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*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



# The Future Role of the **Special School**

**2006**



# CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
3. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT TRENDS	3
4. KEY FINDINGS	7
5. PROPOSED FUTURE ROLE FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS	11
6. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	13
7. CONCLUSION	14
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1 - The Working Group	15
Appendix 2 - Consultation Paper and Questionnaire	16



## **FOREWORD**

Special educational needs (SEN) is an important issue across all sectors in education. In 2003-2004, the most recent year for which complete figures are available, total Education and Library Board expenditure on SEN in Northern Ireland was £148m, including £82m for special schools and £43m to meet the additional costs of statemented pupils in mainstream schools and units. Special education requires effective management and accountability arrangements, with provision for SEN being a major area for development within the mainstream sector.

Since 2002, the Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has carried out a number of surveys of inclusion and collaborative working arrangements to inform the policy development of the Department of Education (DE) and to report on the action required to assist schools to raise standards. In its recent inspections of special schools, the Inspectorate has evaluated the quality of provision and determined how well the needs of individual pupils are being met, as well as examining the extent to which the special schools have developed their role as providers of specialist advice to mainstream schools.

As part of the information gathering for this report, all of the staff of special schools in Northern Ireland were invited to discuss and complete a questionnaire relating to the role of the special school. The 100% response to the questionnaire, and the detailed and insightful comments received, indicate the level of interest and commitment in the sector.

Our thanks are due to all who responded to the questionnaire and to Dr John Hunter, Inspectorate, for his work in managing the survey and in compiling this report. We hope that it will prove interesting and informative and that it will contribute positively to current educational debate on future collaborative arrangements in education in Northern Ireland. In particular, we hope that this survey will help inform the Review of SEN and Inclusion which is currently being taken forward by DE.



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**Permanent Secretary**  
Department of Education



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**Chief Inspector**  
Education and Training Inspectorate



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Managing diversity is a huge challenge for schools in the present educational climate of inclusion. As increasing numbers of children with special educational needs (SEN) enter mainstream schools, principals and teachers are looking more to the special school sector for support and advice. This report explores the role which special schools could develop in support of SEN and inclusion within mainstream schools.
- 1.2 The methodology adopted in gathering the information for this report involved the use of a confidential questionnaire which all of the special schools were invited to discuss and complete. In addition, the Principals and the Vice-principals of the special schools were given the opportunity to consider further their views and to come to common agreement at workshop sessions during the annual Special School Conferences of 2004 and 2005, which were facilitated by the Regional Training Unit. Account was also taken of inspection reports and surveys over the past five years, including the Inspectorate's Survey of Statemented Pupils in Mainstream Schools (2004), and of the special school planning within the Education and Library Boards (Boards). The report of the Special Schools' Working Group in England and Wales on the Future Role of the Special School provided helpful guidance.
- 1.3 A working group was established to advise on the compilation of the report. The group consisted of twelve practitioners, including four special school principals, representatives from DE, the Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Department of Health and Social Services and Personal Safety. The group met on three occasions and drew up the questionnaire to which special schools were asked to respond.
- 1.4 It is intended that this report will inform the outworking of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) and the future

development of special school and mainstream SEN accommodation, as well as the Review of SEN and Inclusion.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This report, on the future role of the special school in Northern Ireland, was compiled by the Inspectorate, on behalf of DE. It seeks to inform the response of DE and the Boards to the challenges posed by pupils with SEN, given the current emphasis on inclusion. The report makes recommendations in relation to how special schools might be enabled to provide more effective support for mainstream schools.
- 2.2 In 2004-2005, all special schools in Northern Ireland were surveyed by questionnaire; every special school (49, in total) responded.
- 2.3 The survey findings indicate wide variations in policy and practice across the Boards, in relation to provision for SEN and inclusion.
- 2.4 The survey findings also indicate that existing formal links between special schools and mainstream schools are limited to development of Outreach support from Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) schools and more specialist support for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from the Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) schools.
- 2.5 Special schools have an important contribution to make to the raising standards of achievement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Currently, insufficient attention is given to exploring the potential of special and mainstream schools working more formally together for the benefit of pupils with SEN. Already, pupils with similar SEN are being educated in both special and mainstream schools.
- 2.6 There is limited transdisciplinary planning within and across the Boards and the Health and Social Services Trusts (Trusts), resulting in inequity in the level of therapy provision available to support pupils with SEN.



