THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

Education Department

Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs

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PEC

A Report by HM Inspectors of Schools

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FOREWORD

In 1989 HM Inspectors of Schools published the report *Management of Educational Resources: Effective Secondary Schools,* which was followed a year later by another on *Effective Primary Schools.* These reports identified features common to schools in each sector which, through inspections, were judged to be effective; and highlighted the quality of teaching, good leadership and sound management as significant factors influencing the quality of educational provision.

This report is in the same series and complementary to the first two reports. It deals with the effectiveness of provision which is made across all sectors for children, pupils and students who have special educational needs. It draws upon evidence from inspections carried out in mainstream and special schools and in other educational establishments over the past 5 years, including work done by HM Inspectors as part of specific tasks and investigations.

The report provides an updating and consolidation of the ideas which derived from the Warnock Report and from the report by HM Inspectors *The Education of Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Primary and Secondary Schools in Scotland.* The latter was published in 1978 and has been seminal in influencing the many developments which have taken place in the provision of learning support in schools and colleges. This report also complements the Circular on *Children and Young Persons with Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Recording Services,* by exploring the variation, elaboration and adaptation needed from professionals to ensure continued effective provision to meet the very wide and increasingly complex special educational needs now found in schools and colleges. It aims to highlight key features, give exemplification of the principles of good practice, and provide a stimulus for further consolidation and development.

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HM Senior Chief Inspector of Schools

1 THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Introduction

1.1 Education authorities have a statutory duty to make provision for special educational needs in fulfilling their responsibility to provide adequate and efficient education for their areas. Further education colleges, too, have duties in respect of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Schools, educational services and colleges are delegated the responsibility to educate children and young persons in such a way as to assist them to learn and to progress. There is no mystique in making effective provision. The general aims and principles of education in nursery, primary and secondary schools and in further education colleges apply. Any differences relate to the strong emphases placed on identifying, specifying and meeting **individual** educational needs, on involving parents[1,2] in this process and on the key role of teachers in planning, implementing and evaluating curricular programmes for individual pupils or students, often in collaboration with other members of staff and other professions.

1.2 For children and young persons with special educational needs, education is of immense importance – often the most critical factor contributing to the quality of their lives in childhood and in adulthood. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that the characteristics of educational provision enable individuals to optimise their abilities and to overcome, minimise or circumvent their learning difficulties. HM Inspectors have identified ten distinctive features of effective provision from analyses of reports of inspections and other investigations of provision for special educational needs. They have also devised indicators of performance for provision in mainstream and special schools and units to assist in the appraisal of quality. The distinctive features, summarised in Figure 1.1, are considered in general terms in this chapter and then in later chapters in relation to pre-school provision, to primary and secondary schools and to further education colleges.

Understanding special educational needs

1.3 HM Inspectors have found that shared understanding of the concept of special educational needs is fundamental to planning and making effective provision at all levels of the education system. Contrary to initial impressions, the concept is subtle and requires discussion and reflection. Stated simply, and in accordance with the legislation[3], special educational needs arise from difficulties in learning, or barriers to learning. However, this does not provide a working definition and in reaching an understanding the following points should be taken into account:

- special educational needs are identified in terms of the **individual;**

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

understanding special educational needs

effective identification and assessment

appropriate curriculum

forms of provision

learning and teaching

progress, attainment and achievement

parental involvement

working with other professionals

managing provision

taking full account of the individual

- special **educational** needs relate to the individual's participation in the process of education;
- there are special educational needs arising from **difficulties** which have an intellectual origin; and from **barriers** to learning which are usually physical including, for example, hearing or visual impairment;
- most special educational needs arise from **curricular difficulties,** such as gaining access to the curriculum or problems in grasping and retaining concepts and skills in areas such as English language, mathematics, science and the expressive arts. The causes of such difficulties are most likely to lie in a mismatch between delivery of the curriculum and pupils' learning needs;
- special educational needs may arise from **disabilities** which are neurological or physical in origin and which to a greater or lesser extent create both difficulties in, and barriers to, learning. Many pupils with disabilities are intellectually able. The presence of a disability in itself does not necessarily mean that the individual has special educational needs;
- special educational needs may arise from **social factors,** within the home or school, which affect the individual's capacity to learn; and
- special educational needs may arise from delays or disturbances in **emotional** development which affect the individual's capacity to learn.

1.4 Special educational needs may be expressed in statements about what has to be done to assist the individual to make progress. These statements should be written in such a way as to allow teachers to derive learning and teaching targets which are the central focus of an action plan covering:

- the planning of educational programmes;
- the content of the curriculum;
- learning and teaching strategies;
- the most suitable contexts for learning and teaching;
- the nature of intervention by school staff;
- the nature of intervention by support services, such as therapists;
- the advice and guidance to enable school staff to be effective;
- the materials and equipment required;
- approaches to assessment; and
- special arrangements for liaison with parents and other establishments.

1.5 The majority of children and young people experience temporary difficulties in learning which can be quickly remedied by additional help from the class or subject teacher, sometimes with the assistance of colleagues. A proportion of pupils, estimated at around 20%, have learning difficulties which are more intractable, but which respond to measures, such as through the assistance of a learning support specialist and/or some curricular adaptations. Between 1% and 2% of children and young people face difficulties in learning which are long-term, require exceptional intervention and need to be kept under review by teachers, parents and other professionals. **Records of Needs** are opened for them as required from the age of two years[4]. The special

Figure 1.1

The ten distinctive features of effective provision for special educational needs

1. **Understanding special educational needs:** Those planning and making the provision have thought through, and share an understanding of, the continuum of special educational needs.

2. **Effective identification and assessment procedures:** Effective and efficient procedures for the identification and assessment of the special educational needs of children and young persons are recognised as essential first steps in making good provision for them.

3. **An appropriate curriculum:** The special educational needs of children and young persons are met through provision of an appropriate curriculum.

4. **Forms of provision suited to needs:** Children and young persons are more likely to make good progress through schools, units and colleges which ensure provision most suited to their special educational needs.

5. **Effective approaches to learning and teaching:** Varied and efficient strategies for learning and teaching include specific techniques to meet the special educational needs of children and young persons.

6. **Attainment of educational goals:** Provision ensures that children and young persons have every opportunity to progress and to achieve educational goals in line with their aptitudes and abilities.

7. **Parental involvement:** The rights and responsibilities of parents are respected and they are actively encouraged to be involved in making decisions about the approaches taken to meet their children's special educational needs.

8. **Interprofessional co-operation:** Teachers enhance their effective-ness by working co-operatively with colleagues in schools and other educational services and, when required, with other professionals from health boards, social work departments and voluntary agencies.

9. **Effective management of provision:** Provision for special educational needs is planned, well managed and regularly reviewed.

10. **Full involvement of child or young person:** The views and aspirations of the individual child or young person with special educational needs are central in making all forms of provision.

educational needs of some of these pupils are **pronounced**, that is clustered around a disability, such as profound hearing loss or motor disorder, and have implications for educational provision. Others have **specific** special educational needs related to difficulties in acquiring competencies in a particular aspect of learning, such as talking, reading or spelling, and require specialist intervention. A small but increasing number of pupils have **complex** special educational needs, resulting from a combination of difficulties, and require carefully worked-out educational programmes.

1.6   Whatever the nature or degree of difficulties in learning, the special educational needs of each individual will rarely remain constant, but will change as that child or young person grows and matures and faces increasing demands. It is useful to conceptualise special educational needs not in static categories, but as represented on a continuum, without precise cut-off points. The needs of individuals, even those with ostensibly the same disabilities as others, will usually be represented at different points on the continuum, and will require differing arrangements to enable them to gain optimum benefit from their education. Educational planners at all levels who take on board the idea of the continuum are more likely to reject the categorisation of children and young people, and to integrate a range of learning support and guidance resources to meet individual needs in a coherent, consistent and efficient way.

Effective identification and assessment procedures

1.7   Identifying individuals and assessing their special educational needs are essential first steps in making appropriate provision. Successful identification and assessment procedures, adopted by education authorities, schools and colleges, share the same objectives:

- to identify those individuals who are failing to make expected progress or who require assistance to overcome obstacles to learning;
- to assess individuals and their relationship to their learning environments in order to specify their special educational needs;
- to decide, in the pre-school and schools sectors, whether a Record of Needs is necessary;
- to appraise the resources required to meet needs;
- to determine the most appropriate forms of educational provision; and
- to inform planning, resource allocation and budgeting.

Good arrangements for achieving these objectives include: consultation with other statutory and voluntary bodies; informing, advising and involving parents; open systems of communication within and between people and establishments; and regular feedback on their effectiveness and efficiency. The outcomes are specifications of what needs to be achieved in order to give schools and individuals optimum opportunities for meeting special educational needs, and base lines against which to measure individual progress and to evaluate the quality of provision.

An appropriate curriculum

1.8   Appropriate education for children and young people with special educational needs assists them to make the fullest use of their potential for learning and comprises three essential components:

A well thought-out curriculum for the class/school as a whole
Such a curriculum is carefully planned and takes full account of national guidance on expectations of curricular content, contained in the *5–14 Curriculum Guidelines* (SOED, 1991/1992)[5,6] and in *Higher Still* (SO, 1994)[7]. It is characterised by the principles of breadth, balance, progression, continuity and coherence. Content is relevant to pupils' ages, aptitudes, experiences and needs.

Individualised educational programmes (IEPs)
IEPs are usually written plans which outline the steps to be taken to achieve specified curricular targets. The programme may comprise a single A4 sheet for individuals whose needs are straightforward, or may require to be a more extensive document to guide the learning and teaching of those whose problems are more complex and atypical. The suggested contents of an IEP are outlined in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2
Suggested content of an individualised educational programme

Relevant personal details: Name; date of birth; class; and, only if pertinent, condition.

Members of staff responsible for IEP: Names and roles of: member of management team or educational service with responsibility for co-ordination; learning support specialist(s); class and subject teachers; any staff from outwith the school.

Special educational needs: Summary of current special educational needs.

Aptitudes and abilities: Summary of aptitudes and abilities indicating how they may be used to assist in overcoming difficulties.

Aims: Succinct statements about educational aims, related to curriculum and including personal and social development and educational aspects of therapies.

Long-term and short-term goals: List of goals to be attained with indications of: expected time-scale; approaches to learning and teaching; assessment and recording; staff involved; resources; learning contexts; and involvement of parents. (The extent to which these goals cover each area/subject/course in the individual's curriculum will depend on factors such as the exceptional nature of the goals in comparison with the rest of the class and whether they relate to a Record of Needs or parental request.)

Relevant documents: It may be appropriate to attach other current records, such as: reports from class teachers and therapists, especially if guidance is given; minutes of review meetings; reports to parents; and assessment records.

Evaluation: Short evaluative statements on the progress of pupils and on the effectiveness of the provision being made.

Integration of the IEPs with the curriculum for the class/school
The art of making effective curricular provision lies in integrating the programmes of the individual or small group with the curriculum of the class or school without detriment to the quality of education of any pupil. It is not always possible to strike an exact balance between the needs of the individual and the class, but staff are continuously working to achieve this aim. Any decisions to alter the emphasis placed on an area of the curriculum should be taken in consultation with parents and the pupil or student.

1.9   In developing the curriculum in response to special educational needs, schools have the difficult task of reconciling the competing demands of balanced programmes of work and activities required to teach skills essential for individual progress. Teachers make use of the following planning strategies of differentiation and its extension in individualisation, adaptation, enhancement and elaboration:

Differentiation
Pupils and students work on the same curricular area, but interact in different ways with teachers and resources. They have some or all of the assignments, learning targets, resources, teaching methods and pupil groupings planned to differentially take account of their aptitudes and the levels of their current strengths, attainments and needs.

Individualisation
Aspects of the curriculum and/or approaches to learning and teaching are altered to take account of the special educational needs of individual pupils or students.

Adaptation
The content of areas or courses is altered to allow pupils facing obstacles, caused by their disabilities, to gain access to comparable experiences to those of their peers or to suitable alternatives. Particular emphasis may be placed on one strand or aspect of the curriculum because of its significance to individuals.

Enhancement
The content of the curricular areas or courses is expanded to ensure that abler pupils are suitably stimulated and challenged.

Elaboration
The content of the curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils and students with delayed or seriously disrupted general development, or those who require additional strands or aspects not normally available in the mainstream curriculum.

1.10   Further education colleges can play a vital role in giving young persons and adults the skills they require in the workplace, and they are responsive to many of the other educational needs of their local communities. An appropriate curriculum is achieved primarily by placing individuals on appropriate programmes, whether mainstream or special, as a result of initial assessment, and with regard to likely opportunities after leaving college.

Further tailoring of the curriculum to meet individual needs is possible through a degree of flexibility within programmes to enable students to select subject areas of individual relevance.

Forms of provision suited to needs

1.11 Many influences have shaped the nature of provision for special educational needs. They include philosophical and political standpoints, location, history and tradition, parental views and the very different and changing needs of children. They have resulted in an ever widening range of provision across Scotland and within regions (Figure 1.3). What matters is that the provision made is suited to the individual's age, stage of development, and educational, social and emotional needs. The starting point in making decisions about educational placement is consideration of mainstream provision in the individual's own area. Most pupils with special educational needs in Scotland attend their local schools. Where the quality of the individual's educational and social experience is in doubt in such a setting, or where it is not feasible to provide the exceptional levels of support required, then other, more specialised forms of education will be necessary. However, the overriding concern must be to ensure that the educational provision takes account of all-round needs and that the individual is not socially isolated.

Figure 1.3

Range of provision for special educational needs

At national level: grant-aided special schools; independent day and residential schools; and research and development centres.

At education authority level: pre-school services, including mainstream and special nursery schools and classes, family centres and home visiting teachers; learning support teams; learning support in primary and secondary schools; special schools, units and classes; peripatetic specialist teaching services; regional psychological services; curriculum advisory services; audiologists; libraries and resource services; and specialist resources and transport.

In further education colleges: learning support; extended learning support; special courses; outreach provision; distance learning; residential units; special assessment services and consultancy.

Effective approaches to learning and teaching

1.12 The characteristics of effective learning and teaching in mainstream provision are equally relevant to provision for special educational needs. Children and young people with special educational needs are most likely to learn when they:

- are motivated by stimulating and personally rewarding tasks;
- have self-confidence and a sense of personal worth;
- understand the relevance of tasks;
- believe that they are capable of achieving the goals set;

- are given and use essential aids and equipment to circumvent or overcome obstacles;
- follow programmes in which learning is broken down into manageable steps;
- are encouraged to be independent and show initiative;
- participate in group, as well as individual, assignments;
- are able to apply knowledge, understanding and skills in practical situations;
- have sufficient levels of support from teachers experienced in their learning difficulties or disabilities; and
- are given relevant home assignments.

1.13 In creating optimum opportunities for learning, teaching staff are, first of all, fully committed to the view that all their pupils and students are capable of learning. They also recognise the importance of forming relationships with them and their families based on mutual trust and open acknowledgement of the difficulties to be tackled. In addition, they are skilled in curriculum planning and in selecting and using approaches to teaching and learning most suited to the assessed needs of the individual, the group or the class. The most effective teachers are those who draw on a wide repertoire of strategies, are skilled and flexible in their use, and are judiciously opportunistic. They appreciate the potential of information technology and other microelectronic equipment and integrate it fully into programmes. They also value team work with colleagues and other professionals and have sufficient confidence to seek and give advice and be guided by others.

