

This report was submitted to Community Learning Committee on 2 November 1999 and is now submitted to the Joint Advisory Committee for comment.

The Review of Special Education Stage 1 report was circulated recently to Secretaries of the Professional Associations and Councillors. In order to avoid unnecessary printing, only the summary and draft action plan is attached.

REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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1. Purpose

1.1 To consider the draft report on Stage 1 of Milton Keynes' Review of Special Education, 1999. The draft report was approved for consultation by Education Committee on 14 September 1999 and has now been circulated to all Members.

2. Summary

2.1 The Council's Policy on Special Education was published in April 1997 as an initial policy to support the transfer of responsibilities to the new Council. It is due to be reviewed by September 1999.

2.2 The report sets out the current situation regarding special education under the broad headings agreed by Learning and Development Committee in 1997. It highlights achievements and issues and gives a draft action plan which forms the basis for consultation during October and November.

2.3 Following consultation a revised and extended report will be brought to Community Learning Committee in January 2000.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Committee comments on the draft report on the Review of Special Education.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 The Council's Policy on Special Education was published in April 1997 as an interim document to support the transfer of responsibilities to the new Council and to facilitate the delivery of services to children with special educational needs within an inclusive context. It is due to be reviewed during the autumn of 1999 and is included in the strategic aims of the Learning Vision within Key Success Outcome 2 - the promotion of social inclusion and anti-poverty strategies.
- 4.2 The review covers a range of areas as agreed by the Learning and Development Committee in 1997. The issues raised by the draft report have been the subject of consultation and development by the local Special Educational Needs (SEN) Partnership groups. The report of Stage 1 of the Review has been circulated to Members separately. The report was considered by the Education Committee to launch the consultation, but outcomes and decisions will then be for Community Learning Committee, given its cross-cutting, strategic nature and the budget issues.
- 4.3 Wide consultation is taking place during October and November, with the outcomes being reported to the Community Learning Committee in January 2000, leading ultimately to the preparation of a Special Education Development Plan.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The draft report records achievements since April 1997, highlights issues and outlines future developments and action. The proposals relate to a number of national developments and draw on best practice elsewhere. In summary, the issues relate to a number of broad areas which are critical to the development of special education provision in Milton Keynes. These are:
- (a) raising achievement for pupils with SEN, and enhancing social inclusion, in line with the Learning Vision and the Education Development Plan;
 - (b) integration of Council and inter-agency support to pupils with SEN;
 - (c) promoting inclusive provision;
 - (d) effective early intervention, reducing statements;
 - (e) re-cycling resources from expensive individual support to more universal, locally based provision;
 - (f) reducing out-authority placements;
 - (g) implementing and improving the continuum of support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties as described in the Behaviour Support Plan;
 - (h) extending the support available for parents; and

(i) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the statementing process.

5.2 The draft report and action plans have been circulated for formal consultation to ensure that all partners have the opportunity to make their views known. It is proposed that a summary of the results of this first stage of consultation be reported back to the January meeting of this Committee, together with an amended version of the report for adoption.

5.3 It is proposed that the final report will then be published during the spring term, 2000, and a summary circulated widely to all partners. Action plans which support the agreed priorities will form the basis of a Special Education Development Plan, 2000 - 2003. It is anticipated that a draft of this plan will be brought to Community Learning Committee prior to widespread consultation and publication during the summer term, 2000.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Environmental

None.

6.2 Equalities

Improvements to services for children with special educational needs will enhance the quality and equality of opportunity, education and employment for disadvantaged and disaffected groups within the community.

6.3 Financial

All proposals for change are made in the context of Best Value principles - to provide a continuously improving service which meets local needs at a competitive cost. Budget implications will be a critical part of review and development work.

6.4 Legal

The Review of Special Education will enable the Council to improve its services to children and young people with special educational needs and to better meet its statutory requirements.

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

Some of the outcomes of the review may entail rationalisation of some areas of accommodation. Any changes to school buildings will be dealt with under the School Organisation Plan. Other changes will be signalled through the Special Education Development Plan.

7. **Conclusions**

7.1 The report on Special Education provides an overview of current provision. It highlights key issues and identifies the need for future action.

7.2 It is intended that this work will lead ultimately to a Special Education Development Plan which will form the basis for strategic developments over the next 3 years.

7.3 The development of the Special Education Development Plan will progress through the SEN Partnership Groups, Community Learning Committee, and by consultation with all key partners.

Background Papers: Recent DfEE guidance and consultation documents relating to SEN and SEN Partnership Group's papers