- 2.7 There is an urgent need for DE to articulate a clear vision for SEN and inclusion and to put in place effective mechanisms to ensure a continuum of provision to cater effectively for a diversity of need.
- 2.8 This report advocates the development of an enhanced role for special schools in support of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.
- 2.9 The profile of pupils entering both special and mainstream schools is changing and requires particular responses from DE, in terms of the provision of appropriate resources and training for all staff to help meet the needs of individual pupils.
- 2.10 The curriculum in the mainstream sector should give more emphasis and recognition to vocational and work-based skills.
- 2.11 A key issue from the questionnaire responses was the ineffective support for special schools from the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Boards.
- 2.12 There was considerable support for the view that the word 'special' should not be included in the title of a special school.
- 2.13 The findings in this report demonstrate a clear need for more strategic leadership from DE, and for a more effective alignment of the work of DE, the Boards, and Health and Social Services Trusts. The development of the capacity of special schools to support mainstream schools, within a continuum of provision, represents a key step in the improvement of provision for all children with SEN, regardless of the school setting in which they are being educated.

### **3. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT TRENDS**

- 3.1 Some 53,164 children and young people in mainstream schools in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup> have SEN and require additional support to access

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<sup>1</sup> Figures in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.3 refer to census returns, October 2003

the curriculum and engage with learning. In addition, 4,986 pupils are educated in special schools. Some 3.36% of pupils hold statements of SEN, reflecting a rise of 0.86% between October 2000 and October 2004, while the total school enrolment decreased by 1.25% over the same period. Currently, just over 62.75% of statemented pupils are in mainstream education. Despite a decrease in overall pupil numbers, the number of statemented pupils is increasing in all of the Boards.

- 3.2 Special education is a major issue across the special and mainstream school sectors; however, strategic developments are inhibited by the complexities and variations in provision across the Boards.<sup>2</sup> There are also considerable variations in the percentages of pupils in special and mainstream schools and units across the Boards; for example, the percentage of statemented pupils in mainstream schools and units ranges from 35.61% in one Board to 84.96% in another. The greatest variation exists in the area of MLD. Significantly, one Board has decided not to maintain MLD schools.
- 3.3 There are 49 special schools in Northern Ireland, employing some 600 teachers and approximately 872 classroom assistants to support the 4,986 pupils who attend them. There are 22 schools for pupils with SLD; 13 for pupils with MLD; four providing mainly for pupils with medical difficulties; two providing for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties; two providing for pupils with speech and language difficulties; two providing assessment; three providing for pupils with physical disabilities; and one providing for pupils with hearing and/or visual sensory impairments. In addition, some 173 units catering for pupils with learning difficulties are sited in mainstream schools. The number of special schools has not reduced and yet, significantly, the percentage of pupils with statements of SEN educated in mainstream schools is increasing. Further changes in the

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information see 'Fundamental Service Review Special Education, CMSU, March 2003'

