

What Works?

Re-focussing the resources of special schools
(evaluating pilot schemes for Partnership and Support Work)

A research report for the Leeds Inclusion Project (May 2001)

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Summary

This report arises from an approach by Education Leeds for research collaboration related to the implementation of pilot schemes for the inclusion of special school pupils in mainstream settings. The Centre for Disability Studies was invited to submit outline proposals for research to evaluate pilot schemes in the initiative to re-focus special school resources in Leeds, and to develop approaches to evaluation that might be used in implementation after the lifetime of the initial pilots.

The pilot schemes concerned reflect two models of refocusing special school resources towards greater inclusion. The two models are referred to here as '**Partnership**' and '**Support Work**' (more details are included later).

The research itself was carried out over a six-month period, and involved a wide range of stakeholders in the existing projects (pupils, parents, support staff, health professionals, teachers and senior managers). The methods involved interviews, group discussions, school visits, and review of documentation. This report details the views expressed and highlights key evaluation criteria for successful evidence based practice, including indications of relevant evidence and how this might be collected. The model of evaluation proposed is based on critical self-review within participating schools.

Background to the research

Policy context

Since the beginning of its first Parliament, New Labour claimed education, and school education in particular, as one of its key priorities. While the emphasis has been on school improvement and pupil achievement, there are clear moves towards the development of a new policy framework for special educational needs and the inclusion of more disabled children in mainstream education (see for example, the Green Paper *Excellence for all children* and revision of the *Code of Practice* on statementing).

Specific attention has also been paid recently to the needs of pupils who currently attend special schools. The White Paper *Excellence in Schools* argued that there are 'strong educational, social and moral grounds for educating pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools' (para. 46) and the Government is now funding LEAs and schools to develop strategies to enable more disabled children to be educated with their peers. The forthcoming Disability and Special Needs in Education Act will add considerable weight to the inclusion agenda, by extending the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act to educational provision.

This is a challenging agenda for both schools and strategic planners. Commitments to disability equality and social inclusion are finely balanced against concerns about the availability of specialist expertise and resources, and about the maintenance of school improvement in the mainstream. It is in this context that we review pilot schemes for the inclusion of special school pupils in Leeds.

'In Leeds our Policy for Inclusion is underpinned by the key principle of access to high quality schooling for all in their neighbourhood school. It is an integral part of our overall Raising Achievement Agenda which aims to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to the highest quality education'. (*Leeds inclusive education policy statement*, August 2000-2003)

As a step towards more inclusive educational opportunities, the LEA has proposed two models to re-focus its special school resources. The aim is to reduce the number of children educated in the special schools by (a) educating more special school pupils in mainstream Partnership schools (Partnership model), and, (b) reducing the number of admissions to special schools, by using their expertise and resources to support children in local mainstream schools (Support model).

Taken to its logical conclusion, this position might suggest that all pupils will attend mainstream schools. However, it is implicit within the proposals that the LEA is not envisaging full inclusion at this stage, but rather a more flexible use of resources to promote education in the least restrictive environment (while acknowledging the complexities and obstacles to full inclusion).

The challenge for schools and the education department, as identified in the Inclusion Position Statement, is then more incremental. That is: 'to work together to use resources in an imaginative way to promote more flexible special provision and enable more pupils to have more opportunities to spend more time in their local school'.

Partnership and Support Work models: the Inclusion Action Plan

This report considers two models of provision towards these objectives, identified in the LEA's Inclusion Action Plan.

The Partnership model builds on work already going on in Leeds schools to include special school pupils in mainstream settings. The aim is to strengthen and develop links between

special schools and mainstream schools through formal Partnership arrangements, allowing groups of special school pupils, together with their teachers and other resources, into mainstream settings. Partnerships should allow pupils access to academic and social opportunities within the mainstream school, while retaining the specialist teaching skills and resources available in special schools.

According to the Inclusion Action Plan (January 2000), the Partnership model aims to ensure: 'high quality schooling for all pupils across all key stages. It will promote greater inclusion by maximising opportunity, independence, participation and achievement for all pupils there, according to individual needs'.

