainstream education is not appropriate, as they are not able to learn in this environment and so might prevent other children from learning.

1.2 ASD School

It was reported to the Task Group that there have been significant improvements across the County working with young people with Autism, however it is apparent that there are still gaps in mainstream schools particularly in the secondary sector. There also seems to be a shortfall in terms of providing services to those young people with ASD post-16. The implication for ASD children at secondary schools is more significant than at primary schools where there are Primary CAIRBS. Secondary schools while having the biggest need for CAIRBS also represented the biggest cost in being able to provide them. A parent reported that a SENCO at one secondary school openly admitted that neither he nor anyone else at their school had any awareness or training in dealing with pupils with autism. This would be thought to be necessary in order to be able to devise, implement and monitor individual educational plans. Members felt it questionable how a child could be included in a mainstream school that had so little understanding in catering for autistic children.

Members received reports that specialist mainstream schools are needed for cluster groups of ASD children. Specialist units appear to work well in being able to take pupils out of classes they could not cope in, and provide them with a setting to do other positive work helping to raise their self-esteem. An ASD school can provide a more relaxed learning environment, and allow these children's interests to develop in a way that a mainstream environment may not allow.

1.3 Dyslexia

Devon has been late in recognizing the problem of dyslexia, which has resulted in possibly several generations of young people not getting the support they should have received. Parents felt that there are still some professionals in the County who did not believe in the concept of dyslexia and who certainly did not understand dyslexic children. This created a lot of tension and anxiety for the children and parents involved. The focus of some professionals centred on a child's behaviour, when often poor behaviour is a manifestation of a child's frustration with their dyslexia for instance. One parent advised that the school her dyslexic son had attended had never addressed his needs, rather which he was written off as 'thick' and treated accordingly.

If dyslexia diagnosis is delayed then there could be overlays of problems. It is vital that primary school teachers are equipped with good diagnostic skills and are able to identify pupils with dyslexia and other SEN at the earliest possible opportunity.

There are simple exercises to help children overcome their dyslexia, but it is crucial that these are started as early as possible. All too often, it is the quiet children that did not get the support they needed, these young people with dyslexia are still very much felt to be the hidden SEN.

Evidence indicates that there are pockets of good practice in the County. Devon has a quality mark in terms of strategies and support to young people with dyslexia, and officers reported that the authority continues to work with the British Dyslexia Association. However while it is encouraging that the Council is undertaking some good work with dyslexia it is apparent that considerably more needs to be done. The fact is that most tribunals relate to pupils with dyslexia. Professionals and parents alike feel that there is insufficient provision and in-depth awareness in the County about an education system that fitted a dyslexic child's needs.

The Devon Dyslexia Association (DDA) reported that the *Inclusive Education in Devon, Dyslexia: Guidance on Identification, Assessment and Intervention* policy document focuses solely on problems of literacy experienced by a child with dyslexia and not on numerical difficulties. The DDA appreciates the Council promoting dyslexia friendly class rooms, but feels the Council should also adopt the concept of dyslexia friendly schools, which would lead to the awards of the BDA Quality Mark. The Dyslexia Helpline for parents and teachers is a helpful initiative, but the helpline is only open for half a day a week, so only very few individuals can access this helpline and the profile of the helpline needs to be raised accordingly.

1.4 Auditory Processing Disorder

Although many children with deafness are picked up through a central screening process, there are more young people coming through to the health services with central deafness, or what is known as Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). These children often pass normal hearing tests, in a one to one situation, these young people might be relatively unaffected, but given a classroom situation then they might start to under function quite dramatically. There is often a change in the young person's performance; a child in mainstream setting is developing normally, and gradually over time there appears to be an accumulative impression of underperformance. This can be associated with auditory processing but not specifically only to auditory processing.

The age of diagnosis is often late, with children often being carried along by their friends. It is not uncommon to find referral as late as 8 - 12 years. As soon as the curriculum begins to get harder then APD children inevitably start to struggle. It is often around this transition time into secondary education, and the time when children have to do more individual working. Most referrals came from paediatricians, occasionally they came from speech and language units, but rarely from education. The earlier the detection of APD the better a child may fare.