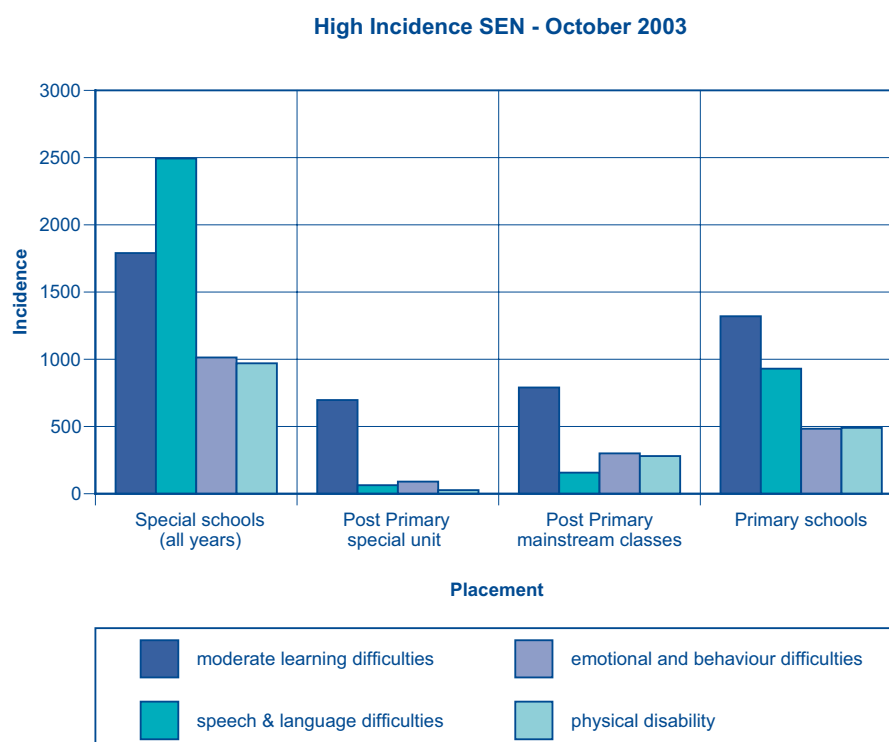
number of pupils with SEN entering mainstream schools will depend on each Board's current practice and the impact of changes in legislation.

- 3.4 There has been a significant growth, across the Boards, in the demand for SEN support. Referrals for statutory assessment coming from the nursery sector have increased, with some 6.9% of the children recognised as needing additional support. Given that few statements are discontinued, it is evident that schools are facing considerable challenges in responding effectively to the impact of SEN.<sup>3</sup> There is insufficient evidence to indicate how well the children on special needs registers achieve, although the percentage of school leavers with no or limited accreditation remains a cause of concern; more significantly, some 33% of pupils leaving mainstream post-primary schools with no General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications had not been recorded previously on the special needs registers. This has probably been caused by schools defining SEN too narrowly. It is clear, therefore, that mainstream school provision is facing a major challenge in addressing the needs of pupils on SEN registers, particularly at stages 1-3. The Department of Education and the Boards need to promote more formal collaboration between special and mainstream schools for the benefit of pupils with SEN.
- 3.5 The Department of Education places high value on the contribution of the special school sector to meeting the needs of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. However, there is growing interest, in both public and statutory bodies, in promoting the concept of inclusion; this is reflected in the increasing enrolment of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Chief Inspector's reports 1999-2002 & 2002-2004 indicate special education is a major recurrent theme

### 3.6 The incidence of SEN in October 2003 was as follows:



3.7 It is clear from the above table that special schools are only one element in a continuum of provision for pupils with SEN. What is also evident is that mainstream schools are enrolling more pupils with SEN who previously would have been educated in the special school sector. A large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream schools have MLD, or communication difficulties such as ASD, which require additional support over and above that which is available generally in the classroom.

3.8 The Audit Commission report (2002) 'Special Educational Needs, A Mainstream Issue' concluded that it was time for a rethink of SEN and proposed a number of areas for further consideration, namely: responding to diversity in every classroom, with a sharper focus on outcomes and on the quality of experiences, rather than on the type of school; and on the need to place special education at the heart of mainstream policy and practice.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