1.14 Well-considered assessment procedures play an important role in giving feedback on progress being made through and across the curriculum, and on approaches to learning and teaching. Information derived from assessment is vital in determining the next steps in learning and in planning new programmes of work. Where appropriate, pupils and students – even those with severe learning difficulties – are competent in appraising their own performance. The results of assessments are frequently motivating to teachers, pupils and parents, especially when related to achievements in national certification through the Scottish Examination Board (SEB) and the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC). Such feedback is enhanced when teachers report fully to parents formally in writing at least once each year and add to this in informal exchanges by telephone, visits to school, at meetings convened to review progress, and, where relevant, in home/school diaries.

Attainment of educational goals

1.15 Where pupils and students with special educational needs are following appropriate programmes of work and are receiving suitable forms and levels of support, they may be expected to progress in all aspects of the curriculum at levels commensurate with their aptitudes and abilities. Progress may be measured in two ways: when relevant, it can be compared to that expected of peers; or it may be judged by the increments made towards learning goals set across the curriculum, or in particular areas or subjects. Rates of progress may be expected to vary depending on the nature and degree of difficulties in learning. Even abler pupils with physical or sensory impairments may require more time to follow particular courses in comparison to their able-bodied

peers because, for example, of the effects of having to undertake additional programmes, such as therapy, the loss of schooling as a result of hospitalisation, or the pervasive effects of fatigue.

1.16 Expectations of the attainments and achievements of pupils and students with special educational needs should be high but realistic. Many are able to attain national targets or examinations in some or all areas of the curriculum or secondary programme, but not always at the same stage of education as their peers. All should be expected to demonstrate the equally relevant achievement of, or progress towards, the individual goals set for them in each curricular area or subject.

Parental involvement

1.17 Pupils are likely to make the best progress when all of those concerned with their education involve parents at all stages of planning and evaluation. In turn, parents can do much to support the work of the schools. Ways in which parents may be involved in their children's education include:

- assessing and reviewing special educational needs and future needs;
- making decisions about the content of the curriculum;
- monitoring and reporting on progress as observed at home;
- considering and contributing to decisions about school placement;
- feeding back to teachers relevant information from doctors and other professionals;
- suggesting and commenting on the likely success of approaches to learning and teaching;
- reinforcing new skills and learning at home and in the community;
- supporting school activities, such as educational visits, making materials and assisting with social events;
- offering advice and support to other parents of pupils in the school; and
- supporting transition to the next stage of education.

1.18 Parents support schools best when they feel at ease with staff and are confident that their opinions and the needs of their children are respected and valued. Teachers in special schools have much good experience of collaborating with parents which should be shared with mainstream colleagues. In further education, involving parents in college provision is a very sensitive area and is likely only to be appropriate when students are not able to make their own decisions about their education.

1.19 Effective establishments and services for special educational needs make full use of contributions and advice from parent groups. Where members of school boards are sensitive to the needs of pupils, they are able to assist their teachers in a number of important ways, including articulating the case for additional resources and giving advice to other parents on matters such as opening Records of Needs and the range of welfare services in the area. School boards in mainstream schools have particularly important roles in reinforcing policies and attitudes which acknowledge differences among children and

young persons and support equal opportunities. National parents' groups, frequently representing the needs and difficulties associated with specific, potentially disabling conditions, are able to provide various forms of assistance to schools and educational services.

Interprofessional co-operation

1.20 Class and subject teachers in mainstream and special schools have the responsibility for teaching all pupils in their classes, including those with special educational needs. In effective schools they receive support from other members of staff, including non-teaching assistants, visiting teachers specialising in an aspect of special educational needs, other professionals such as educational psychologists, therapists, social workers and nurses, and, in some instances, other schools or colleges. Pupils and students benefit most from this support when those involved work together in teams to integrate their various contributions into coherent educational programmes and to review the effectiveness of their approaches. Even when the team comprises only the class teacher and learning support specialist, perhaps with occasional assistance from a member of guidance staff, it is still essential that they should take time to plan and evaluate their respective contributions. Working as full members of inter-professional teams in itself promotes staff development, but does not remove the ever present need for staff development and training for all engaged in making special provision for the children and young people.

Effective management of provision

1.21 Planning and managing the wide range of provision required to meet the diversity of needs makes very great demands on those responsible. Nevertheless good systems and practices are essential if the needs of these vulnerable children and young persons, and the concerns of their teachers, parents and others who contribute to their education, are to be given the required attention. The complexities involved and the solutions arrived at by practitioners are discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Full involvement of child or young person

1.22 In making effective provision for special educational needs, the adults responsible respect the fact that young people have a statutory right to take decisions about their own education. They take the view that children have a natural right to be consulted and, as appropriate, involved in the resolution of issues which affect their schooling. Transferring responsibility to the individual is best achieved gradually and in manageable steps. The process is not easy, least of all for those who have, or feel that they have, the responsibility to protect the child or young person from danger or the harmful effects of rash decisions. However, experience in expressing and making choices, undertaking tasks independently and taking some personal responsibility for actions are essential prerequisites for successful transition to adult life.

1.23 The ten distinctive features of effective provision, outlined above, have been derived from good practice. The following chapters illustrate the applications of the principles in educational management, in primary and secondary mainstream and special schools, and in colleges of further education.

2 EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The previous chapter outlined the distinctive features of effective provision for special educational needs, one of which was the importance of planning and management. This chapter considers those aspects of management regarded as being effective across, and relevant to, all sectors of education. Because of the exceptional nature of provision, the quality of practice in schools, colleges and services is, to a great extent, dependent on the policies, guidance and support of their education authorities or governing bodies. These are also discussed. The chapter has four sections: aims, policies and guidelines; management structures and processes; aspects to be managed; and managing change.

Aims, policies and guidelines

2.1   Effective management of all forms of provision for special educational needs is underpinned by clear aims and well-considered policies and guidelines. It may be argued that, as the aims of education for children and young persons with special educational needs are generally the same as those for all pupils, there is no cause for separate policies. However, many education authorities, governing bodies and schools have found that specific policy statements and guidelines on their implementation are essential for the following reasons:

- to describe the principles on which arrangements for children and young persons and their special educational needs are based;
- to provide information about, and guidance on, the forms of provision made, especially for parents and teachers;
- to establish what has to be managed and who is responsible;
- to spell out the implications of the legislation* and national and European guidance[8] related to special educational needs;
- to facilitate links between professionals, services and departments;
- to support effective and efficient deployment of resources;
- to establish standards against which to judge quality;
- to identify gaps in provision and priorities for development; and
- to assist schools to fulfil the requirement to provide a statement on policy in relation to pupils with special educational needs[9].

2.2   The development of such aims and policies at all levels within the system is best achieved by a process of consultation, involving all of those with a

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* See Appendix B: Legislation and Related Documents

responsibility for, or an interest in, provision for special educational needs. The resulting documents have greatest impact when widely disseminated, fully explained and discussed, and supported by guidelines or other strategies to aid implementation.

Aims, policies and guidelines: education authorities

2.3   Most education authorities in Scotland are regularly engaged in the process of revision and development of policies on special educational needs. Pressure for change comes from:

- increased expectations of parents, teachers and others for improved services;
- demands for early identification and pre-school provision;
- changes in the legislation;
- evaluation of existing provision which has identified weaknesses, inefficiencies and gaps in provision;
- appreciation of the advantages of integrating more pupils with special educational needs into mainstream schools;
- curriculum development, such as developing Education 5–14 for all pupils and applying information technology to make learning and teaching more efficient and effective;
- the need for new approaches to staff development and training to support the changing nature of provision;
- the drive to achieve more effective and efficient deployment of staff; and
- devolving the management of resources to schools.

2.4   Inspections and investigations suggest that parents of children with special educational needs and professional staff seek from education authorities policies and guidelines which cover the following topics:

- the range of provision for special educational needs available within and outwith the education authority, and procedures for learning about them and making application;
- procedures for identifying special educational needs at all stages of education;
- procedures and arrangements for opening and reviewing Records of Needs;
- procedures for assessments of future needs and referral to the social work department;
- placing arrangements for children with special educational needs;
- health and safety issues, such as giving medicines and drugs, dealing with seizures, and managing children and young people with disturbing behaviour;
- approaches to meeting the curricular needs of pupils with particular forms of special educational needs;
- procedures for obtaining and maintaining special equipment and other resources;
- arrangements for requesting assistance from professionals employed by health boards, social work departments and other agencies not normally considered part of the education system;

- parental involvement;
- employing and training auxiliary assistants; and
- staff development and in-service training.

2.5   The policies most readily accepted and understood are those which seek to secure co-ordinated provision from pre-school to post-school and across the continuum of needs. Integral to such policies is a commitment to the identification, assessment and review of each individual's needs, to full parental involvement and choice, and to the adaptation of provision in response to changing circumstances and needs. Schools also welcome more detailed guidance on matters such as the roles and responsibilities of regional and area learning support teams and support services, on health and safety issues, and on statutory procedures, including recording and assessing future needs. Teaching staff and parents also value supplementary statements on the approaches to be taken to the education of children and young persons with particular conditions, such as hearing impairment, language and communication disorders and autism, motor impairment, and social, emotional and behavioural disorders.

2.6   Difficulties have arisen in the dissemination of policies and guidelines. Some parents and, sometimes, staff in schools report that they are unaware of the existence of such documents. Several education authorities have addressed this problem by disseminating policy through attractively presented publications, written in the main languages of families of pupils in their schools and, in at least one instance, supported by short explanatory videotapes for parents and staff.

2.7   Education authorities adopt various approaches to the essential process of evaluating the effectiveness of their policies on provision. Members of the directorate and their professional advisers, including, in some instances, local inspectors, form views of the qualities of schools and services in the course of their daily work. However, such is the complexity of provision, even in the smallest authorities, that these methods are insufficient. Consequently, several authorities have recently taken the necessary steps to appraise the range of their provision for special educational needs and have identified gaps in services, aspects requiring rationalisation and more effective ways of deploying resources. Few have yet systematically examined the issues of cost benefit analysis of differing ways of meeting the special educational needs of children and young people. This aspect now requires extensive investigation and the results should lead to improved provision for special educational needs.

Aims, policies and guidelines: education authority schools

2.8   Effective schools, whether mainstream or special, meet the educational needs of all of their pupils and take full account of national and education authority policies. They aim to develop:

- knowledge and understanding, both of self and of the social and physical environment;
- a wide range of skills;
- certain attitudes and values; and
- an ability to cope with the demands of society.

Schools also make clear their intentions about the range of special educational needs for which they are responsible and are able to make provision. Successful special schools and units set good examples of involving parents fully in their children's education, an aim increasingly being adopted by mainstream schools. What matters most is that "*effective schools have aims which are appropriate and realistic, subject to periodic review, communicated effectively to all involved with the school and matched by a set of clearly defined policies and corresponding practices*"[10].

Figure 2.1

Contents of a learning support policy in a mainstream school

Aims: Summative statements about: the range of educational needs and special educational needs for which the school caters; the ways in which the school intends to identify and meet the special educational needs of its pupils; who is responsible for the education of pupils with special educational needs; the ways in which staff should work together; involving members of other services; and working with parents.

Rationale: Elaboration of the principles, statutory requirements, national/education authority/governing body policies and guidelines and other relevant influences on which the policy is based.

Those to whom the policy is addressed: List of those for whom the policy is intended (giving reasons if necessary) such as class and specialist teachers, support services and parents.

Other policies to which this relates: List of policies and guidelines which have particular significance, particularly those related to the curriculum and learning and teaching.

Names and remits of those responsible for implementing policies: List of lines of responsibility from headteacher to class and subject teachers; include auxiliary and support staff.

Identification and assessment of special educational needs*: List of those responsible; strategies for identifying pupils' short-term or long-term difficulties in learning; approaches to be taken to assessment and reporting to staff and parents on the nature and effects of these difficulties; cross reference to section on recording and assessment of future needs.

Arrangements for making provision for pupils with special educational needs*: Roles of class and/or subject teachers, learning support staff and other specialists; roles of guidance staff; deployment of auxiliary staff; curricular issues, such as strategies for adapting the curriculum; acquisition of equipment and materials; use of accommodation.

Referral to support services*: Referral to support services and arrangements for working with them and involving them in planning, assessment and evaluation.

Record-keeping*: Expectations of all members of staff and advice on the nature and forms of records.

Statutory procedures*: Outline of arrangements to be followed in opening a Records of Needs, reviewing it, and assessment and review of future needs.

Transition arrangements*: Arrangements for planning, supporting and obtaining feedback on moves of pupils to next stage of education or other forms of educational provision.

Timetable and arrangements for evaluating effectiveness of policy: Measures to be taken to evaluate policy; timescale; those responsible.

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* Schools find it helpful to supplement a policy on learning support with guidelines on aspects such as those asterisked in Figure 2.1.

2.9 In effective mainstream schools, policies on special educational needs are usually expressed in terms of provision for learning support, with aims and strategies encompassing all of their pupils with disabilities or difficulties in learning. Such approaches can integrate provision, simplify management and result in more efficient deployment of resources. A comprehensive policy for learning support articulates with aspects such as pastoral care and guidance, language across the curriculum and resources. It is the foundation of effective provision for meeting pupils' special educational needs. Figure 2.1 outlines the items which may be included in a learning support policy in mainstream schools.

2.10 Some special schools have found it necessary to have a policy on support for learning on the same lines as that illustrated, but most treat learning support as part of the general and curricular policies which shape the work of the school. Effective special schools have written policies on the items listed in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2

Policy papers in effective special schools

- Curriculum structure
- Curricular areas/subjects
- Assessment, reporting and recording
- Approaches to learning and teaching
- Pastoral care and guidance
- Homework
- Informal curriculum out of class
- Working with support services
- Management
- Staff development
- Resource management
- Parental involvement
- Health and safety
- Community liaison
- After-school care in residential school

Aims, policies and guidelines: independent and grant-aided schools

2.11 The 27 independent and 7 grant-aided special schools in Scotland extend and supplement the provision made by education authorities. Their governing bodies are responsible for planning, supporting, monitoring and evaluating the work of their schools and for assuring quality to those funding places and to parents of their pupils. Statements of aims and policies are an important means of explaining and justifying the roles and work of the schools to those concerned with selecting places for children and young people. They also provide an operational framework for their headteachers. As the majority of the schools are residential, these statements need to encompass informal curricular provision out of classroom hours.

Aims, policies and guidelines: Further Education colleges

2.12 In the past many colleges worked within the framework of policies developed by education authorities: a few have adopted college policies. Effective policies should:

- contain a set of aims which encompass all aspects of college provision;
- clarify the provision which is to be made, for example regarding curriculum, guidance, assessment, access and other services;
- include reference to other agencies with which the college will collaborate; and
- contain strategies for implementing policy.

Boards of management may wish to establish consultative groups to assist them in determining an appropriate range of provision and developing strategies for meeting special educational needs effectively.

Management structures and processes

2.13 The most effective management structures in both schools and colleges are those which are based on clear lines of responsibility for special educational needs and which relate clearly to support services and other departments. The following characteristics (Figure 2.3) are evident in management structures which promote and support effective provision for special educational needs.

