Somerset’s Strategy for Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability

2016 to 2019

Draft for consultation
Somerset’s Strategy for Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. National Context</th>
<th>Page no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Local Context</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Our Aspiration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Our Ambition – What we Want to Improve</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Key Priorities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The LA Role</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This document brings together the collective views of the Somerset SEN writing Team in their co-production of a strategy for improving the educational outcomes of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability, for implementation in Somerset during the 2015-2016 Academic Year. The writing team included primary and special school headteachers, and SEN/learning support leads from CLPs, schools, colleges, children’s centres, and the LA. This draft strategy for improving educational outcomes is one strand of the SEND Strategic Work Programme, and draws on a number of key Somerset documents, national research and Ofsted documentation.

Please see ‘Somerset’s Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All’, for the broad education picture, including performance data and our ambitious trajectory for improvement.
1. National Context

The Local Authority and schools’ roles, in ensuring that children and young people with SEND receive the support and advice that they need to enable them to meet their full potential, are clearly set out both in law and statutory guidance. The effectiveness of these arrangements will be assessed through the joint Ofsted/Quality Care Commission (CQC) Area Inspection Framework.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on the local area, which includes the local authority and health commissioners and providers, together with all of the area’s early years settings, schools, and post 16 further education sector, to identify and meet the needs of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs aged 0 to 25.

Ofsted and CQC have been commissioned to inspect those local area arrangements from May 2016 on a five year rolling programme. This is in addition to the accountability for SEND outcomes held by Governing Bodies, Trusts and Management Committees contained in the common inspection framework for individual providers.

The Children and Families Act 2014 (section 27) places a duty on local authorities ‘to keep education and care provision under review’. This refers to education provision, training provision and care provision made in or outside its area for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Schools Causing Concern guidance 2015 states that ‘Local authorities are responsible for those children and young people (under age 25) in its area who have, or may have, special educational needs and disability (SEND) and must exercise its functions to identify children and young people with SEND. These SEND duties apply regardless of where the child is educated’.

It is therefore important that Somerset has a quality assurance framework that encompasses the entire cohort of pupils with SEND, with or without a Plan, wherever they are placed and hence the decision to assign SEND as a discrete but embedded strategy in Somerset’s Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All.
2. Local Context

When considering the scope of this Strategy it is important to understand that it encompasses all children and young people with SEND which includes:

- those pupils who have identified SEND where the provision is made by the mainstream school using Dedicated School Grant (DSG) revenue funding and the notional SEN funding;
- those pupils who receive SEND support through High Needs funding; and
- those pupils with a Statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

Despite some good progress at KS4 in 2015, pupils in Somerset with statements and those receiving SEND support continue to underperform at all Key Stages, compared to their peers nationally and regionally. The Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All includes a comprehensive analysis of SEN educational data (pupils with and without statements). Headlines:

- In 2015, KS2 SEN attainment of Level 4 and above reading, writing and mathematics declined by 3.8% to 32.2%, and the gap between their non-SEN peers widened to 56.6%. Somerset is significantly below the national average of 38.8% Somerset’s SEN/non-SEN gap is almost 5.2% wider than the gap nationally.

- At Key Stage 4, the attainment and progress made by pupils with SEN has improved significantly compared to 2014, and at a greater rate than their non-SEN peers, so the gaps are closing. The attainment of SEN students at GCSE of 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics, improved by 2.7% to 45.6%. Somerset is now 2.1% lower than the national average for attainment, compared to 4.9% lower in 2014.

The progress of the very small proportion of pupils within the P scale range of ability and attending Somerset special schools is in the upper quartile nationally for English and Mathematics.

Somerset has a higher proportion than most authorities of EHC plans being requested by parents. The expected norm is that schools manage a graduated response to pupils’ needs and are well placed to request an EHC Plan at the appropriate time. Currently pupils with statements and plans have an annual review which evaluates the progress towards the pupil’s individual outcomes, according to each individual pupil’s needs and starting point. The quality assurance mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of the provision for pupils at SEND support with High Needs Funding are inconsistent, and not
all schools apply for High Needs Funding in a timely manner. This has to change, if we are to ensure that all schools have the highest expectations for SEND pupils.

