

Special educational needs newsletter

Issue 4, Winter 2007

Foreword

The new National Strategies SEN/LDD Programme and adviser team

Since September there has been a new expanded National Strategies team in place whose aim is to provide advice and support for local authorities (LAs) and schools in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs/learning difficulties and or disabilities (SEN/LDD). The team has both a **regional focus** (helping LAs and schools in their work to narrow the gap in achievement for groups of vulnerable pupils) and a **programme focus** (working with programmes across the National Strategies to ensure that every aspect of National Strategies support incorporates best practice in terms of meeting special educational needs).

Members of our new team are available to provide advice to all LAs on the implementation and development of SEN policy, provision and practice and will offer more intensive or targeted support where appropriate. The team has a range of specialist expertise and responsibilities (School Improvement and schools causing concern, LA hubs of best practice, the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP), data management, parent partnership, cross-phase mainstreaming of best practice, behaviour, emotional and social development (BESD), Early Years, Primary and Secondary phase support). This broad range of expertise is being focused on providing the

all-important support necessary for ensuring that the gap between the lowest and highest achieving pupils is narrowed, and that standards are raised for all pupils.

This newsletter has the details of our new team. You will find a grid at the end of the newsletter that gives the name, contact details and areas of responsibility for each team member.

Chris Beek

National Director (SEN/LDD)



Contact us!

We want this bulletin to be part of a dialogue. You are the other part! We need your feedback on:

- this bulletin and how we can improve it
- information about your own developments and areas of good practice.

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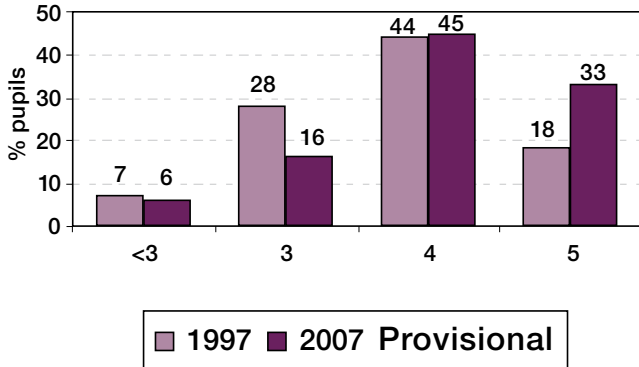
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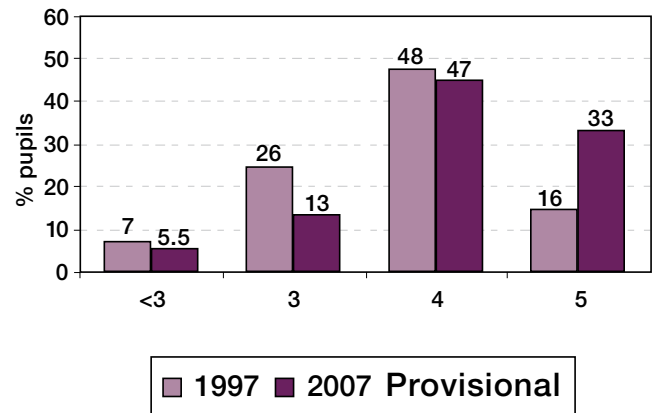
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Raising standards for all pupils

Key Stage 2 mathematics 2007



Key Stage 2 English



In order to reduce the attainment gap further we need to continue to work in partnership to secure the progress of pupils who are vulnerable to low achievement including those with SEN/LDD.

We continue to improve the link between mainstream and SEN programmes within the National Strategies in order to reduce the gap and sustain progress. In this newsletter Jenny Digges outlines the latest developments in the Primary National Strategy and target-setting practice, and poses some important questions for local practitioners about LA and school practice.

Our new team is increasing its focus on supporting LAs and schools to achieve closer alignment of school improvement and SEN practice. We are also looking more closely at ways to better evaluate the impact of additional resources for additional educational needs (AEN) or SEN in schools on the achievement of pupils. Pauline Pitman provides an update on these two important areas of work.

Jason Swale, one of the new members of the team, provides an overview of issues involved in the identification of special needs and intervening in Early Years practice. He explores the importance of rigorous application of Assessment for Learning (AfL)

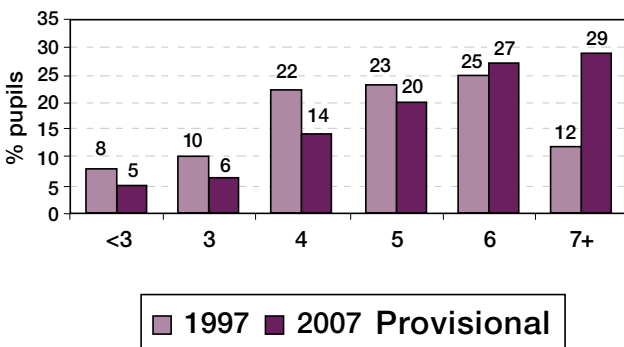
within the context of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, and how the IDP will help in effectively meeting the needs of all children in the Early Years.