2.14 One of the issues for decision by education authorities and schools is how to apportion management responsibilities for special educational needs so as to meet local requirements. The arguments for giving each member of senior promoted staff a share of the remit are based on avoidance of any form of stigmatisation, on integrating all educational provision and, in some instances, on devolving management to local groups. However, giving one person responsibility for all aspects of provision for special educational needs allows the development of experience and expertise in a complex area, and advocacy for the particular needs of pupils and staff and consistency of approach. Other management procedures which need to be tailored to local circumstances relate to communication, administration, case management and staff appraisal, development and training. Schools also require effective arrangements for timetabling, policy development and evaluation.

Aspects to be managed

2.15 In making effective provision for special educational needs, the list of aspects to be managed includes: **staff, accommodation, resources, budgets and finance, curriculum, links with the community and other establishments, and quality assurance.** Existing publications already deal fully with most items on this list and all are considered in the following chapters; comment here is therefore restricted. The four other aspects which are emphasised in provision for special educational needs are: **the range of provision; the contributions of teachers and support staff; parental involvement; and statutory procedures.**

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Figure 2.3

Effective management structures and processes

- **Committed leaders** demonstrate whole-hearted commitment to the education of pupils with special educational needs and are realistic about what can be achieved.
- **Remits and responsibilities** are specified in writing, are delegated in unambiguous terms and are familiar to, and understood by, those concerned.
- **Co-ordination of services** for individuals and their parents is effective and efficient and extends across the stages of education and within and between establishments.
- **Team approaches** are encouraged and supported to ensure that all providing the educational service are kept informed, are clear about respective roles, know that their contributions are valued, and share in planning, implementing and evaluating educational programmes.
- **Systems of evaluation,** involving teachers and other professional staff, parents and the individual, are operating effectively.

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The range of provision

2.16 Education authorities and voluntary organisations are faced with the challenges of planning, managing and evaluating a range of provision. The list of different forms of establishments and range of staff and services necessary to provide a unified service for all children with special educational needs in an authority is formidable. (Examples are given in Figures 1.3, 3.3 and 5.2). Each education authority, taking account of the views of parents, determines the form of its own provision. Where it is not possible or appropriate for the education authority to provide for the specified needs of an individual, it sends pupils to schools in other areas of Scotland and even further afield. This requires good and regularly updated knowledge of provision. Effective schools and services aid this process by evaluating at intervals the nature of the assistance they are realistically able to offer, and by considering ways in which they might expand or adapt to meet other special educational needs.

The contributions of teachers and support staff

2.17 Teachers are the key personnel in meeting special educational needs. Class and subject teachers hold the main responsibility for educating pupils, but should expect and receive support and advice from promoted and guidance staff, from specialist teachers and from members of the support services. Teachers with special educational needs remits have been shown to be of greatest assistance when they are able to fulfil the 5 roles outlined in Figure 2.4.

These roles are most effectively fulfilled when management create the necessary working conditions and when all members of staff recognise that learning support staff aim to assist their colleagues rather than take from them responsibility for pupils' learning.

Figure 2.4

The roles of SEN specialists

Tutoring and class teaching: Specialists teach special programmes for specified periods of time; they teach classes in special schools and units, and special classes in mainstream schools. Specialists also take classes in mainstream schools to free the class or subject teacher to work with individuals or groups, for example, in extending abler pupils.

Teaching co-operatively with class or subject teachers: Specialists (and/or other class and subject teachers) support the work of class and subject teachers by targeting assistance in a planned way to pupils experiencing difficulties in learning but also by enriching the overall quality of learning and teaching.

Providing consultancy support: Learning support staff, teachers from specialist advisory services and teachers from special schools advise the management team and colleagues on ways of improving the quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching throughout the school and on particular areas or subjects in the curriculum; they also give advice and guidance on the learning needs and programmes of individual pupils.

Providing specialist services: Learning support teachers use their unique position to provide exceptional services to individual pupils, such as supporting those with difficulties in adjusting to the life of their school or class; and provide short-term assistance to help pupils to catch up on work after a period of hospitalisation.

Contributing to staff development: Specialists in special educational needs are able to contribute to the enhancement of their colleagues' professional development through seminars and in-service courses, information sheets; and the exercise of the above roles.

2.18   The most effective use is made of members of support services, such as educational psychologists and therapists, when the nature and aims of their work are understood and fully integrated into the educational programmes of individual pupils or students. Senior staff have to ensure that time is set aside to enable teachers and members of support services to meet regularly to exchange information, plan and review their work. School staff also benefit from training and guidance on ways of incorporating the specialist contribution into the daily life of the class, such as the best means of positioning individuals, or of dealing with difficult behaviour.

Parental involvement

2.19   Effective education authorities, schools and governing bodies consider and give guidance on the best ways of involving parents in their children's education. Arrangements to be made cover the formal requirements to provide information about provision in general or about individual schools, to report on and discuss progress and to involve parents in procedures related to recording and assessment of future needs, in addition to more informal measures which promote productive social relationships. Successful managers ensure that parents have identified points of contact, that they are kept fully informed about all matters related to their children, that full account is taken of their views and that decisions are quickly followed by action.

Statutory procedures

2.20 While education authorities are responsible for opening and reviewing Records of Needs and for statutory assessments and reviews of future needs, various parts of the procedures are delegated to schools and in particular to regional psychological services[11]. What matters is that the procedures are managed in accordance with statute in order to ensure that the individual's special educational needs are being identified and reviewed and that provision is being made for them.

Managing change

2.21 Provision for special educational needs is undergoing change in response to the developments in the education system as a whole and to higher expectations both of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and of the services they require. Change may be managed to the benefit of all when it is planned and supported. The process of development planning, as described in *The Role of School Development Plans in Managing School Effectiveness*[12], is equally relevant to improving provision for special educational needs, whether provided within mainstream schools or within education authority or independent special schools or units. Many mainstream schools have already identified projects to improve their provision as a priority in their plans for development.

2.22 Experience has shown that it is particularly important that those responsible for such planning and development are clear about their aims and take steps to involve, reassure and support all who are affected in the process. If their support is to be gained along with that of their parents, teachers and support staff, it is essential that the children and young persons are given full explanations of the reasons for change and the benefits which will accrue. The illustrations of good practice in the following chapters are a testament to such successful management of change.

3 EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

This chapter illustrates the distinctive features of effective educational provision for children in the years before statutory schooling. It emphasises the contributions that educational services play in promoting early development, the central role of the family in the education of the young child and the value of early identification and assessment.

Special educational needs in the pre-school context

3.1   The special educational needs most likely to be identified in pre-school children are those which are pronounced or complex. They mainly relate to specific syndromes or to physical, neurological and intellectual conditions which delay or disrupt normal patterns of development. However, improved assessment strategies have shown that less obvious, but still serious difficulties and disorders in areas of cognitive, language or emotional and social development also give rise to special educational needs. For many of these children the effects are such that their difficulties will persist throughout their lives, but with appropriate interventions and support from the earliest stage, they learn and progress. For others, however, learning problems are overcome before they are admitted to school, due to appropriate intervention, maturation, or change in circumstances - or a combination of all three.

3.2   The quality of children's experiences in the first 5 years of life is well understood to be important in laying the foundations for their later learning and general progress. Early education begins in the home and, therefore, children's first teachers are mainly their parents and family members. Many parents gradually seek the assistance of others, such as playgroup leaders and staff in nursery schools, to widen and extend opportunities for learning. A caring and stimulating home environment is critical for the progress and development of children with special educational needs, and their parents generally require information, advice and support from the earliest point in order to deal with the problems which stand in the way of progress and development. In recognition of the importance of enhancing the early learning of such children, education authorities and many voluntary agencies, since long before the introduction of statutory recording from the age of 2, have developed educational services covering the period from soon after birth to admission to school, with the following aims:

- to assist parents and carers to be confident and effective in nurturing children's development;
- to identify, assess and make provision for children's special educational needs;
- to provide educational programmes aimed at promoting learning and progress;
- to enable parents and professionals to work together; and
- to assist parents to choose an appropriate school placement.

Early identification and assessment

3.3   Central to fulfilment of these aims are effective strategies for early identification and assessment. The Education (Scotland) Act, 1980, requires education authorities to disseminate information about the importance of early identification of children with special educational needs and about the opportunities available for assessment. Education departments which have achieved success in early identification have adopted a number of practices. For example they provide helpful, easily read information booklets for parents on the range of services offered and the means of accessing them, and issue copies of the Scottish Office publication *A Parents' Guide to Special Educational Needs* [2]. They work closely with health boards and social work departments whose personnel, such as general practitioners, paediatricians, clinical medical officers, health visitors and social workers, are likely to be the first points of contact with children with special educational needs. These staff are frequently in the best position to advise parents on the value of referral of their children to educational services. Education authority psychological services and pre-school teachers frequently play an important role in identifying children with special educational needs through their assessment of individuals attending play groups and nursery schools, and through being responsive to parental concerns about the development of their children. In most instances, of course, parents are the first to identify that their child needs help.

3.4   Pre-school community assessment teams have also been effective in assessing young children and advising on the measures which should be taken to assist them. These teams comprise a core membership of educational psychologists and teachers, medical specialists and therapists and social workers. Other professionals and parents become members when appropriate. Whatever the arrangements made for assessment, parental and professional satisfaction is expressed when the following criteria apply:

- parents participate at all stages and understand what is being assessed and for what reason;
- children are assessed in situations in which they are most comfortable and confident, such as in their own homes;
- the assessment focuses on strengths, as well as weaknesses, and account is taken of environmental factors, such as previous opportunities for learning;
- the advice of other professionals is sought when additional expertise is required;
- the assessments are carried out over time to ensure that the child's performance is not affected by fatigue;
- the assessment covers the main areas of development;
- the results are fully discussed by professionals and with parents and amended in the light of new evidence;
- the outcomes include a written profile of the child's strengths, difficulties and needs in each area of development; recommendations for activities and resources which are thought likely to promote development; and options for action, such as the opening of a Record of Needs or provision of services, or attendance at nursery school; and
- arrangements are made for reviewing the progress of the child by a specified date; and those with responsibility for actions, including parents, are specified.

Figure 3.1
The steps in identifying and assessing a child's special educational needs in the pre-school period

STEP 1 **Referral:** The child is referred to educational services by parents or, with their consent, by a medical officer or other professional involved.

STEP 2 **Dissemination of information:** Parents are informed about services available and are invited to have their child assessed, usually by an educational psychologist in the initial stage.

STEP 3 **Initial assessment:** An educational psychologist visits the home or educational setting to meet child and parent, to provide basic information, to answer questions and, perhaps, to conduct initial assessment to determine which other members of the educational service should be involved. At this point other professionals are formally informed about the involvement of educational services and arrangements are made for collaboration.

STEP 4 **Completion of first round of assessment:** All members of educational services conduct their assessment, co-ordinated where possible with that of other departments. Reports are prepared and findings discussed with parents. (Parents and professionals may agree that the child does not have special educational needs and that no exceptional measures are required.)

STEP 5 **Profile of needs and decisions about recommended provision:** An initial profile of the child's development and needs is drawn up. Parents are informed about the range of provision available and decisions are taken about the forms of provision recommended and whether, if the child is aged two or over, a Record of Needs should be opened. (Some children and families will withdraw at this stage if the child does not have special educational needs.)

STEP 6 **Provision is made and, where appropriate, a Record of Needs opened:** The education authority offers provision. Concurrently or before this action, perhaps at Step 5, where a Record of Needs is to be opened, the Director of Education sends the parents a letter inviting them to have their child examined by a medical officer and assessed by an educational psychologist. As a result of advice from the assessment team, a draft Record of Needs is prepared in consultation with the parents. At this point the parents state whether they wish a Named Person – a person agreeing to act as adviser and friend. The Record is opened and a copy is sent to the parents, to the psychological service and to the nursery unit or school attended. Provision is made as recommended on the Record of Needs by members of the multi-disciplinary team. In instances when parents do not agree with the terms of the Record or the decision to open a Record, they may follow appeals procedures laid down in the Education (Scotland) Act, 1980.

STEP 7 **Review of progress:** Where the child is receiving specialist services on a continuing basis, progress is closely monitored and reported to the parents. The progress of children is generally reviewed and, if necessary, reassessed at intervals of around one year.

STEP 8 **Preparation for school:** About one year prior to formal admission to school, or earlier if requested by the parents, the child's development and progress are assessed by members of his or her multi-professional team. The implications of the child's special educational needs for school provision are considered and options are explained to his or her family, who may take up offers to visit the schools suggested and may suggest others. As a result of the assessments and discussions a meeting is held with the parents, staff in any existing provision and staff in the optional schools. This may be the step at which a Record of Needs is opened for some children. Once decisions have been taken about the school and the support to be provided, the child is assisted to make the transition. If a Record of Needs has been opened, its terms are amended in line with the recommendations, and the parents' approval sought.

STEP 9 **Post-placement assessment:** About 3–6 months after placement the child's progress is reviewed and the effectiveness of support systems is evaluated. Adjustments are made in line with recommendations. It is often at this stage that the professionals with pre-school remits withdraw and hand over responsibilities to colleagues.

3.5   Assessment of the young child is a continuing process. Figure 3.1 gives an overview of the important steps to be taken in identifying and assessing special educational needs in the pre-school period.

Because the special educational needs of children identified in the pre-school period are generally pronounced or complex and require continuing review, consideration should be given to opening a Record of Needs. Decisions about whether or not to record should be based on the severity and/or complexity of individuals' problems, on whether these are likely to continue and on the exceptional nature of the support required. The advantages of opening a Record for young children are:

- parents have a means of making sure that their child's special educational needs are recognised and the provision required is specified;
- an all-round view of the child's strengths and difficulties is provided by the various professionals' assessments;
- the child's special educational needs are kept formally under review, an important process at a time when there may be rapid development;
- the procedures should ensure that the child's educational needs are defined in anticipation of entry to school and assist in the process of selecting an appropriate placement; and
- the Record is available to assist in obtaining the necessary provision if the family moves to another area.

Professionals who are successful in assisting parents through recording procedures are open and honest in reporting on progress and in giving advice and, at the same time, sensitive to the stresses on parents and other members of the family.

The curriculum

3.6   Within the pre-school period an appropriate curriculum aims to promote children's general development and to lay the foundations of the knowledge, understanding and skills essential for later learning. An HM Inspectors' Report, *The Education of Children under 5 in Scotland*[13]*,* discusses the nature and definition of the curriculum. Figure 3.2 highlights aspects which are of particular importance to many young children with special educational needs.

Young children with special educational needs benefit from experiencing activities matched to their levels of development in all of these curriculum areas. The balance among them is determined by the individual's needs and circumstances. Through effective early provision children are motivated to expect, and to enjoy, a range of activities which are progressively made more demanding in response to their development. They acquire self-confidence and trust in adults with a responsibility to teach them.

3.7   Where children's difficulties prevent spontaneous learning they will require to have some or most of their activities structured. Teaching staff should agree, with parents and other professionals, appropriate learning targets, the best means of achieving them, and ways of assessing progress and

evaluating the whole educational programme. These individualised educational programmes are often written to the format suggested in Figure 1.2, in Chapter 1, with adaptations to suit each child's educational context.

Figure 3.2

The major pre-school curricular areas

Communication and language: Body language; early conversational skills; listening/looking including, where necessary, use of hearing aids and/or understanding a sign language; talking or communicating by means of speech/signs/symbols/electronic communication aids; enjoyment of pictures, books and media such as television; and for children with the motivation and ability, learning to read and to write, when ready.