- 4.1 Special schools have an important role to play in raising standards of achievement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Currently, insufficient use is being made of the range and quality of expertise and knowledge within the special school sector. There is a need for increased professional collaboration between special and mainstream schools, to ensure that they work as effectively as possible for the benefit of all the pupils they serve.
- 4.2 The profile of pupils attending special schools is changing. The number of pupils identified with severe or profound learning difficulties, including complex medical difficulties, attending the SLD schools is rising. In addition, the SLD schools have increasing numbers of pupils with ASD and challenging behaviours<sup>4</sup>. In the MLD schools, learning difficulties are more commonly associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In specific provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, there is evidence of more pupils presenting with mental health problems. Similarly, more pupils with physical or sensory impairments are being diagnosed with dual or multiple impairments resulting in complex needs. More pupils are being identified with ASD across all sectors. The evidence indicates a slight decrease in the number of pupils attending special schools because of physical disability and sensory impairment.
- 4.3 The changing pupil profile places more demands on the staff of special schools to differentiate their provision and match, more thoroughly, their teaching approaches to suit a wide variety of diverse and complex needs. The changing special school role will require additional resources and training for all staff to ensure that standards are clear and that expectations are sufficiently high. In particular, there is a

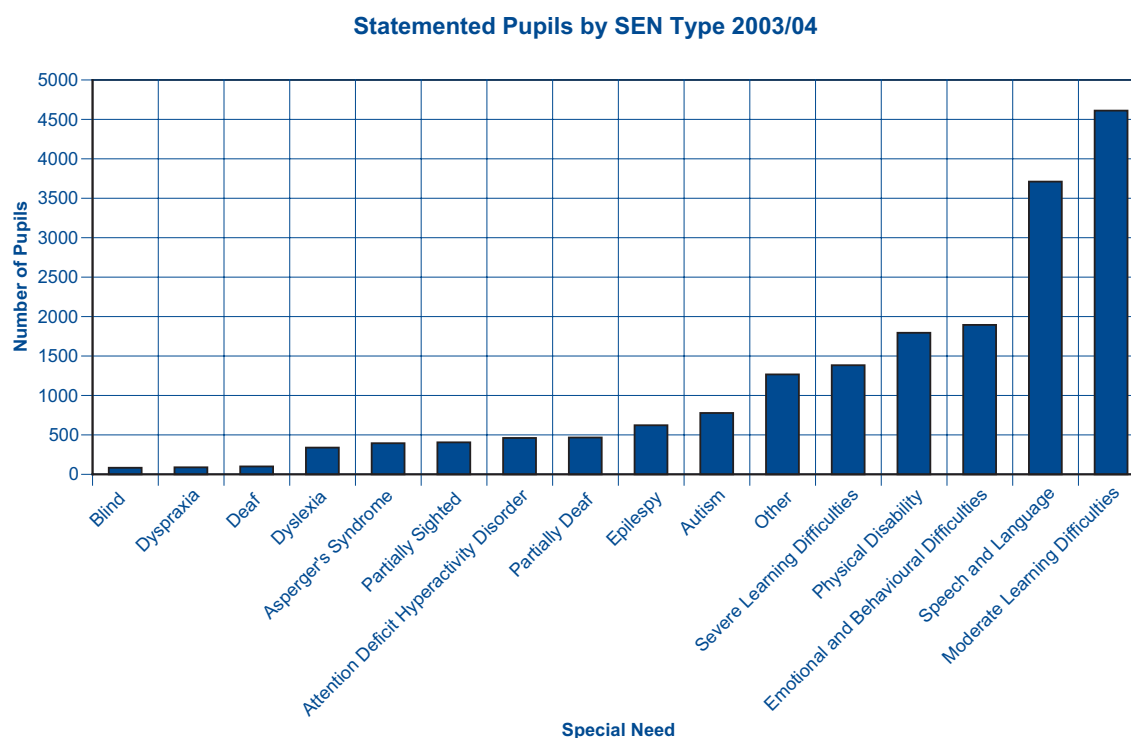
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<sup>4</sup> See ETI survey 'Provision for Pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties and Persistent and Challenging Behaviour in Special Schools, June 2004'

need for improved access to the support of allied health staff in areas such as therapy, psychology and counselling.