This newsletter also provides you with updates on the IDP, the SEN website, LA hubs of effective practice and dates for your diary.

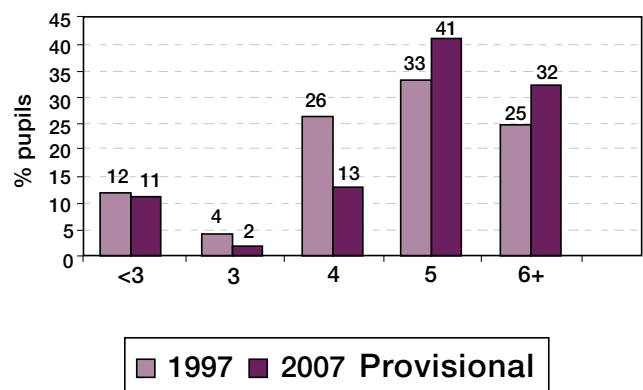
Pauline Pitman

(Regional Adviser – Cross Phase SEN)

Key Stage 3 mathematics 2007



Key Stage 3 English 2007



National Strategies for all pupils

We continue to improve the link between mainstream and SEN programmes within the National Strategies. This is reflected in our newly organised SEN team, in our SEN networks, accessibility to the new SEN website and in the current cross-programme alignment for the 2008–09 annual plan. Our aim continues to be to support LAs and schools to raise standards for all pupils ensuring that quality first Wave 1 teaching is an entitlement accessed by **all** pupils including those with SEN/LDD.

As part of our work to develop a more holistic approach to the development and dissemination of National Strategies materials and initiatives the SEN team is:

- developing practical guidance and planning exemplification aligned to the renewed Primary Framework to support access for all children in special and mainstream settings.

As part of this the SEN team is:

- inviting LAs to SEN school improvement consultant network meetings in January (invitations will go out at the end of November for these events).

SEN/inclusion teams may also wish to consider some of the following.

Progress

A long standing ambition has been to reduce the percentage below level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 to no more than 5% (this applies to English and mathematics). We have achieved that ambition ahead of time in English. This is impressive, showing a slow but solid improvement and reflecting LA and Primary National Strategy (PNS) efforts to use the Three Waves model to raise standards for pupils with SEN.

% below level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 English				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
National	7.1%	6.3%	6.1%	5.5%
Your LA	?	?	?	?

% below level 3 at the end of Key Stage 2 mathematics				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
National	6.2%	5.9%	6.0%	6.0%
Your LA	?	?	?	?



Obviously this is not the whole story.

- What about the percentage of pupils below level 3 in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in your LA or school?
- Do you know who these pupils are?
- Are you confident that their needs are being met and that expectations are high enough – how do you know?
- How does this compare with your statistical neighbours?
- How effectively do SEN/inclusion services align with the National Strategies teams to make use of this 'below level' data?

Target setting

Significant changes have been made both for the direction of targets for 2009 and for the context in which they will be set. From 2009 onwards there will be a dual focus on threshold targets to ensure that pupils reach the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics and new progression targets to improve rates of progress made by pupils from age 5 to 16, with increased attention to achieving faster progress for particular underachieving groups such as children in care and ethnic minority groups.

Part of this national expectation will be the requirement that underachieving pupils should have targets set which help them progress as far as possible and by two levels if appropriate.

There are no specific statutory LA targets for improving outcomes for pupils with SEN. However, schools must set targets for all pupils including those with SEN. Where such pupils are not expected to achieve National Curriculum levels schools should use P scales or other performance criteria to measure progress and set appropriate targets. LAs should support their schools to identify benchmarks of good progress for pupils with SEN who are unlikely to reach the threshold levels so

that their personal targets reflect the best ambition possible for what they can achieve.

- Do SEN/inclusion teams know about these changes?
- Do SENCOs have this information and are they included in the whole-school target-setting processes?
- How confident is your school/LA to make judgements about what is good progress for pupils with SEN/LDD?
- Are the targets ambitious enough? How do you know?

Primary Strategy

Areas that will remain a priority over the coming year include the following.