Personal and social development: Fostering personal identity and confidence; making and maintaining relationships; adjusting to new social situations at home, in an early learning centre and in the community; skills for personal independence; and play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world environment: Learning to use all senses to interpret and make sense of people, objects, places and events and their relationships one to another; understanding and applying concepts, including, as appropriate, early mathematics; getting to know about plants, animals and other living things; encouragement to develop curiosity and a sense of wonder; and early problem-solving.

Physical development and movement: The development of functional movement in sitting, lying, rolling, kneeling, walking, running, jumping and climbing; fine motor skills and co-ordination; learning to use aids to movement and to become as independent as possible; and extending movement experience on different terrain, on transport, and in activities, such as riding and swimming.

Expressive and aesthetic experience: Listening to, making, learning about and enjoying music in many forms; dance and creative movement; drama through mime, stories and rhymes, puppets and pretend and fantasy play; experiencing and learning about colour, textures, forms, patterns and pictorial representations; making and baking; and experimenting with paints, crayons, pencils, modelling materials and collage**.**

Forms of provision

3.8   In Scotland no single service or agency is responsible for all aspects of provision for children under the age of 5. Education authorities, social work departments, health boards and voluntary bodies all play important roles in providing for those with special educational needs. The range of provision across Scotland is remarkable in its complexity as Figure 3.3 shows.

Most of these services are non-statutory and the forms and levels of provision vary markedly in different parts of Scotland. Co-ordinating these various departments, agencies and establishments to provide a service which is coherent to parents, and even to professionals, is essential, but difficult to achieve. So, too, are publicising and explaining their functions. Where progress has been made in these respects, strategies adopted include: joint

planning; inter-departmental working groups, such as pre-school community assessment teams; identification of key personnel with remits which include co-operation with other departments; information booklets which incorporate all forms of provision; and some joint training. Many parents report satisfaction with education services where a single professional, usually an educational psychologist, is the point of contact about provision throughout the pre-school period.

Figure 3.3

Summary of educational and related services for children with special educational needs at the pre-school stage

Education authority services: Regional psychological services; pre-school home visiting teaching service for children with special educational needs; specialist teaching teams for visual and hearing impairment; pre-school units, specialising in the early education of children with specific difficulties, including language and communication disorders and motor impairment; family centres; nursery schools; and curriculum and special educational needs advisory services.

Health board services: Assessment services in hospitals and child development centres; community health services including medical officers and health visitors; occupational therapists; physiotherapists; speech and language therapists; aids and appliance centres; and respite care facilities.

Social work services: Counselling and support for families; assistance and advice on a range of practical matters related to daily life; respite care facilities; day care services; and monitoring provision in playgroups and nursery units in the voluntary sector.

Services provided by the voluntary sector: Organisations which provide information and advice to parents and professionals, advocacy, self-support groups and counselling (for parents); playgroups and nursery provision; and specialist therapy services, respite care and family holiday provision.

3.9 The form and nature of a child's early education vary in accordance with needs and the views of parents, and change with growth and development. In the initial period immediately after parents have been told about their child's special educational needs, educational services are usually best offered in the home. When appropriate, part-time attendance is offered, for example, in a special pre-school unit or in a nursery school. A decision on whether to offer a centre which is mainly for all children in an area, or one which specialises in particular special educational needs, is properly determined by the priority needs of the individual. Many young children appear to benefit from part-time attendance at each, having the advantages of being taught skills essential to overcome their disabilities and opportunities to interact and make friends with other children in their neighbourhood.

Learning and teaching

3.10 In the hands of confident parents and skilled professionals, learning and teaching in the pre-school period are natural, often spontaneous, and consonant with the interests and needs of the child. Learning takes place in a

light-hearted and encouraging atmosphere in which children and adults take pleasure in each other's company and in progressing together. Parents and professionals give the highest priority to fostering in the child from the earliest age a desire to be responsive and to learn and to interact: they try to counter any tendency to passivity and detachment. The main 'teachers' of young children with special educational needs are necessarily their parents. Informed professionals therefore spend a great part of their time in listening, advising and passing on expertise to them. In this process, care is taken not to spoil good parenting with an overload of formal teaching.

3.11 The range of learning and teaching strategies shown to be successful with such young children is broad and includes:

- strategies based on the interactions which take place between mother and infant;
- all forms of play and games;
- direct teaching of essential skills, one small step at a time;
- practising skills in real situations related to the ordinary business of life;
- approaches which engage a number or all of the senses;
- specialist approaches, such as 'gentle teaching' or 'behaviour modification', judiciously and expertly applied;
- techniques which encourage the child to observe and imitate;
- methods derived from the child's own style of learning; and
- use of equipment and appliances which assist the child to circumvent impairment and/or make learning easier.

Good foundations are laid for children's later learning by encouraging them to be as independent as possible in all aspects of their learning and to optimise their abilities in language and communication. It is essential that able children are appropriately challenged.

Progress and achievement

3.12 Within the pre-school period there is often controversy about whether children's progress is due to intervention or to maturation. What matters is that individuals attain the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills commensurate with their abilities, taking into account the effects of any disabilities. Predicting the progress of infants and young children with special educational needs is notoriously difficult, although parents naturally want to have some idea of what to expect and what to hope for. Teachers and psychologists fulfil their professional duties in this respect when, on the basis of sound assessment, they set educational goals and monitor and report on the progress being made to achieve them. Often they are then in a position to make some predictions about expectations for the child, but always with the proviso that rates of progress are particularly variable at the early stages of development and when all the effects of impairments are not yet evident.

Parental involvement

3.13 As has already been emphasised, parents are the main agents for educating young children, particularly those with special educational needs. All other forms of educational provision, whether statutory or voluntary, are effective only in the extent to which they reinforce and build on positive

parental contributions. Full parental involvement, therefore, permeates the work of specialist educational services for pre-school children. Competent and sensitive professionals expend much time and effort in establishing productive relationships with families. The tenor of these early contacts is very important, as it frequently determines the extent to which parents feel they may trust professional advice, guidance and support. Parental involvement at the pre-school stage places heavy demands on professionals. It is essential that they are sure about the parameters of their roles and responsibilities and receive appropriate in-service training and personal support.

3.14 Professionals are more likely to be effective when they:

- listen to, and take full account of, parental views;
- give full information and deal openly with questions;
- inform parents of their rights;
- encourage and support parents in making decisions;
- carry out quickly and efficiently all promised actions; and
- make clear that their aim is to work with parents in a team dedicated to meeting the educational needs of the child.

3.15 Parents are not passive recipients of provision and are generally in the best position to decide what suits their child. Many will go to considerable lengths to secure what they consider to be appropriate education for their children. Educational advisers sometimes find themselves in difficult situations where their views of the needs of the child differ from those of parents. It is their professional duty to present their advice openly and honestly and lay out options for action. Any decisions related to education will ultimately be taken by the child's parents and members of the education directorate.

Working with other professionals

3.16 Because inter-professional team work is a cornerstone of effective pre-school provision, most aspects have already been covered in this chapter. However, two points are worthy of emphasis. First, in the best pre-school provision teachers and others with responsibility for educational programmes have ready access to, and make full use of, all the relevant contributions of other professionals. Second, wise members of education services appreciate that unnecessarily heavy demands may be placed on children and families by having too much professional intervention at any one time. They therefore share their plans with the others in the inter-professional team and together with parents agree priorities for action.

Managing provision

3.17 The principles and procedures outlined in Chapter 2 are, in most respects, relevant to effective management of provision in the pre-school period. Particular matters requiring education authority advice are:

- the most effective means of disseminating information about the importance of early identification and the range of assessment services offered by an education authority;
- the range and forms of educational services required by children with special educational needs and their families;

- the best methods of co-ordinating services to children and their families;
- the stage at which to recommend the opening of a Record of Needs;
- the most efficient ways of consulting and co-operating with professionals from health boards and social work departments and with the voluntary sector; and
- the procedures for determining the most effective primary school placement.

Taking account of children's interests and preferences

3.18 From the earliest stages, children make most progress when they are responsive to and enthusiastically engaged in their education. It is, therefore, important that when parents and professionals are making decisions about educational strategies and placements they take full account of the children's interests and personal preferences. Whatever their abilities, disabilities and difficulties, individuals may be judged to have benefited from their early educational experiences if they enter primary school ready to relate to adults, to indicate simple choices, to be as independent as possible and to respond to appropriate teaching. Effective provision at the primary stage is the focus of the next chapter.

4 EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AT THE PRIMARY STAGE

This chapter illustrates the distinctive features of effective provision at the primary stage of education. Good practice in both mainstream and special primary schools takes account of the special educational needs of individual pupils and of national and regional guidance and advice[*].

Special educational needs in the primary context

4.1   The responsibility of primary schools is summarised in *Effective Primary Schools*[14] in the following way:

> *"Primary schools are responsible for a vital stage in education during which the foundations are laid for a lifetime of learning."*

Solid foundations are laid only when unnecessary difficulties in learning are avoided and appropriate provision is made for pupils' special educational needs.

4.2   The majority of special educational needs in primary schools arise from the difficulties pupils experience in acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills which make up the curriculum. The most common cause for these problems, identified in an Inspectorate report of 1978[15], is a mismatch between pupils' levels of competence and the demands made of them in the classroom. However, not all difficulties in learning can be so attributed. Some are due to a variety of personal and environmental factors which become apparent or more evident during the process of primary education. For example, some specific special educational needs are associated primarily with impairments which impede progress in one or more of the processes of learning to read, to spell, to write and to understand mathematical concepts. A significant number of pupils have special educational needs because, for physical, neurological, emotional or social reasons, they cannot learn at rates similar to those of their peers. They often have a multiplicity of minor problems which together create obstacles to learning. Finally, the continuum in the primary sector includes pronounced, specific and complex special educational needs of such severity that most are recorded before pupils are admitted to statutory education.

4.3   Headteachers in primary schools may recommend that a Record of Needs be opened for pupils with significant and continuing difficulties in learning, in order to ensure that:

- they are fully assessed and any medical and psychological causes of their difficulties are identified;
- their special educational needs are defined and any exceptional forms of provision which are required are provided;
- their progress is kept under continuing review; and
- parents and teachers are agreed about the nature and extent of the special educational needs and the actions they should each take.

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[*] See Appendix A for list of relevant documents.

Figure 4.1

The Steps in identifying and assessing pupils' special educational needs at the primary stage

STEP 1 **Identification of difficulties in learning:** Through the procedures normally used in the classroom, the **class teacher** assesses individuals' learning difficulties. Where relevant, reference is made to pre-school reports and to information given by parents. The teacher takes action to overcome the learning difficulties within a defined period, generally by adjusting the class programme. The teacher reassesses, making a record of the problems faced by individuals, and their learning strengths.

STEP 2 **Referral to learning support co-ordinator:** The class teacher consults with the **learning support co-ordinator** and together they plan, record and implement courses of action for those pupils who have continuing difficulties. Parents are informed and consulted. Additional assistance may be given to the individual by promoted staff, another teacher, or the learning support specialist attached to or on the staff of the school. Arrangements are made to review progress.

At this point, the school has set up learning support arrangements which assist the majority of the pupils with special educational needs to make progress. Their progress and the nature of provision are monitored and necessary adjustments are made.

STEP 3 **Referral to support services outwith the school:** Where a pupil's special educational needs are not being met within the resources of the school, the learning support co-ordinator and class teacher consult with the headteacher. Where it is decided that further assistance is required, the headteacher may first seek advice from an adviser or learning support specialist from outwith the school. The next step is to seek parents' permission to refer the child to the psychological service. In good practice referral is in writing and specifies (a) the individual's strengths, and any needs which have been identified; (b) the parents' views; (c) actions taken by the school; and (d) indications of the assistance required.

STEP 4 **Consideration of the pupil's needs by the educational psychologist:** The educational psychologist meets the parents and assesses the pupil in the school and in other contexts as required. A course of action is recommended in writing with, where appropriate, advice on the content of the curriculum and learning and teaching strategies. Other members of support services may also assess the pupil at this stage and make recommendations. Where action is some form of educational programme, arrangements are made for review and evaluation, in consultation with parents and school staff.

No further steps are required for many pupils but the support services and school, in consultation with parents, continue the process of monitoring progress and adjusting provision in line with needs.

STEP 5 **Consideration is given to opening a Record of Needs:** The headteacher, parents and, normally, the educational psychologist consider whether a Record of Needs should be opened. If there is agreement, the directorate is informed and statutory procedures are initiated. School staff prepare a report on their view of the child's strengths and needs.

STEP 6 **Medical examination and psychological assessment:** The child is assessed. Parents have the right to be present at the medical examination and should be invited to discussions with the educational psychologist. The medical officer and the psychologist prepare reports. Staff in school, meantime, continue to give the pupil assistance.

STEP 7 **Meeting to discuss opening of Record of Needs:** The professionals, including representatives of school staff, meet with parents to discuss assessments. If the decision is that a Record of Needs should be opened, then the pupil's special educational needs are defined and the provision required to meet these needs is specified. Learning and teaching targets should be set and the date of the review agreed. The drafted terms are sent to the directorate for consideration and action. School staff prepare or update their individualised educational programme for the pupil.

STEP 8 **Opening the Record of Needs:** The Record is drafted and a copy is sent to parents for approval. Once approved it is 'opened' and copies are sent to parents, school and psychological service.

Parents may appeal against the decisions to open or not to open a Record, against the terms of the Record and against proposed placement.

Identification and assessment of special educational needs

4.4   Effective mainstream and special schools have policies which ensure that class teachers adopt consistent and rigorous approaches to the identification of pupils facing difficulties in learning and to the assessment of their special educational needs. In such schools, a member of staff is assigned the role of **learning support co-ordinator** to assist class teachers, as illustrated in these extracts from an Inspectorate report.

> *"The learning support teacher provided effective support to pupils who had been identified by class teachers as needing support in language and mathematical work; records of pupils receiving support contained helpful comments on pupils' learning and progress."*

> *"The class and visiting teachers collaborated to provide a variety of interesting learning experiences for all pupils; good support was given to class teachers by both the special educational needs and learning support staff in identifying needs and in planning to meet attainment targets."*

The main means and starting points for identifying and assessing special educational needs are curriculum-related assessments, following the sequence of **planning, teaching, recording, reporting and evaluating** outlined in the *Assessment 5–14 Guidelines*[5]. The various steps which effective schools take to support pupils, review their progress, and to inform and consult with their parents are outlined in Figure 4.1.

4.5   In areas with well-developed pre-school services, pupils with pronounced and complex special educational needs entering P1, or the first class of special school, have Records of Needs or, at least, reports which give staff information on which to plan and provide their special programmes. However comprehensive these reports, staff in the receiving school find it necessary to undertake their own assessment to update such records and to inform curriculum planning.

4.6   The progress of all children must be kept under review and regular reports should be made to parents, as illustrated in this reported example.

> *"Staff had a deep understanding of their pupils' needs. They were competent in setting precise educational targets and closely monitored the progress of individuals towards achieving them. When the results of assessment indicated the need for change to programmes, new targets were set or others revised. The system for recording progress was very efficient. Written reports to parents were informative and thorough on most curricular areas."*

This procedure is essential in making effective provision. Innovative schools anticipated the Education 5–14 advice on assessment and recording by establishing a system of annual reviews of pupils' special educational needs, for which full reports are prepared by teachers and other professionals and to which parents contribute.