Smaller classrooms certainly help, as did buddy style learning, where pupils could crib and increase self-esteem and confidence. The acoustic path is also crucial. It is necessary to have an environment that gave rise to good communication signals. All new schools should also have sound field enrichment systems, with teachers microphoned, as many other children with assorted issues would be helped. These systems cost in the region of £1200 each. If APD is not well managed, children could get bored, disruptive and a naughty label. There are many management styles for APD youngsters, the most simple of which is for APD pupils to sit at the front of class. Those most at risk in mainstream were those moderately effected, who are potentially high achievers. These children might be able to struggle on with their APD, but are not reaching anything like their potential.

Many children are falling behind in school because they do not hear properly what the teacher is saying. These children are often overlooked and made to feel stupid. In addition to those pupils affected by APD, a high number of children under the age of 8 also suffered from glue ear. It is vital therefore, that teaching staff have an awareness of these hearing related conditions so intervention measures can be taken to ensure that these children are being reached within a classroom context.

1.5 Visually Impaired Children

Visually impaired children can be included in mainstream schools. Resource based secondary schools are superb for many children with visual impairments, but some young people with complex needs would not fit in. Some visually impaired young people with good language skills and an average IQ are often put into low sets because they cannot cope with the pace of a class due to their sight problems. The level of support young people with visual impairments need is however more complicated than a few modifications to the existing curriculum. It was reported to the Task Group that Devon lacks a Multi-sensory Impairment Specialist.

1.6 Conductive Education

Conductive education provides tremendous confidence to children with Cerebral Palsy, because it teaches them what they could do for themselves rather than that they need always be dependent on others. Children are shown how to problem solve, learn independent skills and build up their strength so that they are able to have a quality life. There is benefit in children with similar needs being grouped together, as they feel far less isolated. The children gained a great deal of courage and motivation from working together. Evidence indicates that conductive education helped children with Cerebral Palsy greatly but it really needs to be part of everyday life for the children in order to make a difference. There is conductive education available in other parts of the country, but currently not in Devon. Vranck House is a centre for Cerebral Palsy children, but they do not provide conductive education.

2.0 Appendix 2 - Council policy / Cost comparisons

2.1 Council Policy

This study into the provision and support of SEN children across the County directly links to the priorities of the Strategic Plan. A priority of the Strategic Plan 2006–2011, is that 'Devon's children should have the best possible start in life and gain the knowledge and skills they need to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives'. One of the objectives under this remit is to support parents, families and carers to help children and young people enjoy learning, aim for excellence and achieve to the best of their ability.

2.2 Inclusive Education: Defining Principles

Excellence For All Children: The Development Of An Inclusive Education System In Devon (2005) establishes the context and approach the Council has to meeting the needs of SEN children:

2.1 We believe that an inclusive education system is one which:

2.1.1 Places children, not institutions, at the centre and focuses on their needs and well-being.

2.1.2 Has the highest expectations of all children and their potential to achieve success, whatever their circumstances.

2.1.3 Recognises that parents/carers have the right to be fully involved at all times and that they must be engaged as active partners in making decisions about their children's education and well-being.

2.1.4 Ensures that the views of children and young people are sought and given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability.

2.1.5 Recognises every child's entitlement to gain full access to a broad and balanced curriculum, alongside their peers in a mainstream setting in their local communities wherever possible, enabling full and active participation in the life of the school and the highest possible levels of achievement.

2.1.6 Ensures this entitlement by maintaining a flexible, responsive continuum of provision to match a continuum of need. Such a continuum includes appropriately adapted, differentiated and targeted curriculum delivery, reflecting language and cultural diversity as appropriate, and services which can help to enhance the capacity of schools and early years settings to meet a diverse range of needs.

2.1.7 Provides opportunities for children attending special schools to learn alongside mainstream peers and vice versa, and interchange of staff between the two sectors.

2.1.8 Emphasises that those responsible for meeting children's educational needs – primarily the governors and staff of our schools – must take responsibility for providing high quality education for all children, with the Local Authority and other agencies providing appropriate support.

2.1.9 Works in direct partnership with Health, Social Care and the voluntary sector in meeting the needs of children and delivering improved outcomes for them, through services, schools and other settings, jointly planning and implementing strategy in ways which make best use of resources.