Although Partnership arrangements are intended to meet all pupil needs and do not preclude the involvement of any particular group of children, there is an expectation of continuing placements in special schools - either because of a lack of resources to support particularly complex educational and care needs, or because of parental choice. The plan acknowledges that special schools have a responsibility to children currently on role, particularly where parents have made choices for special school placements with the expectation that their child would remain until the end of their school career. However, Partnership is seen to have the potential for reducing the number of disabled children attending special schools in the city.

In the longer term, it is envisaged that a small number of specialist resource centres/schools would remain in key locations (either four centres based on geographical poles, or five mirroring the Family of Schools 'wedges'). Such a move would aim to free up expertise, investment and resources tied into specialist settings to be used more flexibly for the support of pupils in the mainstream.

The new Specialist Resource Centres would be located on the sites of existing special schools, currently catering for pupils with the most complex educational, therapy and care needs. These centres would maintain and develop Partnership arrangements with mainstream schools, as well as providing peripatetic support services. They might also support some pupils on site. Ultimately, the plan envisages a reduction in the number of resource centres to a single site.

The Action Plan acknowledges a need to identify criteria for pupils attending Partnership schools and to plan resources and accommodation with a client group in mind. However, the focus is on pupils primarily regarded as having learning difficulties (representing about three quarters of the 1,000 pupils currently in special schools). The needs of other pupils, such as those with EBD, PMLD and those within the autism spectrum, are not fully discussed.

The Action Plan acknowledges that provision for this population might require greater flexibility in number of pupils and higher levels of staffing. However, it is anticipated that a reduction in fixed costs, such as transport, might allow flexibility through long-term savings.

To ease the pressure on pupil achievement targets for mainstream Partnership schools, the Action Plan states that special school pupils would remain on the roll of the specialist resource centres (which would initially retain responsibility for both the pupils and staff involved). It is unclear from the plan whether this strategy would be pursued in the longer term, or whether mainstream schools would be expected to take special school pupils onto their own roll.

The LEA recognises that continued confidence in a changing future is a key aspect of the proposed changes and that increased staff skills and experience will contribute to that end. The proposals are therefore supported by the aim of a planned and consistent staff development programme to promote equality in training and delivery of service to all pupils with complex needs.

As noted above, the Partnership model is supplemented by proposals for resource centres to provide peripatetic support work in mainstream schools, in order to reduce the number of inappropriate admissions to special schools. The primary aim of support work is therefore to maintain those children currently in local mainstream schools who would otherwise be transferred to special school.

The Inclusion Action Plan identifies two forms of support work: an advisory role and a teaching role. The advisory role would involve providing advice on assessment, curriculum planning and recording, teaching resources, target setting and behaviour management. The teaching role would involve support for pupils through direct teaching in the mainstream school (the latter being more demanding in terms of teacher time). In terms of staffing, priority would be given to special school staff already involved in providing support to mainstream schools. It is acknowledged that both of these roles would require additional staff development, training and joint working. However, the initial emphasis has been to promote an advisory role. Financial outcome is important and the schemes are intended to be cost effective. There are additional administrative implications for improved pupil referral procedures.

The pilot schemes

Penny Field and Miles Hill

Penny Field is a special school, built in 1982, for pupils with severe learning difficulties, and resourced for pupils with profound hearing loss and multi sensory impairments. It provides education for up to 75 pupils. Facilities at Penny Field include: a hydrotherapy pool, a multi sensory room, a physiotherapy department and a range of specialised information and communication technology. The school has two full-time nurses, two full-time physiotherapists and a physiotherapy assistant. Pupils also have access to other professionals (such as educational psychologist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, teacher of the deaf, teacher of the visually impaired and a dietician).

Miles Hill is a mainstream primary school with 256 full-time pupils and a nursery unit (with 78 part-time pupils). One third of the pupils are on the special needs register with 12 children having statements of special educational need.

The Partnership currently involves Penny Field pupils in Early Years and Key Stage 1 (nursery, reception, Years 1 and 2). Six pupils attend the Nursery for one session each per week in groups of three (spread over two sessions). Two staff from Penny Field accompany each group (involving two LSAs, a nursery nurse, and a teacher). Two Reception pupils are included (on a rolling programme) for one morning session each week accompanied by a nursery nurse. In Year 1, two pupils are accompanied by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and in Year 2, three pupils are accompanied by a teacher. The Year 1 and 2 groups attend Miles Hill for most of one day a week. In total, ten children from Penny Field attend Miles Hill Primary School every Thursday morning. All of these children are regarded as having profound or multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Three children attend the nursery on Wednesdays.