We want to actively encourage children and their parents / carers to co-produce and design services with us and with schools. We also want to improve our ability to listen to, and act on their feedback. The effectiveness of our work and parental satisfaction will be considered by the Ofsted / CQC inspection of Local Area SEND arrangements.

We already have a range of mechanisms in place to collect some information at regular intervals and this will continue to be developed. We will also look at other measures which may give indications of parental satisfaction with the SEND processes and provision in the County. For example, one proxy indicator that currently exists for dissatisfaction is the number of Elective Home Educated pupils who are withdrawn from education due to parental perception of un-met SEND needs in mainstream school. A parallel indicator is the number of students entering the special school sector and FE from being EHE, where the reason given was un-met SEND needs in mainstream school.

In addition to parental withdrawal from formal schooling, there is a concern that schools are restricting pupils' access to education through the use of fixed or permanent exclusion or part time timetables. The percentage of Somerset pupils in mainstream schools who receive support at ‘School Action Plus’ (SA+), and those with SEN, with and without a statement, who had at least one Fixed Period Exclusion in 2012/13 was significantly higher than regionally or nationally. Of equal concern is the rate of Fixed Term Exclusions from Special Schools. In 2013/14, 12% of pupils in Special Schools had at least one fixed term exclusion, compared to an average of 6.85% regionally and 5.51% nationally.

The most recent published national data for SEN pupils’ attendance is for 2012/13 and shows that Somerset’s SEN pupils had significantly poorer attendance than SEN pupils nationally or in the South West Region, and that Somerset Pupils with SEN were far more likely to be Persistent Absentees than their non-SEN peers.

All these factors mean that our evaluation of ‘how effectively the local area meets the needs and improves the outcomes of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs’ is unacceptably low.

The SEND Work Programme is seeking to address these issues and ensure appropriate provision for children and young people, is available as locally as possible. Somerset’s Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All, sets out key performance
indicators for the wider educational outcomes and the data and targets which will inform joint commissioning arrangements across the partners in the local area in order to improve those outcomes.

3. Our Aspiration

We believe that every child deserves a fair start in life, with access to the very best opportunities that enable them to succeed. Currently, the life chances for the approximately two million children and young people in England who are identified as having a special educational need (SEN), or who are disabled, are disproportionately poor.

Our aspirations are the same as the children’s hopes and aspirations and those of their parents and carers. That is, a desire to become, like every child and young person, independent and successful in their chosen future, and, to the greatest extent possible, shape their own futures. We expect leaders and teachers to have high expectations for all children, and ensure every child has the support they need to succeed – focusing on achievement, not labels.

Our aspiration is for every early years and educational setting to provide a truly inclusive education, with high expectations for all its children, regardless of their strengths or needs. Teachers will ensure that diverse learners – those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interests and ways of learning – are exposed to teaching strategies that reach them as individual learners.

Our aspiration for Somerset is that all children and young people experience an early identification of their individual needs, and that their needs are met with appropriately tailored support and provision. We want to ensure there is an appropriate range of opportunities, that enable children and young people with SEND to have similar options and choices as their non-SEND peers, so that they can follow a supportive learning pathway towards independence, participation in society and employment.

4. Our Ambition – What we want to improve

Our ambition is that children and young people, moving through the education system, exceed expected progress in all aspects of their development (academic, social, independence etc.) and are able to have proper choices and options as they move through each transition from early years to adulthood.
We know that it can take too long to identify a child’s needs, and sometimes we find out too late that a child needs extra help. Many children with SEND do not get the help they need, when they need it, and some do not do well enough at school because adults’ expectations of their achievement are low.