A well-established system of reviews pays dividends in the following ways:

- the pupil's educational needs are updated;
- the effectiveness of existing provision can be regularly evaluated;
- changes can be made to provision in the light of experience;
- professionals know when an individual's needs are to be reviewed and can plan their contribution;
- parents are reassured that the school is attending to their child's needs and have a regular appointment to discuss their concerns; and
- plans for changes, such as transition to secondary school, can be drawn up in good time.

4.7   Efficient systems integrate the school's overall approach to assessment, recording and reporting to parents with the formal reviews required for pupils with Records of Needs. Additional measures may be required, such as multi-professional reassessment, and more time and privacy necessary for discussions with parents. The frequency of reviews depends on the nature of individuals' needs, their personal circumstances and the views of parents and school staff. Annual reviews, timetabled to coincide with the end or start of a school session, have the merit of assisting staff in evaluating and adjusting programmes of work. However, it is usually unnecessary for professionals, other than school staff, to conduct such annual assessments, although, in the case of recorded pupils, parents may request this. Full formal reviews are valuable at key stages in the pupil's education, for example, at the end of P3 to review progress in the early stages; and in the final term of P6 or the start of P7 to plan transition to secondary schooling. The pupils most likely to need more frequent review are those with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those experiencing disruptions to schooling, perhaps as a result of hospitalisation.

The curriculum

4.8   The Education 5–14 framework, shaping the curriculum at the primary stage, is intended for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The mechanisms of learning outcomes, strands, attainment targets and programmes of study assist teachers in their prime role of making the curriculum appropriate for their pupils. Used well, the underpinning principles and planning framework of Education 5–14 have the potential:

- to prevent the emergence of difficulties in learning, because of the emphasis on matching learning demands to pupils' stages of development and attainment; and
- to assist teachers to devise or to improve educational programmes to meet the special educational needs of pupils at all points of the continuum.

4.9   The content of the curriculum, outlined in the five areas, **English language, mathematics, environmental studies, expressive arts** and **religious and moral education,** should be designed to meet the special

educational needs of the vast majority of pupils[6]. The most common approach used by teachers to achieve this end is known as differentiation, a set of strategies chosen to ensure that the work is appropriate to the needs of all individuals and provides sufficient challenge. However, where special educational needs are exceptional, class teachers, even those in charge of special classes, find that they need to do more, generally with the assistance of promoted staff and the various specialists in learning support. They apply the strategies of individualisation, enhancement and adaptation, outlined in paragraph 1.9 of Chapter 1, and frequently find value in drawing up IEPs to the format suggested in Figure 1.2. Programmes of **personal and social development** are of particular importance for most pupils with special educational needs. In order to meet some exceptional needs, teachers find it necessary to elaborate the curricular content by adding, replacing or removing learning outcomes, strands and attainment targets. Such procedures are more likely to be necessary, for example, for some pupils with:

- hearing impairments;
- visual impairments;
- physical disabilities;
- language disorders; and
- specific difficulties in reading and writing.

4.10   For some pupils, this process of elaboration involves extensive alteration of the content of curricular areas. Such revision and alteration is likely to be appropriate for:

- pupils with profound learning difficulties;
- many with severe or moderate learning difficulties at the early stages of education;
- some pupils with severe emotional difficulties, short-term; and
- some pupils with multiple difficulties.

The areas requiring such planning include communication and language, understanding the environment, personal and social development, movement, the expressive arts and religious and moral education. Certain pupils would experience only this type of elaborated curriculum, though many would also progress into the content outlined in the 5–14 guidelines.

Forms of provision

4.11   Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1 lists the types of provision which may be available at the primary stage. In determining appropriate forms of education for an individual, consideration is given to the most suitable school placement and the configuration of special arrangements, staffing and resources which are necessary to meet the pupil's needs. Throughout the primary stage, the quality of the provision is kept under review and adjustments are made as the special educational and personal needs change.

4.12   Appropriate forms of provision, whether in mainstream or specialist

primary schools or departments, are characterised by the features outlined in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Characteristics of effective forms of provision at the primary stage

- The school provides an appropriate primary curriculum through which general and special educational needs are met.
- The school provides optimum opportunities for pupils to relate to each other and to the community.
- The accommodation and resources are suitable.
- Teaching staff have the expertise, or have immediate access to the expertise, required to meet pupils' special educational needs.
- The school is committed to offering each individual a continuous education.
- Parents are fully involved in making decisions which affect their child's educational programme.
- Support services are available as required.

Effective forms of learning support vary in accordance with educational policies and local circumstances, but all share the characteristic that staff are able to carry out the roles outlined in Chapter 2. In one example of good practice described in a report of an inspection the learning support teacher undertook a range of duties which were of great assistance to her colleagues.

> *"She supported more able pupils and those with learning difficulties. She facilitated the integration of pupils from the learning centre into mainstream classes. She worked co-operatively in classrooms with teachers in lessons across all areas of the curriculum. She gave advice on learning and teaching and the use of resources. Central to her work were effective assessment procedures and detailed records of pupils' needs and progress."*

4.13 In some instances, pupils attend two schools, part-time in each. Such arrangements may be highly appropriate in the short term where staff in both schools can work together on planning, teaching and evaluating the single educational programme. Residential forms of provision are sought for young children when the educational and social advantages outweigh those of remaining with their families, and when parents and guardians and the individual concerned are content that this is the most appropriate arrangement.

Learning and teaching

4.14 Staff in primary schools have a particularly important role in assisting pupils to acquire positive attitudes to formal education and the skills required for learning and good work habits. Success in meeting these goals should avoid or reduce difficulties and result in greater efficiency in learning. Experienced and knowledgeable learning support specialists fulfil their roles effectively when they guide pupils and staff to ways of improving learning.

4.15 The characteristics of effective learning and teaching, and the strategies, respectively listed in paragraphs 1.12 and 3.10 of this report, and in Chapter 1 of *Effective Primary Schools*[11], are generally relevant to pupils with special educational needs in P1–P7. They are restated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

The characteristics of effective learning and teaching

HM Inspectors find that effective learning takes place in primary classrooms where teachers:

- establish and maintain a good classroom ethos in which pupils are motivated to learn;
- plan, prepare and organise lessons well and ensure that pupils are clear about what they have to learn;
- recognise the need for good classroom organisation, including the organisation of resources;
- set a good example, and foster good relationships with pupils;
- have high, but attainable, expectations of pupils in respect of both academic performance and good behaviour;
- provide tasks which are well matched to the needs, aptitudes and prior knowledge of individual pupils;
- understand the role of language in learning;
- ensure that pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, are encouraged to become independent, resourceful and responsible, and are able to work purposefully on their own and with others;
- check that learning has taken place by ensuring that assessment is an integral part of classroom work and provides diagnostic information on pupil progress and information which can be used to evaluate their teaching and to inform parents;
- give pupils feedback on their work to help them learn effectively and identify the best 'next steps' for them, taking account of their strengths and needs; and
- support classroom learning with work done at home where this is appropriate and in accordance with school policy.

4.16 In selecting strategies most likely to motivate pupils to learn, primary teachers and support staff should take account of the following points:

- many primary pupils with learning difficulties cannot cope easily with abstract concepts, but gain some understanding when taught by means of practical experiences and demonstration;
- retention of learning is more likely when pupils are able to practise and apply what has been learned in interesting and relevant activities;
- pupils who are too dependent on teachers or their assistants for guiding and prompting their work are prepared to learn only when adult assistance is available;

- for many pupils with special educational needs, including many who are very able, certain essential processes, such as using alternative forms of communication or co-ordinating movement, are likely to be acquired only through systematic programmes taught by a specialist teacher or therapist, or by a class teacher with specialist guidance;
- for many pupils with difficulties the adage 'little and often' is very appropriate to acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills, for example, those of reading, talking and computation; and
- play and games are an excellent means of promoting practice and application of acquired skills and concepts and of motivating pupils to further effort.

4.17 Information and microelectronic technologies play an increasingly important role in promoting learning at the primary stage, particularly for pupils who require exceptional ways of gaining access to the curriculum. The later learning of those, for example, with hearing impairment, visual impairment, communication difficulties and severe forms of dyslexia is likely to be adversely affected if these pupils do not learn to use, apply and look after equipment and programs designed to assist them to circumvent their difficulties.

4.18 The idea of homework for pupils with special educational needs has not been fully accepted by all teachers and parents, largely because it has been narrowly conceived. Yet imaginative schemes, devised by class and specialist teachers, have achieved aims of improving skills, transferring learning from school into homes and encouraging members of families to take a greater interest in and be more supportive of pupils' progress. More consideration should be given by teachers, parents and residential staff to ways of encouraging pupils to work at home.

4.19 The importance of assessment and of its integration with the processes of learning and teaching have already been emphasised. Class and specialist teachers at the primary stage have tended to be more effective in assessing pupils' attainment and progress and in producing profiles of abilities in the core areas of the curriculum such as English language, mathematics and personal and social development. The Education 5–14 initiatives should assist in improving assessment and, consequently, the setting of individual learning targets across all areas of the curriculum. National tests have relevance, as part of the assessment system, for those pupils with special educational needs who are working at, or towards, the specified levels.

Progress, attainment and achievement

4.20 The progress of all pupils with special educational needs at the primary stage is measured in terms of their achievement of goals which are integral to their educational programmes. Most pupils may be expected to move through the Levels of the Education 5–14 curriculum at different rates according to their aptitudes, abilities and special educational needs. The progress of those pupils with learning difficulties who work slowly through the first Levels may be

demonstrated by their achievement of subsets of attainment targets. While it is not appropriate to gauge the progress of pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties against national standards, their achievements can be measured in relation to their personal attainment targets specified in their IEPs. Such pupils were referred to in this extract from a report.

> *"Pupils required high levels of adult supervision and support because of the complex nature of their needs. In addition to severe learning difficulties, individuals had various problems associated with physical disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, epilepsy and social and emotional development. Nonetheless, all were making encouraging or very good progress towards achieving the appropriate educational targets set for them."*

4.21 The attainments of the majority of pupils with special educational needs are commensurate with national standards in some areas of the curriculum. Some pupils, notably those with pronounced special educational needs, overcome all obstacles in the way of progress to attain remarkably high standards in all areas of the primary curriculum. With few exceptions, pupils achieve appropriate curricular targets when they are motivated and well-supported at home and in school. In some mainstream and special primary classrooms, inappropriately low expectations of pupils with special educational needs result in poor attainments, particularly in written English and mathematics. The attainments of many, while not comparable with the Levels expected of most children of their age group, nevertheless represent significant personal achievements. Many pupils, whose academic progress is slow in certain aspects, compete on equal terms with their peers in gaining awards in other aspects.

Parental involvement

4.22 Effective primary schools and departments invest heavily in establishing good relationships with parents. The entry of any child into primary school is, in most families, a time of celebration, tinged with anxiety. The concerns and fears of parents of children with recognised difficulties in learning tend to outweigh any sense of pleasure.

Teachers successfully reassure parents by:

- taking a sensitive and thorough approach to induction;
- building on the information about a pupil received from members of pre-school services;
- demonstrating quickly that they understand and are capable of meeting their child's needs;
- making sure that arrangements to support the pupil are working efficiently;
- keeping in frequent contact with parents, through meetings, home-school diaries and by telephone; and
- in some instances, organising and assisting parent support groups.

The following extract from an HM Inspectors' report describes an example of good practice:

> *"Parents came to the school, often in the company of an educational psychologist, to learn about its facilities at first-hand before deciding on the placement of their child. Once pupils were admitted, their parents were invited to visit for a variety of purposes: to hear about the work of classes on parents' evenings; to meet with teachers and members of the support services to discuss their children's progress and future educational needs; and to attend concerts and social events."*

4.23 Staff in mainstream primary schools have a particularly sensitive role in advising some parents that their child has significant difficulties in learning. By keeping them informed and involved from the initial point of concern, headteachers are more likely to win the confidence and trust of parents and forge a productive partnership to the benefit of the pupil. They make sure that a member of staff is identified as the contact person, often an assistant headteacher or class teacher. Insightful teachers listen carefully and respond positively to the concerns expressed by parents about their children's learning and behaviour related to school. They do not make presumptions about the causes of parental anxieties but investigate problems with an open mind, discuss them honestly and take appropriate action. In some instances, despite their best endeavours, headteachers are not able to make contact with their pupils' homes. Where such situations are standing in the way of assessing and making provision for special educational needs, headteachers seek the assistance of support services. If all informal approaches fail, they request official action by a member of the education authority directorate.

4.24 In recognition of the varying expectations and needs of families, many staff maintain mutually beneficial relationships with families through a range of strategies. These include the important formal arrangements for discussing and reporting on individual progress and for monitoring and adjusting provision and liaison through school boards and parent teacher groups. In many instances, social events and joint projects are also successful in forging close links between parents and staff.

Working with other professionals

4.25 Some pupils enter primary school with specialist support services specified on their Record of Needs, but in most instances these are identified at later stages. Generally, these specialists are peripatetic, although some may be based in larger special or primary schools.

4.26 Headteachers fulfil their responsibility to integrate the specialist professional contributions into educational programmes by:

- agreeing, with each professional, arrangements to facilitate his or her work and that of the school;
- providing information about the curriculum;
- involving other professionals in the process of assessment, programme planning and evaluation;

- ensuring that class teachers understand the roles of the specialists and the expectation of working together;
- making time for class teachers and specialists to consult, with parents present when appropriate; and
- making arrangements for school staff to be guided and trained by specialists, as required.

4.27 Class teachers support and derive maximum benefit from the contribution of other specialists by:

- specifying the nature of the professional guidance pupils require;
- agreeing the priorities for individual pupils;
- adjusting timetables to allow specialists to work with pupils when they are not distracted or missing important lessons;
- reinforcing positive attitudes to the specialist support;
- integrating necessary specialist activities into the individual's work programme and reinforcing them; and
- evaluating regularly with specialists the effectiveness of the service and making recommendations for changes in arrangements.

An example of the contributions to be made by specialists is contained in the following extract from a report of a special school.

> *"Members of support services provided much valued assistance in assessing and meeting pupils' special educational needs, particularly in providing additional information about individual needs and advice on effective ways of meeting them. A physiotherapist had helped to improve individual programmes by demonstrating ways of encouraging good patterns of movement and by giving staff written guidance. An educational psychologist advised on ways of treating difficult behaviours. A speech and language therapist had assessed the language of pupils and was working with groups on programmes to achieve specific objectives."*

Managing provision

4.28 Chapter 2 and the previous sections in this chapter have outlined the many aspects of provision at the primary stage which require to be managed effectively to ensure appropriate education for pupils with special educational needs. Headteachers with vision and commitment are also ready to acknowledge and assess the demands made on themselves and their staff. They wisely take steps to reduce burdens by setting priorities for work, by delegating tasks and by including provision for special educational needs in their school development plans. Sometimes, too, they must conclude that they are not able to continue to meet some pupils' needs fully. They then consult with appropriate members of the directorate or the governing body in order to determine the course of action to be followed.