There have been some logistical difficulties with transport, lunchtime arrangements and the absence of a hygiene suite in the mainstream school, and this has prevented the extension of visits to the full day. The Year 2 group stay until 1.30pm; while those in the Year 1 leave at 11am (due to the requirement for a suitable hygiene suite). It is anticipated that these difficulties will be alleviated after Easter.

Penny Field and City of Leeds

(Penny Field is described above).

City of Leeds is a comprehensive high school in the inner city zone. There are 540 pupils on roll, including 103 in the sixth form. Social and economic indicators suggest that, with a few exceptions, pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils come from households in receipt of a council-administered benefit, and the Department of the Environment ranks the wards from which the school draws most of its pupils as amongst the 10 per cent most deprived in England. Fifty-two per cent of pupils claim free school meals; 24% are on the special educational needs register, including 42 pupils with a statement of special needs or statutory assessment. The most common category is learning difficulties, including some with severe learning difficulties. A high proportion of pupils are regarded as having emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Two groups of children from Penny Field currently visit City of Leeds on different days. One group involves six pupils regarded as having severe learning difficulties (SLD) and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), plus one child who is Deaf. They are accompanied by a teacher and two LSAs. They attend for most of the day on Tuesdays (from around 9.30am until 2.15pm). The second group includes three children regarded as PMLD, accompanied by a teacher and one LSA, who attend for the afternoon and join mainstream classes with different year groups. Initially, nine pupils were involved (in trial groups of three over a term). Although

the two schools have developed links over time, the inclusion of PMLD pupils is a new initiative. There was some initial concern about the potential for disruption and resentment and three pupils were selected with a view to minimising these concerns.

Penny Field have sought to include the children in age appropriate classes but this has not always been possible. The selection of classes is based on judgements about suitability and is generally restricted to non-exam classes. Consequently, the pupils are not consistently associated with any particular class or year group. There are also some concerns about opportunities for social inclusion.

Broomfield and Cottingley

Broomfield is an all-age segregated school opened in September 1977. As a generic special school, its' pupils include a very wide continuum of special needs, ranging from those with very profound and multiple learning difficulties to those with challenging behaviours. The school is specifically resourced for autistic children and young people and for pupils with visual impairments. There are currently 90 pupils with an adult/pupil ratio of 1:2.5. The school also has nursing staff and physiotherapists with part-time support from a speech therapist and educational psychologist. Additional speech therapy is provided from the school budget and from the health authority.

Cottingley is a mainstream primary school with 270 children (27-30 in each class). Almost 40 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 200 are on the Special Needs Register. There is a high proportion of children with special educational needs and 25 children on role who are regarded as deaf or with hearing impairments (across all years) The school has been resourced to support these specific needs for 12 years. Sign Language interpreters are available where required and all pupils in school learn to sign.

At the commencement of our research, a class of 10 children from Broomfield visited Cottingley for one afternoon a week (divided into two groups of five). Each group was accompanied by a teacher and a nursery nurse. The pupils involved are regarded as having moderate learning difficulties (MLD), autism and/or EBD. The number of children involved has now increased to 12 (five in one group and seven in another group) and there is an intention to extend the time spent to include lunchtime. Difficulties with transport arrangements have prevented further extension, although if and when this is resolved the groups will attend Cottingley for the whole day.

The two partnerships are coming from different starting points. While Broomfield has started with new links, Penny Field is extending established links and turning them into partnership by building in formalities in the procedure.

Grafton School (support work)

Grafton is a special school for pupils aged 3-11 with MLD. Its current role includes pupils with a very wide range of needs, including those with complex needs. It has specific provision for 8 Deaf pupils. The school has strong links with the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service and manages the specialist resource.

