

THE INCLUSION STATEMENT

Stoke supports and promotes:

- the development of schools in making them responsive to the needs of all their children and young people;
- equality of opportunity for all children and young people through shared experiences, social interactions and the demonstration of respect for each other's needs, differences, beliefs and values;
- the inclusion of children and young people with special educational needs within mainstream schools wherever appropriate, recognising the paramount importance of meeting individual needs;
- the commitment, confidence and skills that schools display in successfully meeting the individual needs of all children and young people;
- mainstream schools in the success that they enjoy in educating the majority of children and young people with SEN statements;
- children and young people with SEN being educated in mainstream schools as long as this is in their best interest and in the best interest of other children; in line with recent DfES guidance;
- provision which is matched appropriately to the needs of the child and young person through accurate identification and assessment arrangements and processes applying clear review criteria and effective professional advice;
- wider dissemination of the best practice found in schools and particularly building upon curriculum entitlement and access;
- the inclusive principles of the National Curriculum in setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils;
- the inclusion of children with health problems in mainstream schools, in partnership with health services. and parents, through support and indemnity of suitably trained and accredited volunteer members of staff
- continuing professional development for teachers, teaching assistants and other relevant staff in ensuring that all have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to address SEN needs so helping to raise the standards of achievement of all children and young people;
- the development of the role of specialist provision (special schools, units, SENSS) in

- meeting the continuing SEN needs of some children and young people through an appropriate continuum of provision;
- the availability of information on the processes for parents / carers and young people when dealing with discrimination;
 - parent partnerships so that parents / carers and the young people themselves will feel listened to, valued and fully involved;
- school governing bodies in implementing, monitoring and reviewing their policy on special needs and reporting annually to parents on this policy.

Introduction

Implementing the LEA vision for inclusion will take time and will be driven by the SEN Policy and SEN / Inclusion Action Plan. This action plan strategy when formed will be shared by all. Consultation will involve parents / carers, the pupils themselves and all the range of current providers. Stoke City Council will further develop the ethos in which schools feel supported and confident in meeting the individual needs of all their pupils. The emphasis will be to develop the capacity of schools to make sense of and respond to the needs of the individual learner.

In order to continue the culture change this shared understanding will need to encompass philosophical, strategic, policy' and operational dimensions. The LEA, schools and other stakeholders will work together in close partnership sharing a greater understanding of inclusive issues.

In promoting inclusion, methods to achieve excellence for all learners will be disseminated and consolidated across all schools and establishments.

Background Information,

Inclusion is a current theme in shaping and driving central government initiatives. UNESCO issued the Salamanca Statement in 1994 calling on " all governments to adopt the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise". The 1997 Green Paper "Excellence for all children: Meeting Special Educational Needs", presented a powerful statement on inclusion stating that "the ultimate purpose of SEN provision is to enable young people to flourish in adult life. There are therefore strong educational, as well as social and moral, grounds for educating children with SEN with their peers". In 1998 "Meeting SEN: a Programme of Action" supported actions to promote inclusion in the areas of parent partnership, training, regional collaboration and research on effective inclusive practices. The National Curriculum documents ' (1999) state "schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils".

In making inclusion effective it is recognised that the process will be very challenging, complex and multi-stranded. Its promotion will require significant strategic planning with

decisions and actions that ensure appropriate resources are directed to meeting identified needs. Inclusion will impact and influence current and future teaching practices.

The key to unlocking the full potential in our schools lies in the expertise of teachers and head teachers (ITA 1999). Teachers will help children overcome potential barriers to individual and group learning through the provision of challenging activities, which ensure securing appropriate opportunities to successful learning, and matching teacher style with the diverse learning styles found in the pupils' classroom.

The ideal inclusive school has been described as one which attempts to structure a learning environment in which the needs of every pupil are accommodated, success fostered and all children valued. School personnel, family members and friends work in partnership to develop and support caring learning communities that nurture friendships and commitment among their members.

Inclusion has been broadened to embrace social inclusion, those who are at the margins of society and who are excluded from mainstream education.

Implications for schools, the LEA and other stake holders

The LEA will continue to develop its working relationships with other stakeholders - social services, health, voluntary and the private sector - and there will be a need for multi-disciplinary interventions when planning provision.

The expectation that more children and young people will be included in mainstream settings will necessitate a review of the role of the special schools, developing their SEN excellence and enabling them to offer a range of outreach facilities to mainstream providers. A spirit of co-operation will need to be developed amongst all the providers (special and mainstream). The LEA will continue to develop and encourage all schools as centres for the dissemination of positive inclusive practice.

The quality of SEN provision in the mainstream inclusive school will be high. The LEA will promote those initiatives already in place within mainstream schools, special schools, SENSS, EPS, Behaviour Support Services and the Advisory Service.

All schools have the responsibility to ensure that their own ethos and policies are robust in tackling inclusive practices.

It is envisaged there will be a continuum of resources to meet a continuum of needs and increased access for all learners to mainstream centres - either short or long term. There will be access to a curriculum which is differentiated, broad, balanced and diverse enough to meet all needs - it will be challenging, motivating and achievable.

Mainstream provision will be planned with appropriate resources available to meet pupils' needs. Linkages to a range of effective special support-agencies, including special schools, will be clearly understood.