2.1.10 Relates to all aspects of educational provision, as proposed in the Extended Schools Guidance, and involves youth services, libraries and other sources of support, advice and information.

2.1.11 Has the full support of elected Members of the County Council.

2.3 Report from CYPS – SEN Cost Comparisons

Below are two sets of cost comparisons drawing on 2006/7 and 2007/8 data to pick out key points in relation to our statistical neighbours and national comparisons. For the first Anne Porter has drawn on the March 2007 SEN/LDD report from government. I have then added 5 points drawing on 2007/8 data, using the section 52 financial report as we are obviously yet to receive the overall March 2008 report. Section 52 is designed to help LAs benchmark and is a source for the more interpretive report we will receive in March. Section 52 uses as a comparative indicator the spend per pupil, which is the total spend for that year

divided by the number of pupils in the relevant cohort. It is not a measure of the actual spend on a specific pupil.

Given the potential for variation in the way different authorities manage their special needs and complete this return, these figures do need to be treated with considerable caution. Nevertheless, there are some helpful *indications* of where Devon stands on its SEN expenditure in comparison to its statistical neighbours.

Taken overall, from these indications you would not conclude that Devon was doing anything radically different in supporting special needs than its statistical neighbours are, and current plans to bring more cases back to Devon schools will redress some of the balance where Devon is spending more on independent placements.

Mike Young

Section A - Source: SEN/LDD. A tool to support LA self evaluation. Part 1. Data Annex - Devon - March 2007 - DfES SEN Adviser Team.

The following commentary relates to the findings in this document but it should be borne in mind that forms are not always completed consistently across LAs and there may be some misleading information – although across all LAs this may be less than the disparity identified amongst smaller datasets.

Strategic and Service Management

Resources

1. In line with findings from the Section 52 reports Devon spends less on strategic management, assessment and co-ordination per pupil 3-19 than the national average. Nationally spend is £37 per pupil and Devon spends £27.
2. Resources held centrally for LA Specialist Advisory and Support Services – that is not delegated to schools – is low for Devon compared to national. Nationally the figure rose from £24 in 2005/6 to £27 in 2006/7. In Devon we held £17 in 2005/6 and this decreased significantly to £6 in 2006/7. This could reflect a change in the way forms have been completed but the amount is still below the national average. The impact of this could be that the LA lacks sufficient capacity to support Devon schools in capacity building to meet the full range of special educational needs we would expect to see catered for in mainstream schools.
3. Devon's notional SEN delegated to mainstream schools is well above the national average. In 2005/6 this figure was £51 above the national average and in 2006/7 this rose to £74 above. This puts money directly into schools in line with national advice but leaves the centre with little money for support services or commissioning opportunities.
4. Nationally there has been a small decrease in the notional SEN budget as a share of the individual school budget whereas in Devon there has been a small increase. Devon delegates a significantly higher percentage of identified SEN funding to schools than the national average. The 2006/7 comparison is 10.0% for Devon compared to 4.6% nationally.
5. Devon has increased the spend on individually assigned resources per pupil which brings us closer to the national average at £31 national and £27 Devon. However, the trend is a drop nationally and an increase in Devon.
6. The spend per 3-19 pupil in Devon maintained special schools is well below the national average at £120 compared to £173 although growth is broadly in line.

This comparatively low spend may have resulted in the need to send pupils to out of authority placements and other providers.

7. The average spend on Independent and non-maintained placements for Devon pupils in 2006/7 is less than the national average at £33,988 per placed pupil compared to a national average of £43,921, or £58 per pupil. However, the number of placements made (2005/6) is slightly above national average and increasing marginally whilst the national figure remains the same. This may reflect the lower spend per pupil in Devon maintained special schools compared to the national average.

The delegation figures are unsurprising in some ways because of the low budget share allocated to Devon. School costs are not correspondingly lower and so for our schools to be able to do the same job we need to delegate a higher percentage of our budget. This leaves us with less centrally to support our schools in developing their provisions to meet the range of needs identified.

Anne Porter

Section B – 2007/8 Section 52 statistics

The 2007/8 section 52 table gives a number of points of comparison with our statistical neighbours (henceforth SN). As explained above the figures need to be treated with caution as authorities both do things in different ways and clearly do not all fill in the table in the same way. In each case the expenditure is expressed as a sum per pupil. The report is compiled by the DCSF to help LAs benchmark their expenditure.