Every child deserves the chance to do well at school, however, we know that there are too many barriers that prevent children and young people with SEND achieving the same success as other children. For instance, they are more likely to be bullied or excluded from school.

Furthermore, parents do not always have enough information about what type of support, and which schools are best for their child, and sometimes find it hard to get the help their family needs from education, health and social care services.

Our ambition is to identify children with special educational needs or a disability as early as possible. We want to make sure every child and every family gets the right help at the right time, and are effectively supported through each transition in the child’s and young person’s life. To do this we expect partners in education, health and social care services to work more effectively together to co-produce solutions with parents and carers, children and young people.

Our ambition is for all teachers to have the skills to recognise, and help children who have additional needs in the best way possible. We want teachers to be confident about stopping bullying and poor behaviour; and we want them to know where they can access help and advice as early as possible when there are problems. We will ensure parents have clear information about how a school is helping their child; and that schools report to governors about the outcomes for children with SEND, and how their school and partnership are supporting them to achieve their full potential.

Our ambition is for young people with SEND to have greater opportunities to engage in learning or work after they are 16. We want all young people with SEND at 19, who choose to continue learning, to have an educational pathway available. For learners at pre-entry level, this will require the development of specialist courses and additional support, and may need to be blended with other elements of work-based learning, supported employment, development of life skills and ongoing access to therapies. These opportunities do exist in Somerset but not to the extent they are needed and are not available in every part of the county. Our ambition is to ensure adequate sufficiency of such courses to allow every post 19 learner, who wishes to choose this destination, a place in their local community.

Some post 16 or post 19 young people with SEND would benefit from supported employment, but there are insufficient opportunities being provided by local employers or charitable organisations in Somerset. Our ambition is to ensure sufficiency of wide
ranging and high quality, supported employment opportunities, to allow every young person (who wishes to choose this destination) satisfying employment in their local community. It is the role of the partners in the local area to work together to develop and increase the availability of these opportunities.

5. Our Key Priorities

Priority 1. Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning

The Teachers' Standards, 2011 (currently being consulted upon for possible revision) provide two standards which are particularly relevant for teaching pupils with SEND; standard 5 and standard 7. We want to ensure that all teaching staff uphold these standards.

Standard 5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils:

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils’ ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils’ education at different stages of development have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.

Standard 7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment:

- have clear rules and routines for behaviour in classrooms, and take responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school, in accordance with the school’s behaviour policy
- have high expectations of behaviour, and establish a framework for discipline with a range of strategies, using praise, sanctions and rewards consistently and fairly
- manage classes effectively, using approaches which are appropriate to pupils’ needs in order to involve and motivate them
- maintain good relationships with pupils, exercise appropriate authority, and act decisively when necessary.
Our priority is for early years settings and schools to assess and identify needs as early as possible, and for interventions to be timely and appropriate to the assessed needs.

Teachers and support staff are central to our ambition of giving every child and young person the chance to succeed. Every child, whether in a mainstream or special setting, deserves a world-class education to ensure that they fulfil their potential.

Everyone who works with disabled children and children with SEN should have high expectations of them and the skills to help them to learn.

What we need to do:

- Improve the early identification and assessment of need.
- Set out the expectations about the level and standards of SEND provision which should exist in all educational settings.
- Improve the SEND training and support offer for teaching and support staff in early years and mainstream schools, including training on co-production with parents and hearing the voice of the child.
- Develop specialist standards and improve the training offer for teachers and support staff who work in specialist provision.
- Establish clear and understood thresholds for high needs funding
- Set out clearly the expectations for the graduated response before requesting an EHC Plan.
- Set out clearly Somerset’s range of SEND Support and specialist outreach services and their quality and performance standards.
- Agree and implement the commissioning arrangements and funding mechanisms for Somerset’s specialist placement provision.
- Improve the dialogue between school leaders and health providers delivering direct intervention to pupils during the school day.
- Review with FE colleges all Post 16 provision so that Somerset students have access to a wide range of high quality provision that meets their needs.