The school has pupils from all parts of the city and the surrounding area. There are currently 76 pupils on roll, 73 of whom are the subject of statements of special educational need (the remaining 3 pupils are currently being assessed). The majority of pupils are regarded as having severe learning difficulties. In addition some pupils have significant needs arising from hearing impairment, visual impairment, autism and communication, physical and behavioural difficulties. 45 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than schools of a similar type nationally.

Grafton is currently supporting 6 children in 5 mainstream schools. This includes: Pudsey Tyersal, Hunslet Moore, Moore Allerton Primary School, Quarry Mount and Hovingham Primary School. These children are aged between 5 and 10 and regarded as having mild to severe

learning needs, some with considerable language delays (including two with no spoken language), plus one child who is autistic. While 4 of these children have formal support arrangements in place, the support provided for the other 2 is more informal. Referrals for support are not made using any standardised forms or procedures. Request for inclusion outreach support have come from schools unable to fully meet children's needs, even with the support arising from a statement. While these needs vary, they are mostly concerned with: establishing IEPs and curriculum differentiation, delivery of IEPs, management advice, and increasing staff confidence in school.

Funding

In 1998/9 Broomfield School received a Standard Fund grant to support inclusion. The £15,000 received allowed the deputy head to be released for two days a week to carry out an audit of the 22 primary and 3 high schools in Broomfield's immediate locality. It was revealed from the audit that 4 institutions were well placed to form Partnership links with Broomfield. In 2000 a second Standards Fund bid realised £32,000 to develop the model. This money was to be used to develop the overall Partnership scheme as well as assisting in the setting up of an LEA service to provide outreach support for statemented pupils in their local mainstream schools.

In May 2000, the LEA decided that Penny Field School would receive an additional £14,000 (on top of £7,000 promised to every school to further their links) to continue its partnership school developments in the NW sector. Penny Field was to use this money to formalise existing links with Miles Hill and with City of Leeds, and to work towards those schools becoming formal Partnership schools.

The LEA allocated £23,000 to Grafton in order to develop the support work role with pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. This allows staff from Grafton to share their expertise with mainstream colleagues in order to help maintain placements for pupils with special needs in mainstream schools.

Methods

We began our research with a number of key principles in mind (as outlined below). In particular, we were concerned that any evaluation should seek to reflect the views of all stakeholders and be meaningful to all concerned. We felt that this was important so that the outcomes and findings might be readily usable, and of interest to, those who would use them most effectively. Over a six-month period, we used a multi-method approach to gathering information and validating our findings: including meetings and interviews with key stakeholders; regular direct observation of the pilot schemes in operation; questionnaires; feedback and validation of initial priorities, and analysis of relevant documentation. These methods are detailed below.

Objectives

- To monitor the development of the pilot schemes for 'Partnership' and 'support', from the perspective of all the key stakeholders.
- To determine the criteria that different stakeholders would most value in judging the success of such schemes.
- To establish how such criteria might be most effectively measured.
- To develop easily administered evaluation tools for future use, based on this experience.

Some key principles

Evaluation tends to work best when:

- The people affected by change do not feel threatened
- All the key stakeholders are valued and feel ownership over the process
- The approach evolves to work within existing systems and procedures
- The task of monitoring and evaluation does not add significantly to existing workloads
- The specific value of both quantitative and qualitative data is acknowledged

Summary of research methods

We began by identifying key stakeholders affected by each of the pilot schemes (including pupils, parents, support staff, health professionals, teachers and senior managers in special and mainstream schools). This was followed by direct involvement with the pilot schemes and an ongoing process of interviewing, to establish as far as possible their hopes and concerns. In particular, we focused on factors that might contribute most to the success of the scheme. We also wanted stakeholders to define what success might mean (for example, in terms of educational, social or health outcomes).

In addition to questions about 'what works', we also asked about the barriers to inclusion (i.e. 'what does not work'). Rather than dwelling on how the schemes are working now (although we discussed this), we focused on future goals and outcomes, using 'what if' questions. This helped to lessen anxiety about evaluation of current practice, and helped to identify potential barriers to future implementation of schemes that were still in their early stages. This we hoped would also aid the process of decision-making to improve practice in the future.