1. Devon is just average at £61 for the package of pupils out of school - PRUs, behaviour support and education otherwise.
2. However, for PRUs alone Devon is below average in what it spends, £21 compared to £33 on average. Of our immediate neighbours, Somerset spends £37 and Cornwall £38 according to this report. Devon is average for what is spent on behaviour support within the above package (£8). Permanent secondary exclusions are too high in Devon (141 last year) given the consequences for the young person and communities. Though not the only factor, lack of flexibility in the PRU system is not helping.
3. Perhaps not surprisingly, Devon is above average in the category of fees for independent schools, an increase over last year. The SN average is £71 while Devon's expenditure is £89 per pupil. There is a lot of variation in this column, from £31 to £138. Somerset and Cornwall are both lower at £76 and £57 respectively but Dorset spends a good deal more with a figure of £138. A great deal of work has gone into improving Devon's performance at tribunal and an invest-to-save project to reduce the dependence on out-county placements. The latter has yet to bear fruit but has support from the special schools - essential to any success.
4. Devon is close to average in its spending on educational psychology services at £16 compared to an SN average of £17, with our immediate neighbours again not very different at £19 for Somerset and £23 for Cornwall.
5. Devon continues to spend below average on SEN administration.

November 2007

3.0 **Appendix 3 - Information on school numbers of pupils with SEN Spring 2007**

3.1 Schools with under 10% of children on Schools Action, Schools Action Plus or with a Statement

| | |
|---|------|
| Colyton Grammar School | 1.8% |
| Bishops Nympton Primary School | 2.8% |
| Culmstock Primary School | 3.2% |
| Bishops Tawton Primary School | 3.8% |
| Kingsbridge Community College | 4.6% |
| Feniton Church of England Primary School | 5.0% |
| Holywell Church of England Primary School | 5.4% |
| Sidmouth Infants School | 5.5% |
| Parracombe Church of England Primary School | 5.7% |
| Chagford Church of England Primary School | 5.9% |
| Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School | 5.9% |
| Monkleigh Primary School | 6.2% |
| Woolborough Church of England Primary School | 6.4% |
| Broadhembury Church of England Primary School | 6.5% |
| Exbourne Church of England Primary School | 7.0% |
| Our Ladies Catholic Primary School Barnstaple | 7.3% |
| Doddiscombesleigh Primary School | 7.5% |
| Silverton Church of England Primary School | 7.5% |
| Uffculme School | 7.7% |
| Kingswear Community Primary School | 7.7% |
| Landscope Church of England Primary School | 7.7% |
| Newton St Cyres Primary School | 7.8% |
| Stockland Church of England Primary School | 8.0% |

| | |
|--|------|
| Stoke Canon Church of England Primary School | 8.2% |
| Whimple Primary School | 8.2% |
| Chumleigh Primary School | 8.3% |
| Bolham Community Primary School | 8.5% |
| The Topsham School | 8.5% |
| Beaford Community Primary & Nursery school | 8.7% |
| Branscombe Church of England Primary School | 8.7% |
| Broadwoodwidge Primary School | 8.8% |
| Shaldon Primary School | 8.8% |
| Kingskerswell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School | 8.9% |
| Hatherleigh Community Primary School | 8.9% |
| Black Torrington Church of England Primary School | 9.1% |
| Stoke Gabriel Primary School | 9.3% |
| St. Peters Church of England Primary School Budleigh Salterton | 9.3% |
| Stokenham Area Primary School | 9.4% |
| Pilton Infants School | 9.4% |
| Milton Abbot School | 9.4% |
| Winkleigh Primary School | 9.4% |
| Newton Poppleford Primary School | 9.5% |
| Musbury Primary School | 9.6% |
| Stokeinteignhead School | 9.8% |
| Rydon Primary School | 9.9% |