Priority 2: The development of leadership, including governance

The responsibilities of governing bodies for SEND are set out in The Governors Handbook section 3.5.1. It is an extensive list of duties, many of which are delegated to the head teacher or SENCo, but which all remain the governing body’s responsibility.

They all relate to compliance with legislation, ensuring that ‘best endeavours’ are used in exercising their functions, taking account of:
• the SEND Code of Practice
• the proper training and qualification of staff,
• the inclusion of pupils with SEND in all activities of the school
• the cooperation with the local authority in developing the local offer
• the publication of a SEND information report and a policy on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.

We want to ensure that all school leaders understand and fulfil these responsibilities and have high expectations for all children and young people in their schools and local area.

What we need to do:

• Ensure all school leaders, not just the SENCo, understand the functions and requirements for making provision for pupils with SEND, and how they impact on the outcomes for children and families, by creating opportunities:
  o for governors and substantive and aspiring senior leaders in early years and schools to access appropriate training
  o to learn from experience of working in early years and schools where well developed school systems are in place that result in good outcomes for children with SEND
  o to learn from the experiences and views of children and their parents / carers

• Ensure all governing bodies robustly evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s provision for pupils with SEND (see Priority 4 – Quality Assurance):
  o All school leaders use effective management systems that ensure all processes are completed in a timely manner, and their impact can be reported back to the governing body.

• Ensure reports to the governing body include:
  o an annual report from RAISE on the progress made by pupils with SEND;
  o a summary of the annual reviews of pupils with statements or EHC Plans;
  o a summary of the reviews of personalisation plans for pupils with SEND support and high needs funding;
  o an evaluation of interventions provided by the school to pupils with SEND support using only SEN notional funding allocated through the funding formula.
Ensure the local authority holds settings and schools to account for SEND outcomes:
- Better provision of data, including benchmarking against other schools in Somerset and nationally.
- Support and challenge around outcomes for pupils with SEND through the Somerset Education Partner (see section 6. LA role)

Priority 3. The development of the self-improving education system

Our aspirations and ambitions are dependent on education providers collaborating each other, and with the wider children’s partnership, at a local and strategic level to identify need, and share information, resources and expertise.

The local authority’s responsibility for pupils with statements of SEN and EHC Plans cannot be fulfilled unless the settings into which they place these pupils make the provision which the LA has determined through their statutory assessment process.

What we need to do:

- Ensure all schools understand their contribution to the local offer, and develop the trusting relationships with each other and the LA which will ensure they welcome the ‘support and challenge’ relationship necessary for system-wide improvement.
- Ensure arrangements across Community Learning Partnerships (CLPs), federations and other collaborative partnerships between schools, such as the Sen.se Raising Attainment Plan, step up to the next level of system-wide joint accountability, (e.g. for transitions), including data sharing protocols, and a willingness of peers to give and to receive critical evaluation of practice and outcomes.
- Develop joint targets for improvement, attached to the future allocation of funding to the Compact, CLPs and other groups, to sharpen the focus on the aspects of practice that will have the greatest impact on outcomes.
- Develop schools’ ability to effectively commission support and alternative education.
- Develop a model for schools to peer-challenge practice in relation to the application of mainstream core standards, types of interventions being made for
pupils with SEND, and transitions, in order to jointly improve the progress made by these pupils in each of the schools in the collaboration.

Priority 4. The Development of Effective Quality Assurance Mechanisms at School, Partnership and Local Authority Level

We must ensure that the needs of children and young people with SEND are identified as early as possible and are met effectively.

The impact of interventions must be evaluated, so appropriate adjustments can be made for each child as necessary, and the learning about what works can be captured strategically at school, partnership and LA level, and disseminated.