The interviews took a variety of forms (e.g. small group discussions with parents, senior management teams, and health professionals; individual interviews with other mainstream and special school staff involved; discussions with LEA staff and interviews with pupils). The participants were involved in all phases of the evaluation: negotiating the key questions, collecting the data and analysing our findings. There have been five sites involved in the

Partnership schemes and at least five in support scheme. The researcher spent an average of 1 day per week 'on-site' throughout the project. This included observing children in special schools and mainstream Partnership schools. While it was relatively easy to meet with most of the stakeholders, we found it harder to find convenient times to interview mainstream teachers.

During the project, we familiarised ourselves (in collaboration with Inclusion Service staff) with the most relevant policy developments and documentation within which to frame the evaluation of pilot schemes. We also collected relevant documents from schools and studied these.

As the initial phase progressed, we worked with the data we had accumulated to draw up a priority list of potential evaluation criteria - what works. We consulted with stakeholders in order to reflect on, and refine, this initial list. Having done this, we were in a position to select the most realistic criteria, which might be used as benchmarks or standards for successful evidence based practice.

During the course of the research, it became clear that different stakeholders placed different values on different outcomes. While some measures were more useful to central managers, others were more relevant to schools, or to parents and pupils. To highlight this, and to reflect on the implications, we have devoted a substantial section of our report to a review of this data, comparing the views of those in special school with those in mainstream school wherever possible.

In the second phase of the research we focused on validating the information we had gathered and developing approaches to measuring success (i.e. identifying indicators, which could be used to judge the progress of schemes). This was done in consultation with key authority staff and key school staff with a long-term interest in inclusion. We examined the usefulness of a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators covering not only educational and management outcomes, but also social and other non-educational outcomes. We did this by asking stakeholders about the kinds of evidence that might be used to demonstrate success or good practice with reference to each indicator and how easy this might be to collect or demonstrate. Our emphasis has been to establish what works, and how it can most easily be accommodated within existing systems of monitoring, evaluation and self-review practices.

This provided the basis for our suggested model of evaluation, translating evidence into judgements of worth (i.e. particularly how close to or far from success particular schemes might come). We envisaged that this would highlight those areas that require more attention, and help to guide the planned re-focusing of resources. It is relevant to note that implementation of the support work model was far less advanced than that for the Partnership model and so we have concentrated our efforts on the latter. A separate section detailing issues arising from the implementation of support work is included later in the report.

In developing an initial model for monitoring and evaluation we have been concerned to build on existing models and to avoid unnecessary duplication. For example, we have focussed evaluative statements and questions specifically on Partnership schemes, rather than on the inclusion of disabled pupils more generally. However, we have chosen to employ a comparable approach to some existing models of evaluation in that general field (e.g. the CSIE *Index for Inclusion*). We envisage that the model of delivery would be through the development of materials for self/shared review in schools.

Stakeholder Views

This section of the report examines the views of different stakeholders within the pilot schemes, in order to highlight the kinds of priorities and values that they held in common, and also where they differed. More detailed discussion on the substantive issues is contained later in this report. The emphasis here is to report on the views expressed by different groups. The following analysis includes the views of senior managers, teachers, parents, pupils, support staff and health professionals.

Views of senior managers

The individual interviews with senior managers (including head teachers, deputy head teachers and other senior staff) in both special school and mainstream settings, together with an analysis of school policy documents, suggests that while managers in both settings tend to agree with the principles of inclusion, there is some diversity of opinion as to what constitutes effectiveness. There were differences of opinion about the kinds of benefits that might be expected, about who might benefit from what, and about the kinds of factors that might inhibit inclusion.

There was a common perception that children with a diversity of impairments and needs could be educated in mainstream schools. However, there were considerable differences in the emphasis given to different factors that might contribute to, or detract from, the success of specific inclusion schemes. This may be partly explained by a distinct lack of clarity of purpose about the inclusion agenda, within mainstream schools. There was general concern amongst management teams in some mainstream schools that they lacked a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives for inclusion schemes. As one manager commented, 'if we know what it is that they are trying to achieve, and what criteria have they used to make that judgement about including particular pupils, then we can be more pro-active'. This view, shared by others we spoke to, suggests that while mainstream managers are generally positive about inclusion schemes, the specific objectives and practicalities still concern some of them.