- 4.4 The number of pupils with MLD attending MLD schools is showing signs of decreasing while, in contrast, the number of pupils with MLD in mainstream schools supported by the special MLD schools is rising rapidly; currently, some 300 mainstream schools receive support. The statistics also reveal a rise in the number of schools supported by Outreach services and establishments that serve those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 4.5 Pupils with similar SEN are educated in both mainstream and special schools. The majority of pupils with specific learning difficulties are educated in mainstream schools; equal proportions of pupils with MLD are educated in mainstream and special schools, while pupils with more severe or complex learning difficulties are educated in special schools. Pupils with ASD are educated in both mainstream and special schools or units attached to mainstream schools. The co-ordination of special education provision across both mainstream and special school sectors will require common procedures and criteria for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of provision, and review of progress.
- 4.6 The change in the profile of pupils in mainstream schools is set to continue and is likely to increase, particularly in the number of pupils with MLD. Such changes will inevitably require increased resources in the mainstream sector, and a greater demand for advisory and practical support for policy and practice. The number (see table below) of mainstream placements of pupils with SEN is continuing to rise. The most common areas of support required by mainstream schools are MLD, communication difficulties, ASD and behaviour difficulties. The categories of SEN referred for additional support indicate that pupils with MLD are by far the highest category, with sizeable numbers of pupils identified as having speech and language difficulties. While the category of emotional and behavioural difficulties is considerably less, the findings indicate that this group poses

significant challenges; indeed, in one Board, behaviour is the primary reason for the referral in almost 30% of the cases.



- 4.7 It is likely that the increasing practice of educating children with SEN in mainstream schools will alter significantly the numbers and type of difficulties special schools deal with. It is anticipated that, over time, special schools will cater for pupils with more complex needs or learning difficulties.
- 4.8 The responses from the questionnaires reveal significant variation in special education policy and practice across the Boards. Statementing rates vary considerably and reflect differing criteria and policies. In addition, the Boards' special education officers have been concerned for some time about the lack of agreed definition of SEN, and the varying interpretations of the Code of Practice across Northern Ireland. The implications are that the management of special educational provision is unduly different across the Boards and there are significant variations in the type of provision available at each stage of the Code. These issues need to be addressed so that educational inclusion and

cohesion, as envisaged in the SENDO (2005), can be realised.<sup>5</sup> There is an urgent need for a common Northern Ireland approach to the issue of SEN and for improvement in the mechanisms for identifying need and allocating types of support.

- 4.9 A key issue highlighted by the questionnaire responses was the ineffective support for Special Schools from the CASS of the Boards. There was strong support for a distinct special educational advisory service.
- 4.10 Special schools currently assist with the individual assessment of pupils' needs and provide comprehensive educational plans which reflect specific needs. They also provide expert knowledge of specialist areas such as dyslexia, ASD, speech and language, and challenging behaviour. In addition, special schools support mainstream schools by sharing resources, promoting teacher to teacher contact, and encouraging and guiding multi-disciplinary working.
- 4.11 Many who work in special schools expressed reservations regarding the suitability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils who experience more severe learning and behavioural difficulties and who require higher degrees of adult support. Mainstream schools will require support to ensure that pupils have appropriate access to the statutory curriculum and that they make suitable progress.
- 4.12 Almost all of the responses from the questionnaire survey proposed that the word 'special' should not be used in the official title of a special school. A number of respondents proposed that the name of the school should include its area of particular expertise, for example: "Anytown School: providing specialist support for ASD".

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<sup>5</sup> For further detail see 'Survey of the Five Stages of the Code of Practice', 2006, Education and Training Inspectorate