3.2 Schools reporting over 30% of pupils on Schools Action, Schools Action Plus or with a Statement

| | |
|---|-------|
| Marpool Primary School | 30.9% |
| St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Buckfast | 31.4% |
| Lydford Primary School | 31.6% |
| Hayward's Primary School | 32.1% |
| Countess Wear Community School | 32.3% |
| St. John's Church of England Primary School, Totnes | 32.5% |
| East Anstey Primary School | 32.6% |
| Buckland Brewer County Primary School | 32.6% |
| Low Trenchard Church of England Primary School | 32.8% |
| Forches Cross Primary School | 33.6% |
| Bideford College | 33.9% |
| Yeo Valley Primary School | 33.9% |
| Inverteign Community Nursery & Primary School | 35.3% |
| Bridgerule Church of England Primary School | 36.4% |
| Bradford Primary School | 37.0% |
| Bassetts Farm Primary School | 37.5% |
| St. Andrews Primary School, Cullompton | 38.0% |
| Sticklepath Community School | 39.1% |
| Salcombe Church of England Primary School | 40.0% |
| Whipton Barton Infants and Nursery School, Exeter | 40.6% |
| Wynstream School , Exeter | 41.0% |
| Willowbrook School, Exeter | 42.3% |
| Boasley Cross Community Primary School | 44.2% |
| The Chestnut Centre, Exeter | 46.8% |
| The Castle Primary School, Tiverton | 49.3% |
| Littleham Church of England Primary School | 50.4% |
| Loddiswell Primary School | 53.3% |
| Great Torrington Junior School | 55.3% |
| Highweek Community Primary & Nursery School | 55.8% |
| Whipton Barton Junior School, Exeter | 59.5% |

4.0 Appendix 4 - Task Group activities

- 4.1 The first meeting of the Task Group took place on 5 February 2007. The aim of this initial scoping meeting was to determine the focus for the investigation, gauge Members' viewpoints and plan the next steps for the investigation, including witnesses. The Head of Strategy and Commissioning: Inclusive Education and the Deputy Director of Education and Head of Learning and School Improvement provided some background to the Council's position and approach to SEN in the County. The Task Group was then given a presentation on Communication & Interaction Resource Bases by the Special Senior Education Psychologist for Autism and the Senior Advisory Teacher for ASD

It was agreed in view of both Members and Officers' commitments to other reviews underway that after this initial meeting the review would be held in abeyance until May 2007. It was also agreed that relevant evidence from the work of the Children's Trust Scrutiny Panel be used to inform the work of this review.

- 4.2 On **29 May 2007** the Task Group received evidence from a County Councillor, and further considered the scope of the review.
- 4.3 On **14 June 2007** the Task Group interviewed the Executive Support Member for Schools; Head of Strategy and Commissioning: Inclusive Education; SEN & Conflict Resolution Officer and the Principal of Broomhayes School.
- 4.4 At the **26 June 2007** meeting the Task Group spoke to the Head of Service for Children with Special Needs; a representative from the West of England School, Exeter; the Head of Resource Strategies for CYPS and a parent.
- 4.5 On **2 July 2007** the Task Group visited Southbrook Special School and Queen Elizabeth's Community College in Crediton, meeting heads and other teaching staff.
- 4.6 The Task Group undertook site visits on **10 July 2007** to Lampard-Vachell and Pathfield special schools in Barnstaple.

- 4.7 On **26 July 2007** Members interviewed a former Senior Education Psychologist; Senior Monitoring Officer (Special Educational Needs); Chief Executive of Vranth House and a number of parents making representations to the review. The Task Group was also given a presentation on ARROW tuition for dyslexic children.
- 4.8 On **6 August 2007** the Task Group received evidence from the Principal Clinical Scientist, Deputy Director of Audiology, Devon Primary Care Trust; a Dyslexia Specialist and a number of parents.
- 4.9 On **23 August 2007** the Task Group continued to hear evidence from parents and carers of children with SEN.
- 4.10 At its **6 September 2007** meeting, Members interviewed a number of parents as well as an officer from the Devon Parent Partnership; a Teignbridge District Councillor; Principal Portage Officer; SEN Conflict Resolution Officer; Schools Access Services Manager and the SEN Governor, Newtown.
- 4.11 On **19 September 2007** the Task Group met with the Director of Children & Young People's Services.
- 4.12 On **24 September 2007** the Task Group visited Tavistock Community Primary School.
- 4.13 On **27 September 2007** the Task Group met to consider its findings and recommendations.
- 4.14 On **25 October 2007** the Task Group met to consider its findings and recommendations.
- 4.15 On **29 October 2007** the Task Group met the Chair of the Children and Young People's Services Overview/Scrutiny to discuss its findings and recommendations.