What we need to do:

- Develop consistent systems to monitor compliance with requirements and expectations for pupils with SEND support receiving high needs funding.
- Develop a consistent mechanism for governing bodies to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision made for the pupils with SEND support who only receive support through the notional SEN funding in the Individual Schools Budget.
- Develop governing bodies’ accountability for this evaluation by annually sending out a summary of the SEN notional funding allocated through the formula, and the additional funding allocated to individual pupils through High Needs Funding.
- Ensure that there are robust systems in place to ensure that all provision commissioned for children with SEND, whether from the state sector, or from independent, non-maintained providers, is of a high quality, achieving desired outcomes and providing value for money.
- Improve and extend our systems to strategically gauge parental satisfaction and listen to and act upon the voice of the child.
6. The Local Authority Role

The appointment of Somerset Education Partners (SEP) to provide a support and challenge function to individual schools, means that the infrastructure now exists for the local authority to fulfil its requirement to know the quality of provision for SEND in Somerset. The LA will provide schools with good quality data relating to outcomes for pupils with SEND, (progress; attainment; attendance; exclusions), benchmarked against the local area; families of schools and nationally.

The LA will jointly agree and commission a multi-agency provision map of available interventions across groups of schools, to better enable them to draw down effective support for pupils individual need and circumstance.

As part of their analysis of the effectiveness of school improvement, the following aspects of SEND practice will be discussed by SEPs with each school; whether

- The gap in performance of pupils with SEND compared to their peers is narrowing sufficiently rapidly
- Pupils with SEND are making expected progress
- Their SEND information report complies with SI 2014 1530 schedule 1
- Their website is compliant with SI 2012 1124 and subsequent additions
- The governors publish the evaluation of the provision for pupils with SEND:
  - RAISE key stage to key stage progress of pupils with SEND
  - Summary of annual reviews of statements of SEN or EHC Plans
  - Summary of reviews of personalisation Plans
  - Evaluations of interventions
  - Summary of parental satisfaction surveys
  - Summary of pupil satisfaction surveys

They will also discuss, if relevant

- The incidence of, and reasons for, pupils being withdrawn from school for Elective Home Education
- The timeliness and quality of identification of need and applications for high needs funding
- The quality of the graduated response and application of thresholds
- The appropriateness of requests for EHCs
- The incidence of fixed term exclusions of pupils with SEND
- The incidence of permanent exclusions of pupils with SEND
- The use of part time timetables for pupils with SEND
• The quality and use of internal exclusion (on or off site) or commissioned alternative provision for pupils with SEND
• The use of dual or single enrolment and the use of appropriate absence codes for pupils with SEND
• The levels of attendance and persistent absence of pupils with SEND

They will also seek feedback about
• The effectiveness of support services
• The effectiveness of partnership arrangements e.g CLP
• Identification of good and effective practice that could be shared

Feedback will be collated and evaluated to facilitate service improvements and address provision gaps by supporting schools to jointly commission effective and timely services to enhance local provision.

As part of their contribution to the evaluation of the local area arrangements for SEND, each school will be required to submit to the LA:

• Parental and pupil satisfaction attached to each annual review. This will require the Local Authority to amend the annual review documents to capture key questions of parents / carers and children:
  o Do you feel your child/you is/are supported well and is/are making good progress?
  o Do you feel listened to?
  o Do you feel you have been involved in your child’s/your EHCP?

• The LA will produce an annual report of ‘Parental and Pupil Satisfaction

• The LA will undertake an ‘annual impact review’ of the personalised plan where a pupil has SEND support with high need funding. This will be used in any re-consideration of renewed high needs funding.

The LA will make better use of its data to monitor the outcomes and safety of children with SEND e.g. those EHE; excluded or persistently absent, and take swift and appropriate action where concerns arise.

The LA will put in place robust targets, measures and systems to hold individual schools and partnerships to account for funding spent on improving outcomes for children with SEND.
The information resulting from this quality assurance activity will enable the local authority to support early years and schools to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and continually ‘evaluate how effectively the local area meets the needs and improves the outcomes of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs’ which is the second focus of the Local Area SEND inspection.