4.29 There are some aspects of managing provision for special educational needs which relate specifically, although not exclusively, to the primary stage. Arrangements have often to be made for the personal care of pupils with special educational needs, such as transport, supervision in the playground and during breaks and assistance with personal hygiene. Successful induction

into P1, and transition to secondary school, result from well-managed arrangements involving pupils with their parents and the staff of the establishments.

The personal and social development of pupils with special educational needs in primary classes

4.30 For those pupils, whose special educational needs are diagnosed in the pre-school period, the years spent in appropriate primary schools or departments are often a time of stability and gradual adjustment to coping with or overcoming disabilities. The schooling of some is disrupted by visits to hospital, but detrimental effects are usually minimised when their parents, school and medical staff work together to bridge gaps in education. However, many pupils with special educational needs experience frustration in primary classes. Their natural enthusiasm for primary school is reduced when they experience difficulties in learning. With sensitive treatment, teachers restore self-esteem and counsel pupils to recognise and find positive ways of dealing with their problems. They rekindle pleasure in learning in a stimulating classroom. As they approach the end of their primary education, all pupils with special educational needs face the demands of puberty and transition to the secondary stage of education. With the encouragement and support of their parents and teachers, they can look forward to, and quickly adjust to, new sets of expectations.

5 EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AT THE SECONDARY STAGE

This chapter illustrates the distinctive features of effective provision at the secondary stage of education, which takes account of national and regional advice and guidance on the curriculum, pastoral care and guidance, and learning and teaching. The process of secondary education is geared towards consolidating pupils' previous learning, widening and deepening knowledge and understanding, and increasing skills across a range of subjects. Preparation for transition to adult life should be integral to the educational programmes of pupils with special educational needs.

Special educational needs in the secondary context

5.1   At the secondary stage, the continuum of special educational needs and the difficulties which give rise to them are in most respects similar to those described for primary schools in the previous chapter. Any differences relate to the increasing demands made of pupils in terms of:

- physical and emotional development;
- the complex organisation of the secondary school;
- expectations of greater independence;
- an expanded curriculum;
- the vocational dimension; and
- preparation for transition to adulthood.

It is, therefore, essential that parents and teachers consider special educational needs within the various educational, social and vocational contexts in which pupils are placed. For example, individuals with special educational needs related to basic attainments in literacy and numeracy find that their difficulties cause obstacles to learning in other subjects. Pupils with physical disabilities admitted to S1 may find that their capacity to learn is reduced by the fatigue of getting around a large school building. During the first four years of secondary schooling, the numbers of those exhibiting social, emotional and behavioural difficulties rise, in part because they are unable to adjust to expectations and demands of parents, schools and society. In comparison with the primary years, pupils' special educational needs can change more rapidly, often necessitating frequent adjustments to the provision made for them.

Identification and assessment of special educational needs

5.2   The overall importance of effective procedures for the identification and assessment of special educational needs has been stressed in previous chapters. At the secondary stage, such procedures cover arrangements for:

- liaison with the primary schools/departments from which pupils transfer, so as to obtain information about their special educational needs and the provision required, and to plan transition;
- the identification and assessment of pupils experiencing difficulties in learning;

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

understanding special educational needs

effective identification and assessment

appropriate curriculum

forms of provision

learning and teaching

progress, attainment and achievement

parental involvement

working with other professionals

managing provision

taking full account of the individual

- the involvement of support services;
- statutory procedures for reviewing the Record of Needs and the assessment and review of future needs;
- reporting to parents and involving them in assessments; and
- sharing assessment information with staff in post-school provision, with the consent of pupils concerned and their parents.

HM Inspectors have found that strategies for identification and assessment work well when the contributions are co-ordinated across teachers and subject departments, guidance and learning support, staff, parents and the pupils themselves. An assistant headteacher, with responsibility for year groups or for learning support is generally the most appropriate person to act as co-ordinator. Such co-ordination was well illustrated in one school.

"Pupils who had learning difficulties and those with recorded special educational needs were very well supported. Learning support teachers and teachers specifically appointed to support pupils with special needs worked well as a team under the excellent leadership of a senior teacher. Learning support teachers and class teachers combined effectively in identifying pupils' needs and in making appropriate provision for them."

5.3   The steps taken by teachers and other professional staff to identify pupils with learning difficulties and to assess their special educational needs are largely the same as those outlined in Figure 4.1 in the previous chapter. The co-ordinator's task at the secondary stage is, in many respects, more complex than at the primary stage. Many more members of staff have to be consulted and asked to provide reports. An example of an effective system is illustrated in the following extract from a report of an inspection of a special school.

"Soon after admission to the school, a pupil's progress was discussed at a staff meeting to decide on how best to meet general needs. Following this initial assessment, a new system of holding regular case conferences, chaired by the headteacher and attended by parents and relevant professionals as well as the pupil's main teachers, had been introduced. At these meetings the all-round progress of individual pupils was reviewed to identify needs and reach agreement on aims for the next stage of school education and the resources required to meet them. These reviews were already helping to make pupils' programmes more relevant."

This type of system also occurs in the mainstream sector where guidance staff and those responsible for year groups regularly review the progress of all pupils.

5.4   Most pupils whose needs are significant enough to require a Record of Needs will have been identified and assessed in the primary school. Others have the process initiated at the secondary stage, along similar lines to those illustrated in Figure 4.1. The major responsibility in statutory assessment at the secondary stage is for review of Records of Needs and assessment of future needs. These procedures, outlined in Figure 5.1, should ensure that pupils' special educational needs are reviewed, that their secondary education is carefully planned and that post-school options are considered. Some experienced learning support and guidance staff have also found value in adopting similar procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils where special educational needs are not recorded.

Figure 5.1

The assessment and review of future needs

Purpose of assessment of future needs: Pupils with Records of Needs require assessment and review of their future needs within the period beginning two years before they cease to be of school age and ending nine months before that date. The review is to:

- consider whether the pupil is likely to benefit from staying on at school after the statutory school leaving age;
- consider whether, if this is the case, the pupil's Record of Needs should be continued;
- consider the options for post-school provision;
- plan the final years of schooling; and
- obtain from the social work department an opinion on whether or not the pupil is a disabled person.

Details of the statutory procedures are contained in the relevant Acts and related Circulars. (See Appendix B.) The following steps illustrate good practice.

STEP 1 Establishing responsibilities: The headteacher establishes with the directorate and the regional psychological service the duties of the school in arranging, contributing to, and following up the procedures related to assessment and reviews. A member of the school staff is given responsibility for co-ordinating the school's remit.

STEP 2 Drawing up a timetable: Soon after pupils with Records of Needs are admitted to S1, the co-ordinator checks their dates of birth to ascertain when the assessments of future needs should be held. Schools find it helpful to time the future needs assessment to coincide with the cycle of reviews of Records of Needs. The co-ordinator draws up a timetable, indicating when the various procedures should take place.

STEP 3 Making arrangements for the assessments and case conference: If the co-ordinator is responsible for these arrangements, he or she will, before the start of the school session during which a pupil's future needs are to be assessed, agree the date of the meeting with the professionals involved to enable them to plan their assessments. The relevant professionals include, as a core, a medical officer, educational psychologist, social worker, representatives of school staff and a careers officer; other professionals may include therapists, staff from establishments which the pupil may attend and the school or community nurses. The co-ordinator also notifies the local social work department of the likely leaving date of the individual and requests an opinion with regard to the pupil's status as a disabled person. The co-ordinator discusses arrangements with parents and, unless it is inappropriate, with the pupil, who is invited to attend the review with his or her parents. Arrangements are made for school staff to undertake assessment and prepare a report.

If the arrangements are co-ordinated by the psychological service, the school has a major responsibility, nevertheless, in assessing the pupil, in forming opinions about the options for education and post-school placement, and in preparing a report. At all stages the school involves the pupil and the parents.

STEP 4 Assessments and case conference: The pupil is assessed and reports are prepared. At the case conference, the pupil's special educational needs are redefined and options are discussed for the next stage of education, the dates for leaving school, post-school provision, the continuance of the Record and the role of the social work department, if any. Plans are drawn up for the following years at school and other provision, such as work-experience or college link schemes. Actions are agreed. A date is set for the next review. Minutes are kept of the meeting and agreed with those present, particularly the parents.

STEP 5 Follow-up to case conference: A delegated professional, usually the educational psychologist, prepares a draft report and sends it to the appointed member of the directorate for approval. It is then sent to the parents, with copies to the school and the psychological service, to become part of the Record of Needs. With the consent of the parents and the pupil, copies may be sent to other relevant establishments and services, such as an adult training centre or further education college. The school co-ordinator checks that the follow-up actions take place.

STEP 6 Reviews: The co-ordinator in school or the psychologist arranges annual reviews. Parents, pupil and relevant professionals review progress and the options and plan the next set of strategies until the pupil leaves school.

The Curriculum

5.5 The principles of breadth, coherence, progression and core skills, advocated in ***Higher Still*** are those which have increasingly shaped effective curricular programmes for many pupils with special educational needs. The most effective programmes are those which build on the knowledge, understanding, skills and values acquired in primary classes and which increasingly prepare pupils for transition to adult life. Thus, the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs at secondary stage should be considered as a series of coherent programmes systematically promoting progress across a broad range of subjects from S1 to S6. Pupils with special educational needs, like their peers, enter the secondary stage eagerly anticipating more specialist teaching and, for some, the new experience of learning a modern foreign language, as required by Circular 1178[16]. The Education 5-14 Guidelines[5] suitably adapted or elaborated to meet individual needs[6] have been found to be valid in shaping work in S1/S2. Programmes in S3/S4, in most instances, are guided by the Standard Grade syllabuses and in S5/S6 by a mixture of courses leading to a national qualification outlined by SEB and SCOTVEC. Selecting courses is an important matter for all pupils, but many with special educational needs face additional constraints imposed by their disabilities and the physical demands of the learning context. Over recent years, many of these problems have been circumvented or overcome by determined and imaginative pupils, teachers and parents. However, individual pupils need to be very realistic in making their choice of subjects and courses. A well-designed secondary curriculum also includes programmes to tackle priorities in special educational needs not met in other ways. For example, pupils with more severe forms of dyslexia are taught essential skills, such as using a cassette recorder to record work or to dictate answers, when they follow the Standard Grade English–spoken course. Several special schools have demonstrated the value of adding the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme to the provision for pupils for whom academic courses are not suitable in whole or in part. The content of the curriculum for the small number of pupils with complex special educational needs is an extension of the elaborated curriculum described in Chapter 4. However, it is augmented to include activities appropriate to their age and in preparation for life as adults.

5.6 HM Inspectors have found that the curricular programmes of many pupils become fragmented as they progress through secondary school and their learning needs are not addressed in a planned and coherent way. The following strategies have been seen to be helpful in resolving such curriculum problems:

- the curriculum is planned to enable pupils to achieve, at each stage of secondary school, specified educational targets, leading to fulfilment of the aims of a full programme of secondary education;
- individualised educational programmes are planned to meet short-term targets and fulfil long-term aims;
- a team of staff, including learning support and guidance teachers, are given a specific remit to plan and evaluate pupils' educational programmes and to chart and monitor individuals' educational progress across the curriculum and throughout their school career;

- subject and specialist teachers are fully informed about individual educational targets and work together to achieve them across the curriculum; and
- a point of contact is provided for pupils, generally in a learning support base or guidance room, to which they may go to seek assistance.

For pupils who require additional or alternative programmes to meet their special educational needs, fragmentation is also avoided by adjusting the balance of the curriculum to emphasise those subjects which are most relevant to their interests and needs, while at the same time retaining breadth in the curriculum. For example, many pupils respond with enthusiasm to a programme which is built around personal and social development and vocational skills, but without neglecting other important subjects, such as English language, mathematics, science, social subjects, technology, religious education and creative and aesthetic courses.

Forms of provision

5.7   The range of options for provision in secondary education is wide and the possibilities generally increase in the upper stages to include opportunities for work experience and taster courses, for example, in further education colleges. Examples of forms of provision across the range are summarised in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

Forms of provision at the secondary stage for pupils with special educational needs

Throughout the secondary stage of education:

   Mainstream classes with or without learning support and with or without curricular adaptations and elaborations.

   Special units or classes, full-time or part-time.

   Part-time placements shared between mainstream and special schools.

   Special schools with or without various arrangements for learning in the community.

   Community-based projects.

   Short-term residential projects.

   Residential school.

In the upper stages:

   Work experience.

   Link and taster courses at further education colleges.

   Part-time attendance at adult training Centre.

The extent to which such opportunities may be realised depends on a number of factors, such as location, special educational needs and availability of placements, for example, in businesses and colleges. However, the more

critical factors influencing possibilities for extending pupils' experiences are in:

- the commitment and ingenuity of staff in schools and members of support services in seeking out or devising opportunities;
- the levels of interest and support of parents; and
- the attitudes of the pupils concerned.

The following extract from an HM Inspectors' report on a special school illustrates imaginative and beneficial forms of provision.

"Extensive, well-established contacts with the community enriched the curriculum through contributions by a variety of adults to the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, first-aid, and an excellent work experience scheme. Links with other educational establishments eased the transition of pupils across different sectors and broadened the range of experiences available, most notably by the senior pupils' part-time attendance at colleges of further education. Pupils also contributed significantly to the community in anti-litter campaigns, offering help to pre-school children and old people and in running successful social events to which their many friends were invited."

And, similarly, from another HM Inspectors' report on a mainstream school:

"The curriculum for all . . . was broad and well-balanced, including drama, media studies, and conversational French as well as the full range of school subjects . . . Pupils benefited also from valuable residential and work experiences which were carefully planned, discussed and recorded. One pupil went to a college of education for a day each week on a link course. The local community gave very welcoming support to these pupils; local firms, for example, had helped to provide work experience placements . . . All had successfully completed National Certificate modules in survival cookery, independent travel and the use of a microcomputer."

To allow staff to plan and secure placements and projects, well-organised schools map out the options for individuals from S1 to S6. An important part of this process is planning and supporting transition to post-school provision.

5.8 The characteristics of effective forms of provision (Figure 5.3) are similar to those summarised in Figure 4.2 for the Primary Stage.

Figure 5.3

Characteristics of effective provision at secondary level

The members of learning support services in secondary schools achieve their overall aim of assisting pupils and their teachers, when:

- they operate within a sound school policy on supporting all pupils;
- they are supported and consulted by the senior management team who facilitate their work with departments;
- they have realistic remits;
- there are efficient systems for briefing all members of staff and responding to requests for assistance;
- there is a recognised base from which to work; and,
- the levels of staff development and training are sufficient to consolidate and extend expertise.

Learning and teaching

5.9   The characteristics of effective learning and teaching have already been considered in the relevant sections of Chapters 1, 3 and 4. At the secondary stage, strategies are selected because they:

- are more likely to motivate pupils;
- are suited to pupils' levels of maturity and styles of learning;
- give pupils the most efficient means of acquiring and retaining knowledge, understanding and skills;
- promote independence of thought and action;
- promote social development; and
- prepare pupils for learning in post-school placements.

Many secondary-age pupils with special educational needs continue to need a great deal of practice to support and consolidate learning, but they tend to be resistant to repetition and over-use of one teaching approach. Skilled teachers create a positive climate for learning by maintaining a judicious balance between essential repetitive processes and practical activities. In addition, well-designed assignments to be undertaken at home or in the community are an important means of reinforcing learning in school.