5.0 Appendix 5 - Witnesses / Representations to the Review

5.1 Witnesses to the Review (in the order that they appeared before the Task Group)

| <u>Witness</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Organisation / District</u> |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Chris Aston | Head of Strategy and Commissioning: Inclusive Education | Devon County Council |
| Deborah Magill | Deputy Director of Education/Head of Learning and School Improvement | Devon County Council |
| Alan Williams | Special Senior Education Psychologist for Autism | Devon County Council |
| Kathy Morris-Coole | Senior Advisory Teacher for ASD | Devon County Council |
| Councillor Douglas Hull | Member for Axminster | Devon County Council |
| Councillor Nick Way | Executive Support Member for Schools | Devon County Council |
| Joan Tremblett | SEN & Conflict Resolution Officer | Devon County Council |
| Marcia Vallely | Principal, Broomhayes School | National Autistic Society |
| John Shaw | Head of Service for Children with Special Needs | Devon County Council |
| Jenny Shorters | Former Deputy Head | West of England School, Exeter |
| John Barnard | Head of Resource Strategies | Devon County Council |
| Parent | | East Devon |
| Hilary Green | Head teacher | Southbrook Special School, Exeter |
| Bronwen Caschere | Assistant Head teacher & SENCO | Southbrook Special School, Exeter |
| Donna Parsons | Assistant Head teacher | Southbrook Special School, Exeter |
| John Sanders | Governor | Southbrook Special School, Exeter |
| Richard Newton-Chance | Head teacher | Queen Elizabeth's Community College, Crediton |
| Jo Eames | SENCO | Queen Elizabeth's |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| | | Community College, Crediton |
| Loren Reeve-Hodgson | Behaviour Support Teacher | Queen Elizabeth's Community College, Crediton |
| Jackie Edwards | Head teacher | Lampard- Vachell Special School, Barnstaple |
| Edwards Holroyd | Governor | Lampard- Vachell Special School, Barnstaple |
| Rod Conway | Head teacher | Pathfield Special School, Barnstaple |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Bob Gosling | Former Senior Education Psychologist, South Devon | |
| Dr Colin Lane | Chief Executive | A.R.R.O.W. Centre, Bridgwater |
| Anne Porter | Senior Monitoring Officer (SEN) | Devon County Council |
| Colonel Graeme Wheeler | Chief Executive | Vranch House School, Exeter |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Mrs Taylor | Former Teacher, Exeter | |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Kelvin Wakeham | Principal Clinical Scientist, Deputy Director of Audiology | Devon Primary Care Trust |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Sylvia Green | Dyslexia Specialist | North Devon |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Parent | | East Devon |
| Parent | | East Devon |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Parent | | East Devon |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Cath Butland | Devon Parent Partnership | Devon County Council |
| Councillor Anne Lonsdale | Member for Kingsteignton | Teignbridge District Council |
| Linda Rigler | Principal Portage Officer | Devon County Council |
| Lisa Boon | Schools Access Services Manager | Devon County Council |
| Su Aves | SEN Governor | Newtown Primary School, Exeter |
| Anne Whiteley | Director, CYPS | Devon County Council |
| Joe Flynn | Head teacher | Tavistock Community Primary School |
| Jackie Freedman | Learning Development Coordinator / CAIRBs Teacher | Tavistock Community Primary School |
| Rebiha Aifa-Tingle | SEN Governor | Tavistock Community Primary School |
| Councillor Christine Channon | CYPS Overview/Scrutiny, Chair | Devon County Council |