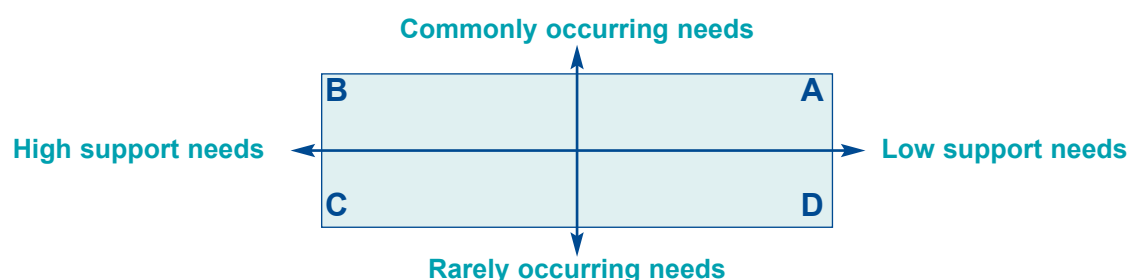


- 4.13 One question in the questionnaire asked about the rationale to be used to close the special schools. Strong opinion was expressed that the needs of pupils with SLD could not be met in mainstream schools. Reference was made to barriers to inclusion, particularly for pupils with SLD, emotional and behavioural or complex medical difficulties, or pupils with significant ASD. Some responses cited examples of pupils who had ‘failed’ in mainstream schools and were currently attending special schools. There was an acceptance that special schools should close if the numbers attending are too small or if the quality of the provision is unsatisfactory. A majority of respondents felt that special schools, in the future, should be located alongside mainstream schools.
- 4.14 The curriculum in the mainstream sector should give more emphasis and recognition to vocational and work-based skills.

## 5. PROPOSED FUTURE ROLE FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- 5.1 Special schools, in the future, will be expected to provide a range of interventions which address low support needs, commonly occurring needs, rarely occurring needs, and high support needs.

All special schools should have a major supporting role in the assessment of a pupil's needs and the preparation of individual intervention plans. Educational plans, of necessity, should contain an inclusion statement identifying the experiences and resources available to support the education of pupils with SEN. Intervention should be matched to the categories of support and monitored as the assessment indicates. The table below (taken from the Audit Commission, 2002) shows how such a model might operate.



- 5.2 The Audit Commission recommends that each quadrant should be funded to provide differing levels of support which can assure consistency and cohesion to the planning across the Boards and enable joint planning with Health and Social Services. Currently, most of the pupils with SEN in mainstream schools will be identified in section A and mainstream teachers may require Outreach support and advice or training. Most of the pupils in special schools (mostly SLD) will be in section C and will require more intensive and individualised intervention. Pupils identified as in need of level B and D support are more likely to need input from specialists or for a longer period of time.
- 5.3 In order to work effectively across the different quadrants of the above framework, the special schools will have to be able to develop further their levels of knowledge, skills and resources in particular areas, and evaluate the impact of their support on mainstream schools. The support of Allied Health Services at strategic and operational levels will need to be harnessed more formally and reflected in the agreed model.
- 5.4 The special schools have established links with mainstream schools, adult centres, further and higher education colleges, and other agencies. Most of the links result from the interest and vision of the special school principals and staff and are informal and short-term, and more often social than academic. More formal links, where they exist, reflect the Outreach and specialist provision arrangements between Boards and individual special schools. Special schools should seek to develop purposeful opportunities for their pupils to access mainstream school provision, as a key element of their school development planning.
- 5.5 Effective collaborative arrangements, between special schools and mainstream schools should be characterised by: a culture of inclusion; high quality, specialised training, available to teaching and non-teaching staff in both school sectors; appropriate support from and collaboration with allied Health Services and the sharing of good

practices, such as: classroom management, individual education planning, target-setting and recording.

## **6. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 There is an urgent need for DE to articulate a clear vision for special needs and inclusion, and to put in place effective mechanisms to ensure a continuum of provision to cater effectively for a diversity of need. Key to the success of the new arrangements will be the support provided by special schools for mainstream schools. Existing special schools should be developed to ensure that they can meet the needs of the pupils enrolled as well as providing support for pupils and teachers in mainstream schools.
- 6.2 There is a need for a model of assessment and co-ordination of SEN across both the mainstream and the special school sectors. The model of assessment should indicate the nature and level of intervention which is required.
- 6.3 Localised clustering arrangements among special and mainstream schools should be created, with adequate resourcing and Outreach support to enable the sharing of skills and expertise in both sectors and to facilitate placements for pupils and staff from mainstream schools in special schools.
- 6.4 High quality, specialised training should be provided for all staff (teaching and non-teaching), in both sectors, to increase the effectiveness of links between special and mainstream schools.
- 6.5 There is a need for a specialist advisory service to support special schools and to promote inclusion.
- 6.6 Opportunities should be created for special schools to achieve recognition as centres of expertise and excellence for the provision of specialist training; this could also involve e-outreach or video-conferencing.