5.10 The process of linking assessment to the cycle of planning, implementing, recording, reporting and evaluating the curriculum continues to be relevant at the secondary stage. However, early in secondary schooling, attention is given to the assessment requirements of external examinations and certification. Teachers need to consider:

- the SEB and SCOTVEC courses which pupils are likely to follow and the implications of the assessment procedures for learning and teaching;
- any adaptations to existing courses and the means of negotiating these with the relevant bodies; and
- the special examination arrangements which some pupils with special educational needs will require and the steps necessary to ensure that they are in place.

The Scottish Examination Board booklet of advice provides guidance on arrangements for candidates with special educational needs[17], as do various SCOTVEC publications. Records of Achievement are likely to be an asset in secondary provision for special educational needs because they give pupils an official means of recording their achievement of certificates, completion of modules and attainment of recognised skills; such evidence of achievement should be helpful in negotiating post-school provision.

5.11   Experience of self-assessment is an important component of secondary provision. Work in some special schools has also demonstrated the value of peer-group assessment. Both techniques, when well taught and sensitively used, encourage pupils to be self-critical and to appreciate real achievement

in themselves and others. An example of pupil assessment is contained in the following extract from an inspection report.

> *"Advances had been made throughout the school in involving pupils in assessing their own or others' performance; such procedures were an integral part of the course in physical education and had motivated individuals to improve their personal standards of attainment. Photographs and videotapes had proved helpful to teachers, parents and pupils in recording improvements in the acquisition of personal and social skills."*

Progress, attainment and achievement

5.12 Rates of progress and levels of achievement should be measured, as at the primary stage, in terms of personal targets and, for many, national expectations of performance. Opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to demonstrate their achievements have increased significantly in recent years and have enriched the secondary curriculum for many, as illustrated through the following example.

> *"Many valuable contacts had been established with agencies and groups in the community. Courses for pupils in S3-S6 were enriched by the contributions of officers from the St Andrew's Ambulance Service, the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme and from Project Trident which is a charitable trust providing work experience, community involvement and personal challenges for young people. Over 40 employers co-operated in providing work experience placements for pupils and went out of their way to make them as helpful and purposeful as possible. Pupils were appreciative of the assistance they were given and took pride in making their own contributions; they ran social events and invited community helpers as guests, collected funds for various charities, gave food parcels to elderly people at Christmas, and had improved a nursery school by painting a mural and tidying up its grounds."*

However, the range and diversity of possible awards and certificates present parents, pupils and schools with issues to resolve. They have to resist the temptation either to pursue a narrow set of certificated courses at the expense of other essential elements in the curriculum, or to indulge in a pot-pourri of modules with little coherence and progression. Individuals are more likely to benefit from their secondary schooling when they make progress in areas of the curriculum selected for their relevance to present needs and interests, future education and training, and the promotion of independent study and personal autonomy.

Parental involvement

5.13 For parents of pupils with special educational needs, their child's time at secondary school brings new anxieties, particularly related to the important question of what is to happen to them on leaving school. Most parents, also, have to learn to hand over responsibility for making decisions about post-school placements to their children whom they may feel lack the experience to reach sound judgements. Effective schools recognise these concerns and

seek to assist pupils and parents in making such decisions through means such as the following:

- a member of staff, often in the guidance or learning support department, is identified as the key contact in the secondary school for pupils and parents and this person has full and up-to-date information about pupils' needs and progress;
- regular scheduled meetings, in addition to those required for future needs assessment, are held with parents to discuss the pupils' progress and the possible options;
- schools arrange for parents and pupils to meet with other professionals, such as members of the careers service and social work department, or staff in universities and colleges, who can provide further information and advice about options;
- when required, pupils are given opportunities to take part in social education programmes designed to assist them to develop and extend life and study skills; and
- parents are informed about how to raise concerns with members of staff.

Working with other professionals

5.14 Because of the organisational and time constraints on provision for pupils at the secondary stage, it is even more essential that those contributing to their educational programmes work together effectively. The learning support co-ordinator is likely to have the responsibility for facilitating the work of the various professionals in much the same way as the primary headteachers described in paragraph 4.23. Learning support and guidance staff, subject teachers and auxiliaries work together more effectively and harmoniously when they feel part of a team, dedicated to meeting pupils' needs. The following extract from a report describes such joint working.

> *"Guidance teachers and the Area Special Education Needs team (ASENT) provided effective support for pupils. Together with register and class teachers and senior promoted staff they contributed to the maintenance of a strong school community which was responsive to the needs of pupils and gave status to their views and experiences. The system of guidance was well organised to promote social cohesion: it comprised 3 vertical units which included classes from each year group; principal teachers typically took a class within their unit from every year group from S1 to S4 for both registration and personal and social education; each worked with a group of register teachers who remained with the same class throughout S1 to S4."*

However, they cannot undertake essential joint planning and evaluation unless time is set aside for these purposes. Some pupils in mainstream and special schools continue to need specialist treatment and support from professionals other than teachers. Their contributions should be integrated into secondary programmes of work.

Managing provision

5.15 The features of effective management of provision were described in

Chapter 2. Successful secondary provision is managed by headteachers who have in place systems which have the characteristics outlined in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.14. While such headteachers necessarily delegate most functions in the day-to-day management of provision for special educational needs to members of senior promoted staff, they usually retain oversight of policy and practice and pay particular attention to evaluation of provision and to related staff development and training.

5.16   Members of the management team with responsibility for the timetable play essential roles in promoting good provision for special educational needs by:

- ensuring that pupils with special educational needs have access to the range of appropriate courses and to relevant teachers;
- providing learning support and subject teachers with opportunities for consultation and planning work together; and
- providing blocks of time to enable pupils to undertake community-based activities.

Schools or units with small rolls face inevitable staffing constraints which make it difficult to provide the range of curricular experiences expected by pupils and parents and endorsed in national guidelines. Thoughtful and inventive headteachers, with the support of education authorities and governing bodies, have frequently overcome the problems by, for example, employing teachers on a part-time basis, arranging for classes to be taught in other schools, and teaching subjects on a rotational basis.

Attitudes and aspirations of pupils at the secondary stage

5.17   The years spent in secondary school are a time of challenge and change for pupils with special educational needs. Most have aspirations similar to their peers and many will go on to realise them in school and beyond. In the period between S1 and leaving school all pupils go through a process of recognising the gaps between their personal aspirations and the realities of what is possible. This process may be particularly difficult for those who come to appreciate the reality of their special needs. With good support at home and in school, they can be assisted to solve many of the problems which lie in directions they wish to take. Parents and guidance and learning support staff have a particularly sensitive job in judging when to promote self-reliance and independence and when to intervene and provide support. They have to direct their efforts increasingly in the senior classes of the school to assisting pupils to prepare for the transition to life as adults.

5.18   As pupils with special needs approach the end of their secondary school careers, attention should be given to transitions to the various forms of post-school provision which are available to them. Options can include: open employment; supported employment; training schemes; further education college; a combination of secondary school and further education; community education; adult training centre; non-university higher education institution; teacher training institution; open learning systems; and university including the Open University. In the transitional period it is important that there is a

two-way exchange of information between the secondary school and the planned form of post-school provision. Staff from both sectors, particularly those involved in special educational needs and guidance, should have clearly defined roles in assisting pupils at these crucial stages of educational development.

6 EFFECTIVE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

Further education is characterised by its responsiveness to the education and training needs of young people and adults. The last ten years have seen an impressive expansion in the level of provision for special educational needs. This chapter considers the distinctive features of effective educational provision in Further Education Colleges. It should be read in conjunction with Circular FE 3/93, Notes of Guidance to Boards of Management on Meeting Special Educational Needs[18]; and the reports on the use of Performance Indicators[19,20,21].

Special educational needs in the context of Further Education colleges

6.1 Entry to a college is a matter of choice for the individual. Until recently only a small number of young people and adults with special educational needs chose, or were guided to choose, further education. However, the number of such students is increasing and colleges need to be responsive to the continuum of their needs. The causes and nature of the special educational needs of young people and adults are similar to those of pupils in schools. A proportion of students on mainstream courses experience some difficulties with the curriculum from time to time. In many cases they can be resolved by the subject lecturers who, for example, adapt their teaching approaches or provide material for extra practice. Some students have more intransigent difficulties which are overcome with specialist help and advice from a learning support lecturer. Most students whose special educational needs are the result of physical or sensory disabilities can study on mainstream courses with adaptations to the curriculum and with the aid of special equipment and, sometimes, ancillary staff. Special courses are available to meet particular needs. Some people with moderate and severe learning difficulties find it beneficial to attend college on a part-time basis or to participate in college outreach learning programmes delivered in, for example, hospitals.

6.2 Identification of special educational needs is undertaken in several ways:

- college staff are informed of students' special needs by schools, through the system of assessment of future needs or by other arrangements;
- potential students, perhaps with a professional or other helper, seek advice from college staff on the provision which may be made for their needs;
- the admissions process invites students to describe any special educational needs and these are discussed at interview and on entry; and
- lecturers and students together recognise that learning difficulties are being experienced and seek advice from learning support staff.

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

understanding special educational needs

effective identification and assessment

appropriate curriculum

forms of provision

learning and teaching

progress, attainment and achievement

parental involvement

working with other professionals

managing provision

taking full account of the individual

For those students entering college with previously unidentified learning difficulties, a good admissions system assesses their needs at the outset, drawing on direct information from the student, and perhaps on evidence from school or any other establishment attended, from parents, where appropriate, and from work completed. Personal learning and support plans should be drawn up where necessary. They should identify individual educational goals and the support measures which are to be deployed[23].

6.3 Students of any age or level of course may experience learning difficulties. A systematic approach to the provision of support will assist student progress. The following steps are elements in an effective system for assessing and making provision for the special educational needs:

- the identification of need for support;
- referral, if necessary, to an appropriate source of expertise;
- development of strategies for overcoming problems;
- evaluation of effectiveness of support given; and
- decisions to cease, continue or adapt support, or to adjust students' programmes.

6.4 It is important to avoid inaccurate judgements on students' needs, based on false assumptions and generalisations about disabilities and learning difficulties. In many cases, information will be readily available from the student and from sources currently offering support but, in some instances, more specific assessments will be needed. Some colleges have the special expertise required to carry out successful assessments while others need to seek external advice. What matters most is that students and lecturers are clear about the nature of the difficulties and the best means of overcoming them.

The curriculum

6.5 Within all programmes the principles of relevance, responsiveness, access and flexibility should underpin curriculum design and management. The curriculum to be followed by an individual student is decided either before or on entry to college. Some students on mainstream programmes require alterations to the curriculum to meet their individual needs. Such alterations are best discussed and planned during initial guidance interviews so that arrangements can be made well in advance. Flexibility in the curriculum often allows for negotiation of the specific modules or units to be studied. Alternative assessments can be developed in accord with SCOTVEC procedures. Special equipment, adaptations to equipment and access to ancillary staff may be needed. Learning and teaching approaches may require particular thought. In some instances, students need to extend their period of study or undertake studies on a part-time basis, and, for some, a distance learning route is appropriate.

6.6 A wide range of special courses is developing in response to local needs. These are most successful when course teams engage in a careful process of curriculum development which includes:

- well-defined aims;
- good match between content and aims;

- a design cycle which incorporates development, monitoring and evaluation, to which all members of the course team contribute;
- willingness on the part of all college departments to participate;
- flexibility and sophisticated timetabling to offer choice to individuals;
- a tailoring of programmes to match individual needs; and
- consultation with those who have an interest in the programme.

The following extract from an HM Inspectors' report illustrates an example of thoughtful planning.

". . . towards the end of each session an evaluative discussion of the programme considered the appropriateness of content and changes were suggested. The discussion drew on the experiences of staff in teaching the planned programme and on formal and informal feedback from students. In one programme the Contemporary Issues module was dropped in favour of a non-modular programme which gave greater flexibility. Communication 1 was offered to achieve the right level of demand on students. An optional sex education component was introduced."

6.7 Many school leavers attend full-time programmes often known as 'extension' courses. An important feature of good provision is the attention given to continuity and progression through building on the students' school achievements and through relating the curriculum to the range of options that might be available after college. The curriculum should take account of the need for core skills development (communication, numeracy, problem-solving, personal and inter-personal skills and information technology) alongside vocational elements, independent living skills, the use of recreational and leisure facilities, and creative activities. National Certificate modules often comprise a major part of the curriculum. Where non-modular elements are included, they should be carefully planned with specific learning outcomes. The development of the awards National Certificate (Level 1) and National Certificate (Skillstart 1 and 2) provide appropriate goals for many students and will bring them within the national awards framework. A well-planned curriculum will, therefore, incorporate preparation for the awards or for some of their constituent parts for those who will benefit.

Forms of provision

6.8 The extent and nature of provision for special educational needs varies from college to college. For example, where provision concentrates on just one vocational area, a college may be involved in providing some support for students with temporary difficulties and in arranging adaptations to the equipment to enable one or two students with disabilities to follow the curriculum. A small rural college teaching a broad curricular range may provide special courses to meet community needs, in collaboration with the local authority social work department and with hospitals. A few colleges have developed very extensive provision, including a well-appointed and

managed residence, and have become centres of excellence in particular fields. Effective provision includes full-time, part-time and short courses, and students may choose to study at home or work by distance learning. In some instances, outreach training can be arranged at the workplace or in a day or residential care setting. The extent and organisation of learning support varies widely. The most effective form of such provision is where a team of lecturers specialising in learning support is deployed to assist students and lecturers as required.

6.9   All students benefit from being able to experience college life to the full. Outside the classroom they may use college services and facilities, participate in social activities and interact with teaching and non-teaching staff. Well-managed college provision ensures that students with special needs are not disadvantaged in these respects.

Learning and teaching

6.10 The qualities of effective student-centred teaching have been defined[22] and they are equally relevant to students with special educational needs. Important characteristics include:

- well-developed teaching plans;
- an awareness of the variety of possible approaches and methods;
- responsiveness to the needs, aptitudes and interests of students;
- the planned use of resources to support teaching and learning;
- effective classroom organisation; and
- the development of communication skills and study skills.

6.11 HM Inspectors find that staff-student relationships are most productive where lecturers are confident, experienced and well supported. Students respond to a purposeful approach where appropriately high expectations are set. A relaxed and enjoyable climate for learning ensues when lecturers move easily between formal and informal modes and know their students well enough to anticipate potential areas of difficulty for individuals. Many anticipated barriers and difficulties can be overcome when student and college staff work in partnership to find solutions.

6.12 Specialist lecturers tend to be effective and well practised in student-centred approaches. Their teaching allows for differentiation, enables students to work at their own pace and provides individual or group tuition needed. Imaginatively prepared teaching and learning materials facilitate a range of methods and levels of work. Learning experiences can be valuably extended beyond the college walls, as students explore the uses of community facilities, engage in work experience and participate in residential activities. With the best teachers, students experience a sense of challenge, purpose and achievement, and develop self-respect and self-esteem which derive from receiving respect and positive regard.

6.13 Most students are taught by a number of lecturers. The quality of their overall learning experience is optimised when mainstream lecturers:

- are aware of individual needs and goals;
- ensure that any support measures in place are used to best effect;
- are confident in adapting materials and approaches to most individual needs; and
- have specialist support and advice available.