5.2

Written and Telephone Representations (in the order that they were received)

| <u>Witness</u> | <u>Position</u> | <u>Organisation / District</u> |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Angela Browning | Member for Tiverton and Honiton | Member of Parliament |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Paul Hodgkinson | Head teacher | Bishop Dunstan School |
| Oliver Davey | Music Development Leader | Devon County Council |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Dr Mark Elkington | Chair Of Governors | Canada Hill Community Primary School |
| Aspirations | Parents, South Devon | An organisation for children with Asbergers Syndrome |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | South Devon |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Maria Howarth | Chief Speech and Language Therapist | NHS |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Dr Kevin Bawn | Head teacher | Clyst Vale Community College, Exeter |
| Judy Phelan | Deputy Principal | St. Lukes Science and Sports College, Exeter |
| Sue Campbell | Physical Difficulties Co-ordinator | St. Lukes Science and Sports College, Exeter |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Peter Edwards | Chair of Governors | Lampard-Vachell Community School |
| Parent | | Exeter |
| Mr Geoffrey Cox Q.C. | MP for Torridge and West Devon | Member of Parliament |
| Ian Hobbs | County Community Strategy Officer – North Devon & Torridge | Devon County Council |
| Christina Pett | Chair | Devon Dyslexia Association |
| Will Pritchard | Primary Resource Base Advisory Teacher | Countess Wear Community School, Exeter |
| Mrs Crook | Primary Resource Base | Ratcliffe School, Dawlish |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------------|
| | Advisory Teacher | |
| John Smith | Executive Member for Children's Services | Devon County Council |
| Parent | | North Devon |
| Jeanette Kemlo | Chair | Parent Carer Voice |
| Brian Grady | Strategic and Joint Commissioning Manager | Devon County Council |
| Caroline Armstrong | Senior Finance Manager | Devon County Council |
| Mike Young | Strategic Lead 14-19 and Youth Matters | Devon County Council |

In addition to the witnesses listed, the Task Group drew on evidence received from interviews conducted between June 2005 and January 2007 by the Children's Trust Scrutiny Panel. The Panel also undertook site visits to Ellen Tinkham Special School and Countess Wear Combined School.

6.0 **Appendix 6 - Glossary**

Annual Review

The review of a statement of special educational needs which an LEA must make within 12 months of making the statement or, as the case may be, of the previous review.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)

APD is an umbrella term for communication disorders.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is a relatively new term which recognises that there are a number of sub-groups within the spectrum of autism. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder find it difficult to:

- Understand and use non-verbal and verbal communication
- Understand social behaviour — which affects their ability to interact with children and adults
- Think and behave flexibly – which may be shown in restricted, obsessional or repetitive activities

Pupils with ASD cover the full range of ability and the severity of their impairment varies widely. Some pupils also have learning disabilities or other difficulties, making diagnosis difficult. Many are delayed in learning to speak and some never develop meaningful speech. Pupils find it difficult to understand the social behaviour of others. They can experience high levels of stress and anxiety in settings that do not meet their needs or when routines are changed. Pupils with Asperger's should be recorded in this category. These pupils share the same triad of impairments but have higher intellectual abilities and their language development is different from the majority of pupils with autism.

Devon Parent Partnership

The Devon Parent Partnership is a service created to provide information, training and support for parents and carers of SEN children from 0 to 19 years.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

The DDA 2005 builds on and extends earlier disability discrimination legislation, principally the DDA 1995. The DDA 2005 introduces a duty on all public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. This means that they must take account of the needs of disabled people as an integral part of their policies, practices and procedures, and not as something separate or as a tag-on. They will have to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment
- promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes to disabled people
- encourage disabled people to participate in public life

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty characterised by problems with written or spoken language such as reading, writing, spelling, speaking, or listening. The word dyslexia describes a different kind of mind, often gifted, over-productive, and that learns in a different way.

Hearing Impairment

Pupils with a hearing impairment range from those with a mild hearing loss to those who are profoundly deaf covering the whole ability range. For educational purposes, pupils are regarded as having a hearing impairment if they require hearing aids, adaptations to their environment and/or particular teaching strategies in order to access the concepts and language of the curriculum.

Inclusion

In education, "inclusion" has become the term used to describe the right of parents and children to access mainstream education alongside their peers, where parents want it and children's needs can be met.

Independent school

Neither a school maintained by a local education authority, nor a grant maintained school.

Integration

Educating children with SEN together with children without SEN in mainstream schools wherever possible, and ensuring that children with SEN engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have SEN.

Learning Support Assistant

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) support teachers in schools. Duties can vary depending on the age of the children, but the main nature of an LSA's work is to support children with SEN.

Mainstream school

An ordinary school, which is for all children, not just those with SEN. This will normally be a state school.

Maintained school

Any county school, grant maintained school, grant maintained special school, voluntary school or maintained special school.