- Understanding and use of AfL. The AfL area of the Primary Framework remains on track for launch in January 2008.
- Improved use of teacher assessment and use of tracking data for interventions.
- Sustaining the success of Intensifying Support programme (ISP) processes in schools no longer receiving direct ISP support.

Further improving progression in:

- early reading;
- writing, especially boys' writing;
- number concepts, calculation, using and applying mathematics;
- improving the impact of school-led CPD on classroom practice and pupils' progress. The Primary Framework CPD programme gets underway this term with the critically important day one CPD for headteachers.

The next major development on the Primary Framework will be the population of the AfL area. The Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) materials will be a major part of this. The APP model has been developed in partnership with QCA, it is already used in Key Stage 3 and is now being piloted in 100 primary schools. The APP is a model of assessment that:

- draws on formative approaches and is diagnostic;
- is periodic and keyed to national standards;
- integrates assessment into teaching and learning;
- enhances classroom practice and encourages a broadly based curriculum;
- is embedded in the renewed Primary Frameworks;
- is based on assessment focuses that underpin National Curriculum assessment.

None of the above excludes pupils with SEN/LDD. SEN/inclusion colleagues will be familiar with these principles and may wish to be included in this work where possible and appropriate.

Timescale for development

- September – Primary Strategy managers briefed on APP
- September – Subject leaders' APP training
- October and November – Consultants' briefing and training on APP.
- Spring term – Headteacher framework CPD day 2
- January – AfL area of framework available.

You may wish to consider whether:

- special school/SEN/inclusion colleagues know about these developments;
- there has been an opportunity for SEN/inclusion colleagues to consider the application and differentiation of the key Primary Strategy developments for pupils with SEN/LDD?

If you are doing, or know of, any interesting work to align these developments we would be interested to hear from you.

Some useful links

Leading Improvement using the Primary Framework – headteacher booklet (Ref: 00484-2007BKT-EN)

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/literacy/leading_improvement/

Leading Improvement using the Primary Framework – DVD (Ref: 00618-2007DVD-EN)

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primaryframework>

An updated version of *Leading on Intervention* has recently been produced and is available on DVD (Ref: 03817-2006PCK-EN)

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/local/ePDs/leading_on_intervention/

Jenny Digges

(Regional Adviser – Cross Phase SEN)





SEN and school improvement consultants

From our recent LA SEN/LDD self-evaluation visits and subsequent discussions, the National Strategies' SEN team are aware that many LAs are in the process of realigning school improvement and SEN/LDD teams to support schools in developing their capacity to more effectively meet the needs of all pupils.

We have received requests to hold regional network meetings for LA colleagues who provide SEN consultancy support to school leadership teams and are working alongside National Strategy consultants to deliver and develop LA and National Strategy messages and materials.

As a response to this we will be holding one-day regional network meetings for LA consultants for SEN and school improvement in the spring term 2008 as follows:

- 22 January 2008 : London 1 and 2, South West, North East
- 23 January 2008: South East, West Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside
- 24 January 2008 : East/East Midlands, North West.

Invitations have been sent to SEN strategic managers and heads of school improvement.

The network meetings will be of interest to two colleagues in each LA:

- the SEN consultant who works alongside National Strategies consultants, an existing consultant who takes a lead on SEN/LDD within the National Strategies or the SEN advisory teacher or adviser;
- a primary **and** secondary or cross-phase representative from each LA.

The meetings are not aimed at School Support Service staff who work only with individual pupils unless they are currently engaged in refocusing their work in order to work in a strategic capacity with school leadership teams.

Pauline Pitman

(Regional Adviser – Cross Phase SEN)

Value for money resource pack for schools: Evaluating the impact of SEN/AEN resources

Since the development of *Leading on Inclusion*, *Leading on Intervention* and *Maximising Pupil Progress: Ensuring the Attainment of pupils with SEN*, the National Strategies have promoted and supported the use of provision mapping and the Three Waves model of intervention.

To complement this work the National Strategies are working in partnership with the Audit Commission to develop a school resource pack to enable schools to strategically monitor and evaluate SEN/AEN income and expenditure and to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils linked to value for money principles.

The resource pack, which will be a web-based resource, will enable individual schools to focus on two main areas:

- What SEN/AEN funding does the school receive and how much does it spend on SEN/AEN pupils?
- How is provision mapped and what are the outcomes achieved in the individual schools by SEN/AEN pupils?