6.14 The use of microelectronic aids in teaching and learning is a significant means of improving access to the curriculum for some students, as the following extracts from reports illustrate:

> *"An excellent range of equipment was in use in the readily accessible drop-in centre, including a work-station for visually handicapped people which contained a speech synthesiser and braille printer, and a CCTV aid which enlarged print onto a screen. In some cases students were working on their own while in others a tutor was giving individual assistance. There was a purposeful approach to work and students appeared highly motivated and matched with aids that best met their needs."*

> *"A group of non-speaking students were working with communication aids, carefully chosen to match individual requirements, and nearby in a soundproofed room containing special equipment, some hearing-impaired students were studying mathematics."*

Careful assessment of needs is important. Consideration must be given to aids which have been used successfully in the past in schools. It is also important that the devices chosen are appropriate for future use in a work context.

Progress and achievement

6.15 For those students with special educational needs engaged in mainstream courses, progress is represented through their attainment of the learning outcomes specified in modules and units and the accumulation of these.

6.16 There is value in developing records of achievement which provide students with a cumulative account of their progress, taking as a starting point the goals identified by student and tutor. These can generate opportunities for students to participate in regular reviews of their progress. This is an essential part of an effective system of academic guidance. The best practice incorporates scheduled, purposeful meetings between student and tutor where individuals are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and identify strengths and weaknesses. They are encouraged to set themselves goals, develop a deeper understanding of their learning process, and take increasing responsibility for their learning. The following two observations by HM Inspectors illustrate good practice:

> *"Students were given a short talk about the options and it was quite clear to both staff and students that the choice was genuine. While staff offered guidance and students appreciated the care with which they 'helped you decide', decisions were ultimately for students to make and were respected.*

> *In helping students make decisions a prime aim was to allow them to 'build on success' and in planning individual programmes 'the crucial issue was confidence".*
>
> *"Good student-tutor relationships supported the process of personal development well, and students nearing the end of their second year were able to comment evaluatively on what they had achieved in terms of both skills learnt and maturity gained. One student reported that he used to 'lose the rag when people got at me' but was now able to deal with people better."*

Good tutors use a light touch to make this a positive experience. Students on well-planned courses, supported by individual and group tutoring, can make impressive gains in personal effectiveness, and develop confidence through the recognition of their achievements. The measurement of progress by these means can contribute towards an analysis of student achievement to be used as a key performance indicator.

6.17 Many students have opportunities to gain employment or youth training places after college. They benefit from programmes which anticipate post college needs through, for example, the provision of well-supported work placements, the development of the vocational and personal skills relevant to employment, and practice in job-finding skills. Satisfactory post-college placement often results from colleges working with other agencies to support students in making this transition, as demonstrated in the following comment by an HM Inspector.

> *"Students carried out a work placement in their second year and the course tutor facilitated student decisions about the type of work they would like to try, then developed the placements by negotiating with suitable employers, preparing the students and supporting the placement as necessary. A local employer found this process very satisfactory. He had helped the tutor identify suitable types of work in his hotel and had been briefed on student capabilities. The tutor visited his hotel with the 2 students a fortnight in advance of the placement to make introductions and made phone contact to ensure that things were running smoothly. One student had been offered a permanent job."*

Working with professionals

6.18 Constructive liaison activities make an important contribution to the effectiveness of provision. Internally, well-planned channels of communication, for example between guidance staff and specialist staff, and between course planners and mainstream lecturers, ensure that students achieve the aims of their programmes and are afforded the support they need. External liaison in respect of individual students may extend to schools, authority advisers, other colleges with relevant expertise, disablement resettlement officers, occupational therapists, voluntary organisations, social work departments and others. Whatever the process of consultation, no arrangements should be made which detract from the autonomy of an individual student. A multi-professional overview is required where provision is requested by other agencies, for example social work departments and hospitals, in order to ensure that the educational programme is relevant and harmonises with the agency's own services. At the strategic level, colleges

should be aware of their potential role in local developments such as the implementation of community care legislation.

6.19 In all cases, good practice is characterised by a co-ordinated approach in which a key member of college staff is identified as being responsible for arrangements. Sometimes such a person will be a senior member of staff. This is essential when consultation has to be undertaken with other service providers in order to ascertain the nature and level of demand. In other situations, it is more appropriate for a course tutor or learning support specialist to work in conjunction with others.

Managing provision

6.20 Quality of provision tends to be high where responsibility for implementing the policy is vested in a member of the senior management team. This person is in a position to ensure that agreed principles are applied across the range of the college's work. Students can be provided with a more coherent service if a specialist senior member of staff acts as co-ordinator for special needs, with the role likely to include:

- giving specialist advice to students and potential students (or arranging for specialist advice to be given);
- making initial assessments of the support measures required by individual students (or arranging for special assessments to be made);
- ensuring that personal learning and support plans are drawn up;
- ensuring that any support measures offered to students by the college are in place when needed;
- setting up strategies and producing materials to inform prospective students about programmes and services offered by the college;
- establishing and maintaining liaison with the multi-professional network of agencies and individuals who provide services for students with special educational needs;
- acting as a consultant to subject lecturers;
- liaising with the guidance team and with those involved in admissions; and
- monitoring the whole range of provision for special educational needs.

6.21 As with any other feature of college provision, it is important that the quality of the provision for students with special educational needs is monitored and assured. HM Inspectors provide an overview[21] of a comprehensive approach to the evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency, but recognise that the development of performance indicators is a process which will require considerable refinement. This is particularly the case regarding provision for special educational needs, since by their nature an individual response is often required. The recommended key performance indicators can, with some adaptation and development, be valuable signals of the effectiveness of provision for special educational needs within the college's system for assuring quality.

6.22   Funding of provision often presents difficulties. As in the schools sector, the many complex issues require further study at college and national levels. As incorporated bodies, colleges will wish to develop a clear idea of costs in order to plan their provision effectively. They will also need to seek information on the funding roles and responsibilities of other bodies in order to effect joint planning and, thereby, help to maximise the effects of existing funding levels. Implementation of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990* has implications for the provision of services for some students with special educational needs.

6.23   Opportunities for staff development in working with students with special educational needs vary. Some lecturers qualified and worked in the schools sector before joining the staff of colleges. Others have been seconded on a one-year full-time diploma course. In general, there is a lack of continuing development for qualified staff and of initial training for mainstream lecturers and non-teaching staff, although some commendably high quality in-house training is available in a few colleges, and lecturers in some areas have benefited from education authority initiatives.

Parental involvement

6.24   Great sensitivity has to be exercised by college staff in relating to parents. Most students with special educational needs wish to be, and have the right to be, independent. A small number of students with complex special educational needs remain dependent on parental support, advice and guidance and in such cases colleges may develop relationships with the home. Parents of students making the transition from school to college, too, often appreciate information on the aims and conduct of the college programme and involvement at the admission stage, so that they can give support throughout the student's college experience.

6.25   Students in further education colleges benefit from systems of guidance which enable them to achieve their potential by an appropriate choice of curriculum, to increase their awareness of learning processes, to overcome barriers to learning and to help them plan for the future. Most colleges recognise four stages of guidance: pre-entry, induction, in-course and pre-exit, and each individual normally has a course tutor who oversees guidance matters.

Students with special educational needs

6.26   For some students, college attendance is the final stage in the process of transition to adulthood. As a final measure to more independent adulthood, self-advocacy should be promoted. For others, it is a return to education after a long break since school. Students gain in confidence when they meet a welcoming and supportive climate in the college. An adult orientation ensures that the autonomy and independence of each individual is respected and encouraged.

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* See Appendix B: Legislation and Related Documents

7 ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The illustrations in previous chapters have demonstrated the range and quality of successful practice in educating children and young persons with special educational needs across Scotland. It is unlikely that any education authority, educational service, school unit, or school or college governing body would claim that all aspects of their provision were equally effective, but they may now share and draw on examples of proven good polices and practices. Many are engaged in the process of self-evaluation as a first step in determining plans for development. In undertaking this task, they have to take account of new developments, most of which have implications for education in general and some of which relate in particular to special educational needs. Achievement of the various internally and externally determined targets depends on setting realistic priorities for action. This chapter briefly considers new developments which have particular relevance and some of their implications.

New developments affecting provision for special educational needs

7.1 The consequence of bringing provision for special educational needs within the mainstream of educational developments is that those responsible for planning and educating children and young persons with difficulties in learning must be sensitive and responsive to all new initiatives, and take on board those which are relevant and likely to lead to improvements in quality. Some of the more recent developments specifically include, or relate directly to, provision for special educational needs, while others are of general concern and may not have implications for all pupils. Although governing bodies of grant-aided and independent special and mainstream schools are not always expected to take part in development work, many will choose to do so, because they see advantages for their pupils and parents. Parents, the children and young persons with special educational needs themselves, and school boards will also wish to be kept informed about and, where appropriate, involved in new projects.

The list of initiatives, which is long and covers all aspects of educational provision, includes the following:

Management, planning and quality assurance: School development planning[12]; college development planning[24]; using performance and ethos indicators in managing school effectiveness[25][26][27][28]; using performance indicators in colleges[21]; devolving management to schools[29]; incorporation of colleges[30].

Curriculum: Implementing 5–14 curricular and reporting guidelines[6]; undertaking assessment[5], including testing[31]; considering good practice in learning and teaching in Scottish secondary schools[7][32][33]; considering good practice in teaching, learning and assessment in National Certificate provision in further education colleges[22]; developing Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)[34] and general SVQs[35].

THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

understanding special educational needs

effective identification and assessment

appropriate curriculum

forms of provision

learning and teaching

progress, attainment and achievement

parental involvement

working with other professionals

managing provision

taking full account of the individual

Better information for parents: Improving reporting procedures[5]; expanding information contained in school handbooks to give details about policies on special educational needs, the development of spiritual, social and cultural values; authorised and unauthorised absence, examination and certificate results, school leaver destinations and school costs[36][37]; the *Parents' Charter*[1], and the *Parents' Guide to Special Educational Needs*[2].

Staff development and appraisal: Implementing schemes to determine the staff development and training needs of members of teaching staff and others[37]; management training for headteachers[39]; and revision of strategies for in-service training of teachers and other members of staff to work with children and young persons with special educational needs.

Working with other professionals: Developing education for pupils in residential care[40]; implementing regional youth strategies; integrating the work of therapists into the school.

7.2   On first sight the above list appears daunting, but reconciling the initiatives is possible. Those responsible for, and engaged in, making effective provision for special educational needs have, through the good practices outlined in preceding chapters, already adopted many of the requirements and recommendations of the documents. Staff have selected for development those aspects which will be of direct and immediate benefit for their pupils or students, and set themselves a realistic set of targets, while continuing to develop ways of improving learning and teaching for those with particular forms of special educational needs. Many of the initiatives are designed to assist staff development and training, particularly in helping key personnel to manage change. The rest of this chapter is concerned with some implications of these developments and summarises strategies which have already been shown to be effective.

A policy framework for special educational needs

7.3   In undertaking development work, staff in schools will be at a severe disadvantage unless they are clear about what is expected of them by education authorities, governing bodies, parents and school boards in making provision for special educational needs. Such expectations are best outlined and explained in succinct written policies and guidelines which then provide a context for the school's own statements of aims and policies. Similarly, college staff will work most effectively where there are policy guidelines developed by each college with reference to provision in other institutions.

School development planning

7.4   The process of school development planning provides the key to effective management of new developments and maintenance of existing programmes. It encourages headteachers and their staff in schools to:

- agree with education authorities, governing bodies and parents the aims of the school in respect of provision for special educational needs;

- establish a limited number of priorities for action, and set realistic time limits for undertaking selected projects;
- identify and evaluate the resource implications of plans;
- assess and respond to the needs of staff for development and training; and
- build in quality assurance measures of progress in implementation and of outcomes.

7.5 The distinctive features outlined in Chapter 1 and the related national performance and ethos indicators are designed to assist schools to conduct the audit of their own provision, as a first step in the process of agreeing the priority developments to be undertaken. School development planning should also assist senior management teams in both mainstream and special schools to take the initiative in identifying and specifying the responsibilities, resources and funding implications of devolving management of provision for special educational needs to schools. Resolution of the issues arising from school development planning and devolved management will require co-operation and support at national, regional and local levels.

College development planning

7.6 Legislation requires each Board of Management to submit a development plan to the Secretary of State. The process of producing the plan is seen as a central activity of college managers and the Board, and its readership will also include college staff and The Scottish Office Education Department. The development planning process should assist colleges to identify need and determine the curricular provision, and other support services to be offered.

Curriculum and resource development

7.7 Without relevant action in terms of setting priorities and obtaining guidance and support, the demands for curriculum and resource development could overwhelm staff responsible for provision for children and young persons with special educational needs at all levels of the education system. National and regional bodies can assist schools and colleges in a number of ways. They should make clear their expectations and encourage schools to undertake development work in a realistic but systematic way, and with regard to the resources available. They may sponsor research and development to find ways of resolving common issues, to produce guidelines and materials to support teaching and learning, or to demonstrate and disseminate effective practice. They may set up and support networks of advisers and practitioners to enable them to exchange and disseminate innovative approaches. Many curricular initiatives are currently underway, but more effective strategies continue to be required to ensure that optimum use is made of relevant outcomes.

Staff development and training

7.8 Effective provision for special educational needs at all levels in the education system is largely dependent on the contributions of committed, well-informed and skilled members of staff. Efficient systems of staff development and training are required to prepare teachers, their assistants,

administrators and support staff for their roles in making provision for children and young persons with special educational needs, and to provide support in carrying them out. Such systems are being put in place[38]. They are likely to be most effective if their planning, implementation and monitoring are undertaken within a framework which encompasses national and regional bodies, the relevant departments in universities and other higher education institutions, education authorities, governing bodies and schools.

Informing and involving parents

7.9   The expectation that parents will be informed about, and more involved in, the education of their children has been well understood for many years, and acted on by staff who make provision for pupils with significant special educational needs. Implementing the requirements for reporting to parents on the progress of their children and the work of the schools should provide a means of appraising and improving current practice, disseminating effective strategies and refining the way in which attainments across the curriculum are described. However, supplying such information for parents on the levels of performance of all pupils in a school has implications for headteachers and their staff. They will be required to explain the significance of attainments and achievements of many pupils in relation to their special educational needs and the educational targets set for them.

Cost effectiveness

7.10 There are increasing pressures to evaluate provision for special educational needs in terms of cost effectiveness. The reasons are not simply financial, although these considerations must carry weight in an area of education which requires a high level of staffing and other resources. It is essential for individuals with special educational needs that they are assisted to learn in the most effective and efficient ways and enabled to achieve educational targets which will help them to gain personal independence as adults. Many resources, such as experienced and highly trained specialists, are scarce and should be deployed for optimum use. Inefficient provision means that other pupils who could benefit are denied the support. A small number of national and regional studies on cost effectiveness in provision for special educational needs have been undertaken. Further refining of costing techniques and analyses could benefit resources deployment.

Meeting individual needs

7.11 It is appropriate to end by restating the view expressed in the first chapter that making effective provision for special educational needs is essentially about meeting the needs of the individual. Many concerned and committed teachers, and other members of staff in schools and educational services, have pioneered the way in assisting children and young people to make optimum use of their abilities and educational opportunities. The task now is to make sure that all provision for children and young persons across the continuum of special educational needs is effective, and enables them to enjoy and derive maximum benefit from their education in school and beyond and to become fully participating members of their communities.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

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