- 6.7 Effective collaborative working arrangements should be formally established between the education service and Health and Social Services to enable the development of a high quality, multi-disciplinary, integrated service provision.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The findings in this report demonstrate a clear need for more strategic leadership from DE, and for a more effective alignment of the work of DE, the Boards, and Health and Social Services Trusts. The development of the capacity of special schools to support mainstream schools, within a continuum of provision, represents a key step in the improvement of provision for all children with SEN, regardless of the school setting in which they are being educated.

## THE WORKING GROUP

John Hunter	Education and Training Inspectorate (Chair)
Nuala McArdle	Department of Health and Social Services and Personal Safety Northern Ireland (DHSSPSNI)
Sandra Wylie	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
Imelda McDaid	Regional Training Unit (RTU)
Lynn Wilson	Principal, Glasvey Special School
Tom McCully	Principal, Belmont Campus
Maurice Crozier	Principal Educational Psychologist, North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB)
Colm Davis	Principal, Tor Bank Special School
Fintan Murphy	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)
Martin McGlade	Principal, Harberton School
Irene Murphy	Department of Education (DE)
Clare Mangan	Assistant Senior Education Officer, Southern Education and Library Board (SELB)

## APPENDIX 2

# CONSULTATION PAPER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

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## Promoting the Role of the Special School within a context of Inclusion

*“Mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation.....are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.”*

*“There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.”*

**UNESCO Salamanca Statement 1994**

The Department of Education (DE) endorses the sentiments noted above and has identified as key strategic and policy objectives the need to recognise the broader role of special schools within a costed policy for special education and inclusion which reflects best practice, policy and principles and puts children first.

## Background

The Department of Education places high value on the contribution of the special school sector in meeting the needs of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. The Chief Inspector's report (2003) highlights the developing quality of special school provision and, in particular, identifies the expertise of many special schools to provide well for specific areas of need. However, in keeping with the growing interest, both public and statutory, in promoting the notion of inclusion and the emerging trend indicating a continuum of provision across the mainstream and special sectors, DE has

prioritised the need to review and consider the future and further role of special schools within an inclusive context.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate), as a consequence, has initiated a series of surveys of current provision in order to provide evidence, inform thinking and assist the production of a clear policy of inclusion and special education.

## This Survey

This survey sets out to recognise the best practices of special schools and to make recommendations as to the future contribution which special schools can provide in a context where increasing numbers of children with special educational needs are included in mainstream schools.

The focus of the survey is on:

- identifying the best practices in special schools;
- identifying how special schools can play a significant role in promoting a mainstream culture of inclusion; and
- producing a report to inform policy and make recommendations to effect improvement in standards of special education across special and mainstream schools.

## The approach

The concept of a continuum of provision for a diversity of need is a core theme of government thinking. This is viewed as a starting point for the survey with clear emphasis on access to best quality teaching and learning and specialist expertise and experience. Such an approach places clear impetus on the special school and mainstream sector to develop a quality of provision tailored to the needs of individual and groups of children irrespective of where they happen to be educated. The recent publication of the Costello report on the future of post-primary education in Northern Ireland offers a useful vision for

the special education sector as an integral aspect of future post-primary arrangements in Northern Ireland:

*“arrangements must ensure that pupils with special educational needs have access to the same range of learning pathways available to other pupils including access to FE institutions, training organisations and other providers: opportunities should be taken for two-way exchanges of expertise, teaching and support staff and, where appropriate, of pupils between mainstream and any special schools in a given locality as part of collaborative arrangements advocated elsewhere.”*

It is clear, therefore, that a holistic approach involving those with the skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate the emergence of best practice provision for all underpins the work of this survey. Indeed, the concept of Learning Pathways appears to take account of the current views and provide advice on options for the future arrangements of special education across the education sectors.



# THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following:

## School Profile

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Services (outreach/units/specialisms): \_\_\_\_\_

Staffing:

● Teachers In school: \_\_\_\_\_ Outreach: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

● classroom assistants (school allocation): \_\_\_\_\_

● classroom assistants (specific to individual children): \_\_\_\_\_

● Other professionals (therapists/please list time allocation): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pupils: \_\_\_\_\_

Range of disability: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have pupils with: (please tick)**

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SLD     | <input type="checkbox"/> hearing impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MLD     | <input type="checkbox"/> speech/language    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ASD     | <input type="checkbox"/> visual impairment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EBD     | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical | <input type="checkbox"/> Other              |

### Enrolment over the past 5 years (annual average)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

### Outreach Numbers (if applicable)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

### Number of schools supported by Outreach (if applicable)

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

## Provision

1. Please provide four examples of the current strengths of your school.

The following list is for guidance only:

- curriculum;
- specialist knowledge;
- special teaching knowledge;
- individual planning/differentiation;
- assessment;
- recording;
- establishing parent partnerships;
- involving classroom assistants;
- providing training;
- accessing external support;
- developing collaborative practices;
- accommodation;
- resources.

2. Please indicate the skills and expertise your school could offer mainstream schools: *(Tick as appropriate)*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> outreach (specify)     | <input type="checkbox"/> accreditation support                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> early years support    | <input type="checkbox"/> inclusion support                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> play skills            | <input type="checkbox"/> transition support                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communication support  | <input type="checkbox"/> managing assistants support           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sensory support        | <input type="checkbox"/> differentiation support               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> autism support         | <input type="checkbox"/> ICT support                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dyslexia support       | <input type="checkbox"/> identifying learning outcomes support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> literacy support       | <input type="checkbox"/> parent partnership support            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> numeracy support       | <input type="checkbox"/> EBD support                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assessment support     | <input type="checkbox"/> therapy support                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EP writing support     | <input type="checkbox"/> support in inter-agency working       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> annual reviews support | <input type="checkbox"/> other                                 |

3.a) Please identify any links which you have with mainstream schools/colleges/FE/training/Trusts/other agencies.

3.b) Can you indicate the features which ensure successful links?

3.c) What are the issues facing your school?

Please list under the headings:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training   | <input type="checkbox"/> changing pupil profile (note) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> challenging behaviour         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> annual review                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change     | <input type="checkbox"/> transport                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other      |  |

4. What additional resources do you consider would enhance your work:

- ☒ in raising standards in your school?

- in supporting mainstream schools?

5.a) How do you envisage the future role of your school in an inclusive context? *(give 4/5 examples)*

5.b) What would you suggest should be in place to enable you to fulfil the role you envisage for your school?

6. What are the key principles of an effective special school which could assist successful inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties into mainstream schools?

7. What ways could your staff support pupils in mainstream schools?

8. Are there children for whom mainstream is at present unsuitable?  
(specify reasons)

9. What allied health services should be intrinsic to special schools?

10. What is needed to ensure good quality leadership in special schools?

11. How best can special schools attract and retain staff?

12. Should special schools retain the name special school? Can you suggest an alternative and more inclusive name?

13. In what ways could special school staff work alongside mainstream staff to enhance teaching and learning?

14. What other professionals should be included in the special school of the future?

15. What are your suggestions of the use of ICT in the role of the special school of the future?

16. What other innovative activities would you suggest for the special school of the future?



17. Should all special school offer the same range of provision? What differences would you suggest?

18. Are there reasons for closing special schools? *(specify)*

**Thanks for taking the time and energy to discuss this questionnaire with your staff and for the view expressed.**

Please forward your response to:

Carl Savage  
Special Education Branch  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
Co Down  
BT19 7PR





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