The resource pack will enhance strategic planning in schools and provide a good practice evidence base linked to self-evaluation and the school improvement cycle. It will also support greater parental confidence in a school's ability to meet additional educational needs including SEN. The pack will be disseminated in spring 2008 and will draw upon a wealth of school and LA good practice models and case studies.

Pauline Pitman

(Regional Adviser – Cross Phase SEN)



LA SEN hubs update

In our last newsletter, we informed you of the development of LA hubs of effective practice in SEN. The overarching aims of the hubs are to address the three key areas for the development identified in Removing Barriers to Achievement as follows:

- developing a flexible range of local provision;
- support services effectively building mainstream capacity;
- effective use of data at LA and school level to help meet needs.

Eighteen hubs are now operating in all nine regions. Key developments over this are as follows:

- All hub LAs have held their first meetings with participating LAs by the beginning of November.
- 126 LAs (84%) are participating in the hub initiative.
- Evaluation returns from these first meetings are positive.
- The outcomes from all the meetings are currently being followed up with participants and further work will be developed at the next round of meetings in January (see *Dates for Your Diary on page 8*).

Steve Huggett

(Senior Adviser SEN/LDD)

New SEN/LDD focused area website

Over the last 12 months the National Strategies have had a number of enquiries from LAs, schools and the general public wishing to locate key SEN/LDD documents on the National Strategies website. To make this easier there is now a dedicated cross-phase SEN/LDD focused area on the National Strategies website with links to the DCSF site.

The area will contain key resources, publications and guidance including: newsletters, IDP materials, hubs of effective practice case studies, SEN/LDD self-evaluation materials. It is hoped, that in collaboration with LAs and schools, this site will develop further during 2008.

There are a number of ways to access the SEN/LDD focused area:

- National Strategies site: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/features/inclusion/sen>
- DCSF site: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/SEN
- Primary National Strategies site – Whole-school/Inclusion/SEN
- Secondary National Strategies site – Key Stage 3 Resources and publications

Pauline Pitman

(Regional Adviser – Cross Phase SEN)



The inclusion Development Programme

On 17 October 2007, the National Strategies launched the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP). Over four years, the IDP will develop and deliver a programme of CPD designed to strengthen the confidence and expertise of mainstream staff in Early Years settings, primary and secondary schools in ensuring the progress and achievement of pupils with SEN.

Originally proposed in the government's SEN strategy Removing Barriers to Achievement, the IDP will aim to support schools and Early Years settings by helping them to:

- develop more inclusive practice;
- raise awareness and confidence among all staff about meeting the needs of children with different types of SEN;

- further develop strategic approaches and responses to the diverse needs of individual pupils.

In 2007–08 the IDP will focus on speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and dyslexia. It is envisaged that future rounds will focus on autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Leading national specialist organisations, including voluntary bodies, are working in partnership with the National Strategies in the development of the CPD programme and supporting materials, which will be presented through a series of DVD- and web-based resources tailored for use by:

- leaders of Early Years settings, in conjunction with area SENCOs;

- leadership teams, inclusion managers and individual staff in primary and secondary schools;

- providers of initial teacher training (ITT) as well as individual trainees.

The resources will be closely aligned with existing CPD and guidance materials available from both the National Strategies and the voluntary sector. The first phase of the IDP, with the focus on SLCN and dyslexia, aims to help both practitioners and school staff and trainees to:

- recognise early on the common signs of difficulty in understanding and/or making others understand information conveyed through spoken language;
- recognise common signs of dyslexic difficulties;

- create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for pupils with SLCN and/or dyslexia;
- use inclusive teaching strategies appropriate for dyslexics and for pupils who have communication difficulties.

Timescale

- Dissemination of CPD materials for primary and secondary schools in March 2008
- Dissemination of CPD materials for EYFS in March 2008
- Dissemination of materials for ITT in March 2008.

This first phase of the IDP is being developed in partnership with I CAN and Dyslexia Action

Mary Daly

(Programme leader – IDP)

Identifying and intervening in the early years – a question of language?

In the spring 2007 newsletter, my colleague Pauline Pitman mentioned the possibility of the concept of 'special educational needs' being increasingly subsumed within the drive for personalisation, equity and excellence for all. This mainstreaming of SEN applies as much to the EYFS as to any other phase of education. In my previous post (working in an advisory capacity in a LA) when visiting settings I was sometimes told: 'We don't have any children with special needs; we never have had'. It is important to remain clear that the definition of SEN is enshrined in law, but nonetheless it may be misunderstood or interpreted in the light of local and cultural contexts. I often find it helpful to think in terms of a dynamic continuum of need, along which every child has a place. At one end are children with complex and multiple needs; while at the other are children with more straightforward needs.