Moderate Learning Difficulty

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties will have attainments significantly below expected levels in most areas of the curriculum, despite appropriate interventions. Their needs will not be able to be met by normal differentiation and the flexibilities of the National Curriculum. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and under-developed social skills.

Multi-Sensory Impairment

Pupils with multi-sensory impairment have a combination of visual and hearing difficulties. They are sometimes referred to as deafblind but may have some residual sight and/or hearing. Many also have additional disabilities but their complex needs mean that it may be difficult to ascertain their intellectual abilities.

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)

Non-ministerial government department established under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to take responsibility for the inspection of all schools in England.

Parent

Parent in relation to a child or young person includes any person who is not a natural parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him or her, as their carer.

Physical Disability

There is a wide range of physical disabilities and pupils cover the whole ability range. Some pupils are able to access the curriculum and learn effectively without additional educational provision. They have a disability but do not have an SEN, while for others the impact on their education may be severe. In the same way, a medical diagnosis does not necessarily mean that a pupil has SEN. It depends on the impact the condition has on their educational needs.

Portage

A planned approach to home-based pre-school education for children with developmental delay, disabilities or any other SEN. Portage began in Portage, Wisconsin, USA, and there is now an extensive Portage network in the UK, which is overseen by the National Portage Association.

Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have complex learning needs. In addition to severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition.

School Action

School Action could be further assessment, additional or different teaching materials or a different way of teaching and it might sometimes, but not always, be additional adult support. Teachers use Individual Education Plans to record the different or additional provision to be made for the child, teaching strategies, short-term targets for the pupil, success criteria, and what they have achieved.

School Action Plus

School Action Plus is where School Action has not helped the child to make adequate progress, and the school asks for outside advice from the LEA's support services, or from health or social work professionals. This could be advice from a speech and language therapist on a language programme or an Occupational Therapist's suggestions or a medical diagnosis and report giving recommendations as to how to work differently with the child in class.

Special Educational Needs

Some pupils need additional help at school because they have learning difficulties or disabilities which significantly affect their access to the curriculum. They are described as having special educational needs (SEN). The traditional way of thinking about SEN was to see it as an individual deviation from the norm. This individual has significant difficulties in learning compared to the majority of children of the same age. A preferable view, now widely accepted, sees the level of need as the result of a complex interaction between:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses,
- the level of support available, and
- the appropriateness of the education being provided.

A child has an SEN if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- (b) has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority
- (c) is under five and falls within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do if special educational provision was not made for the child.

Special educational provision means:

- (a) for a child over two, educational provision which is additional to or otherwise

different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the child's age in maintained schools, other than special schools in the area.

(b) for a child under two, educational provision of any kind.

[Education Act, 1996, Section 312]

The relevant Education Act requires the Government to issue an SEN Code of Practice in order to provide guidance on what is expected of all those involved.

SEN Coordinator

The SEN Coordinator (SENCO) is a member of staff of a school who has responsibility for coordinating SEN provision within that school. In a small school, it is not uncommon for the head teacher or deputy to take on the role of the SENCO. In larger schools, there may be an SEN coordinating team.

SEN & Disability Tribunal

An independent tribunal set up by Act of Parliament for determining appeals by parents against local educational authority (LEA) about children's SEN, where parents cannot reach agreement with the LEA.

Severe Learning Difficulty

Pupils with severe learning difficulties have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and co-ordination, communication and perception and the acquisition of self-help skills.

Special School

A school which is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Statutory Assessment

A detailed examination of a child's SEN. It may lead to a statement.

7.0 Appendix 7 - Bibliography

Devon Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009 (DCC, 2006)

Disability Discrimination Act 2005 - Implementation in schools and other maintained settings: Accessibility Planning Guide (DCC, 2006)

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (DfES, 2004)

Excellence for all Children: The Development of an Inclusive Education System in Devon (DCC, 2005)

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum
<http://www.naldic.org.uk/ITTSEAL2/teaching/Response.cfm>

Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government Strategy for SEN (DfES, 2004)

Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties (DCC, 2003)

Strategy and Provision for Pupils with Needs on the Autistic Spectrum (DCC, 2003)

Teachernet website

www.teachernet.gov.uk/