Even for those who are clearer about the inclusion agenda, there remains some concern about staff resistance. Some senior mainstream staff report that anxious staff continue to question them about the rationale for participating in Partnership. In addition there are practical worries (for example, how to deal with a prescriptive curriculum for numeracy and literacy hours while increasing the number of special school children in their class).

Overall, management teams were generally positive about the inclusion agenda. However, there appeared to be different priorities for management teams in the special schools and mainstream schools involved. The following highlights both the main assumptions underlying their vision of success and the factors they believe may be inhibiting the inclusion agenda.

Views of management teams in special schools

- Partnership should work for everyone, whatever their impairment, and must be available to all age groups.
- Whatever specialist equipment a pupil accesses in a special school should be available in a Partnership school.
- Success in inclusion depends on achieving outcomes in all areas - including educational outcomes, social outcomes and health outcomes (although some prioritise educational outcomes). Mainstream pupils also benefit socially.
- Special school pupils should be considered part of the mainstream school and operate fully within their peer groups for most, if not all, lessons (rather than as part of a 'unit', where they are seen as 'special').

- There is a lack of continuity in support for children with certain diagnoses (such as Asperger's syndrome and Autism) evidenced by the increasing number of children with such diagnoses admitted to special schools (particularly in years 6, 7 and 8 from mainstream schools). This, as one special school head put it, suggests that 'they may have coped reasonably well in the primary sector but are not able to cope with the environment, large number of pupils or more structural academic approach of the secondary sector'.
- Perverse incentives are created for mainstream schools by the perceived demands of formula funding, and whole school achievement through SAT results.
- There are funding and bureaucratic restrictions to developing a flexible working Partnership. There should be a move away from project-based commitments to become embedded within the core central budget.
- Constant staffing substitutions and difficulties in obtaining supply cover are threatening special school structures and making it difficult to staff new Partnerships.

Views of management teams in mainstream schools

- Partnerships should benefit mainstream pupils as well as those from the special schools.
- Inclusion will benefit pupils from both settings in different ways: for special school pupils, the benefit is primarily social but also potentially educational; for mainstream pupils it is seen as purely social.
- Mainstream pupils will benefit socially (by developing experience of meeting more people with diverse needs). This may raise their awareness of disability issues and improve the self-esteem of some hard-to-teach pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Children from special schools will benefit from developing new social networks, from being in a busier environment, and from working alongside other pupils.
- Educational outcomes for special school pupils are not seen as a necessary criterion for success of a Partnership. As one manager put it, 'as far as pupils from [the special school] are socially included, the scheme could be said to be successful'.
- Developing ways to involve special school pupils in mainstream classes requires a lot of planning, which cannot be done without adequate time and resources. Releasing a teacher for planning may solve some problems but also causes disruption to those classes.
- There is a lack of common knowledge and understanding about the goals of Partnership schemes, making it difficult to achieve and assess what outcome it might have. More information and guidance is needed to break down the various stages of establishing Partnership with a special school.
- Partnerships may generate a need for new management techniques and skills. There is some uncertainty within mainstream schools about decision-making in Partnership. Some schools would like models, based on other people's experiences, offering them different management techniques.
- There is an absence of clear criteria against which children's progress, or the success of the scheme, can be measured (at the moment success is often judged by an absence of major problems, rather than by any particular identifiable achievement).
- The perceived demands on schools to focus on exam results create some tensions with attempts to widen inclusion and participation.

Views of teachers

While our initial discussions with teachers highlighted a shared commitment to inclusion through Partnership, and some shared ideas about potential success criteria, they also

suggested some significant differences and concerns.

All of the teachers we spoke to, in both mainstream and special schools, emphasised the importance of training and covered time (to plan and prepare lessons, to provide feedback and to share experiences). There was also a general concern about the staffing levels required if more special schools pupils were to move to mainstream schools.

All of the teachers we met claimed that school Partnership had a positive effect on their pupils' behaviour. In the case of mainstream pupils, inclusion was said to have had a calming effect on pupils (in particular on children with emotional or behaviour difficulties). It also encouraged them to take a wider view of disability issues. For pupils from special schools, inclusion was said to have a positive effect on behaviour by providing new role modes and new opportunities to integrate socially.