The continuum is dynamic in that children are continuously moving backwards and forwards, depending upon, for example: their engagement with the day's activities and experiences; the success of a particular teaching strategy; the extent to which the learning environment is modified to take account of any delays and impairments; and outside factors such as a bereavement or birth of a sibling. Movement at either extreme of the continuum may be more gradual, but nonetheless each child will make movements within it.

This way of looking at the needs of children avoids the construct of 'special' versus 'not special' and instead focuses on meeting each individual child's needs, whatever they might be. Of course, for children with more complex needs, specialist advice and support will remain vital, and for some forms of support, it may need to be acknowledged that a particular

threshold of needs is being crossed to access appropriate support. Some practitioners are reluctant to attach a 'SEN' label to children in the early years, arguing that 'it's too early to label them'. However, this 'let's wait and see' approach may work against early intervention, meaning that children's needs remain unmet. Focusing upon the needs of each individual child, regardless of whether a label is used or not, should lead to increased personalisation, which is clearly of benefit to all children, not only those with higher levels of need. The implementation of rigorous AfL, and the use of this to inform high quality teaching and early years provision, should lead to a raising of achievement and well-being for all young children. The danger of settings believing that they do not have any 'special needs children' is that they may be more likely to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach in which individual needs are forgotten.

Happily, however, the new EYFS makes this much less likely. The EYFS curriculum is firmly rooted in the principles of inclusion. It is inclusive in its coverage of children from birth to five; it is inclusive in its ending of the artificial distinction between childcare and education; it is inclusive in its application to all practitioners, working across both the non-maintained and maintained sectors; and above all, it is inclusive in its commitment to helping every child meet their full potential. Each of the four themes of the EYFS – *a unique child*, *positive relationships*, *enabling environments* and *learning and development* is underpinned by inclusive principles. Together with the IDP, the EYFS should make a real difference in meeting the needs of all children, including those who require higher levels of support than the majority of their peers.

Jason Swale

Cross Phase Regional Adviser, SEN

Dates for your diary

LA hubs of effective practice in SEN

Date	Region	Lead Hub	Venue
8 January 2008	LON2	Tower Hamlets LA	Hilton Docklands
8 January 2008	SW1	Somerset LA	Holiday Inn Taunton
8 January 2008	NW1	Sefton LA	Macdonald Manchester
9 January 2008	LON1	Kingston LA	Thistle Marble Arch
9 January 2008	WM2	Coventry LA	Novotel Birmingham
9 January 2008	Y&H1	York LA	Park Inn York
10 January 2008	SE1	Kent LA	Holiday Inn Kensington Forum
10 January 2008	Y&H2	North Yorkshire LA	Novotel Leeds
10 January 2008	E2	Luton	Cambridge Belfry
15 January 2008	SE2	Hants LA	Mercure Wessex Winchester
15 January 2008	SW2	North Somerset LA	Mercure Southgate Exeter
15 January 2008	NW2	Cumbria LA	Macdonald Manchester
16 January 2008	EM1	Derbyshire LA	Stuart Hotel Derby
16 January 2008	WM1	Walsall LA	Radisson Birmingham
16 January 2008	NE2	North Tyneside LA	Marriott Durham
17 January 2008	EM2	Notts LA	Park Plaza Nottingham
17 January 2008	E1	Essex LA	Holiday Inn Kensington Forum
22 January 2008	NE1	Sunderland LA	Copthorne Newcastle

The LA SEN and school improvement consultants meetings

Originally these were planned for December 4–6, but have been moved to the spring term 2008 as follows:

Region	Date	Venue
Yorkshire and Humberside	22 January	Crown Plaza Leeds
South West	22 January	Mercure Southgate
London	22 January	Marriot Maida Vale
West Midlands	23 January	Paragon Hotel
South East	23 January	Marriot Regents Park
North East	23 January	Paramount Redworth Hall
East and East Midlands	24 January	Marriot Peterborough
North West	24 January	Jarvis Piccadilly

Early Years – IDP regional meetings

Region	Date
North East	25 February
South West	25 February
South East	26 February
East and East Midlands	26 February
Yorkshire and Humberside	27 February
London	27 February
North West	28 February
West Midlands	28 February

National Strategies SEN/LDD Programme and adviser team

Contact details

Specialist area/ Responsibility	Name	Region(s)	Email
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LA Hubs of Best Practice	Steve Huggett	South West/East Midlands/ West Midlands	steve.huggett@nationalstrategies.co.uk
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Tutors should check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.