Taken together, the views of teachers suggest a number of key factors for success in inclusion schemes. These include: personal commitment to inclusion, adequate resourcing (financial, physical and staffing), time for joint curriculum planning, additional time for personal planning, shared staff training and support, continuity of provision, and funding security for long term Partnership between staff.

Views of teachers in special schools

- The inclusion agenda should not be impairment specific. It is important to ensure that every pupil is included, whatever his or her impairment. There is a perceived danger that the most able pupils would be transferred to mainstream and those with more complex impairments left behind. However, teachers also suggested that some children do need more attention (e.g. PMLD, Autistic and older children).
- There should be a continuity of inclusive provision across Key Stages, so that Partnership or support does not cease when a child leaves primary school. Special school teachers disagreed with the argument that it would be easier to include younger children on the grounds that they would not need the same extent of differentiation in their work. Effective planning and differentiation must consider individual children's needs, whatever their age.
- For Partnership to be successful, children should be part and parcel of mainstream school life, and inclusion should be considered as a whole school issue (not simply for classes where special school pupils are present).
- Special school teachers emphasised the need to differentiate work, to set clear targets, and to develop systems for recording pupil progress (these issues were not generally offered as a priority by mainstream teachers). There was a general view that inclusion would have educational outcomes as well as social outcomes, provided there was an appropriate school ethos, adequate resources and good planning. The main message from special school teachers was that their pupils should be treated equally, rather than 'the same', within mainstream classes.
- Teachers in special schools have skills that mainstream pupils may benefit from, and there is an argument for Partnership arrangements where mainstream pupils also visit special schools.
- We were told that there was considerable emotive reaction to the initiatives from some teachers - concerned that special schools might be closed and jobs lost. Although we did not encounter such views directly during our research, there was clearly some potential for rapid implementation to undermine the existing positive outlook on inclusion.

Teachers in mainstream schools

- One of the main concerns for mainstream teachers was that some children from special schools could not be accommodated within their classes. For example, while both Partnership and support schemes were seen to work at primary level, many felt that the

same children could not be included at secondary level (because they would find the work hard and/or they might not have the necessary social skills).

- Even within Partnerships at primary level, inclusion was sometimes seen as appropriate only to 'less formal' classes, while inclusion in more formal sessions, and for older groups, was felt to require more careful consideration. Similarly, in the case of support work, some teachers argued that while their provision was suitable for children in Key Stage 1, the curriculum would be too complex at Key Stage 2.
- Inclusion was often thought to have little potential outcome for special school pupils (other than social outcomes). Following this argument, some teachers expressed a rather different vision of inclusion to that articulated by the LEA. Mainstream teachers in particular were more likely to argue for flexibility, on the grounds that some children's needs would be better met wholly or partly within a special school.

Views and experiences of pupils

Observation and interaction with children in both mainstream and special school settings indicated that experience varied in relation to age, level of support, time spent in mainstream, type of lesson participation, and the level of planning. The number of pupils involved in primary Partnership has been small and their involvement has tended to include more social than curriculum activities. Within high school, participation has been more in subjects such as music, drama, textile and food technology rather than the full curriculum. All of the children we spoke to told us that what they value most about going to mainstream schools, is meeting more people and playing with them. A number of points can be highlighted:

- At the moment, children from special school only attend mainstream school for a limited time (sometimes arriving after the class has started and leaving before it is finished). The special school pupils are therefore often seen as making 'visits' rather than being part of the class. The children themselves want more than this. As one 5-year-old put it: *'I want to go there the whole day... I want to go to [the mainstream school] all the time'*.
- In Early Years and Key Stage 1, afternoon sessions offered less formal opportunities for pupils to play together, while morning sessions (where PMLD kids were also involved) involved more formal whole class teaching.
- Despite staff concerns about a potential lack of resources, pupils appeared to have an increased choice of learning resources in the mainstream school. The range of new opportunities for play particularly excited children in primary.
- The children appeared to have more interaction with other pupils in mainstream than they did with each other in the special school. Many special school pupils (in primary) had already established friendships in the mainstream. They knew each other's names and seemed to have no difficulty in playing with each other. There were occasions when a mainstream pupil would ask why a particular child acted in a certain way, but this did not prevent them from playing together. In some cases it was hard to distinguish which children were from which school.
- In the case of the 'more able' pupils, staff felt that they had to intervene much less in the mainstream class than they would have done at their own school. Children from smaller special schools seemed to find that the bigger environment gave them the chance to play more purposefully in separate areas, reducing the need for adult intervention. As one child said, he prefers the mainstream school because *'it is big... [there are] more people there'*.
- For older pupils (and specially for those with PMLD) there were different issues. Unlike the primary children, they were not always in an age appropriate class. This, coupled with the organisation of high school sets, meant that children were less able to identify with a particular peer or class group.

- The level of social interaction varied very widely for secondary school pupils. For example, in an Art class there was no interaction whatsoever (either with the other pupils or with the mainstream teacher) while in a Drama class there was more active co-operation among children and staff, and pupils were more included. Both the structure of lessons and the attitude of classroom teachers had a considerable impact on pupil experience.
- Despite the rationale of social inclusion, high school pupils had very little opportunity to meet with other pupils in school at break times or lunch times. They were kept as a group indoors and took their lunch break separately.
- Pupils who had a sibling in school, or who already knew some pupils through other links, were at an advantage in getting to know people.
- The academic benefits of inclusion were limited, among other things, by the small amount of time spent in the mainstream environment and consequent timetabling difficulties (e.g. a secondary special school pupil attending Design and Technology one day per week misses two thirds of the lessons).

Views of parents of special school pupils

Group discussions and individual interviews with parents of special school pupils suggested a number of shared values, concerns and criteria for success in school inclusion schemes (irrespective of a child's level of impairment). None of the parents we met were opposed to the idea of the new schemes for inclusion. They wanted their children to access the best education possible. Most felt that inclusion would provide new role models and discourage certain unwanted behaviours. We were told that children had already started to benefit from Partnership, both academically and socially. One parent put it: *'Every time [my son] went there, he had something to tell me... they have a lot more going on... he felt one of them... he loves to be among pupils who are normal'*. However, parents also had real concerns. These clustered around the following themes: support, bullying, continuity, accessibility, flexibility, transport, and acceptance.

- Parents wanted to ensure that the mainstream school could offer the same level of security and resources to their children as they might receive from their existing special school.
- Parents stressed that there should be continuity in the inclusion programme. It may not be easy for some children to adapt to new environments, and it would therefore be very difficult if support were suddenly withdrawn at a later date. One parent put it: 'If this is not going to be a long-term plan, don't confuse my child'.
- Parents wanted to be sure that mainstream schools were adapted to provide a safe and accessible environment for their children.
- Parents wanted to make sure that their children would not be bullied in mainstream settings.
- Parents valued the choice to opt out of the scheme if, for any reason, they felt that it was not working for their child (for example, where future patterns of behaviour may be very unpredictable). They wanted to ensure that children would not lose a place in the special school. Some parents were particularly concerned about the possibility of losing their child's statement, thus preventing them from returning to the special school.
- Parents wanted reassurances that the responsibility for transport to and from the mainstream school would always remain with the special school and would not become theirs in the longer term. This was particularly the case where the Partnership did not involve their neighbourhood schools.
- Some parents were concerned that parents of other children in mainstream schools might be hostile towards the inclusion of their children. Therefore, steps should be taken to foster positive acceptance from the community of the mainstream schools.

- Some parents have concerns about their children's health needs and would prefer a school near their home (because they feel they may be called upon more often due to the lack of health provision on site).

Views of support staff

All of the special school classroom assistants agreed that there were positive opportunities for their pupils within mainstream schools, and that the pupils seemed happy and found the experience stimulating in different ways. However, they also raised a number of points, which would need to be considered if Partnership is to succeed.

- One of the major concerns from LSAs was that they should receive more training to adapt lessons for the children they were supporting in class. They felt that they should know more about the topic for the lesson in advance and have time to plan and prepare. As one LSA put it: *'It does help if you have a basic knowledge, because a lot of the lessons you walk into, you are playing off the hook because you don't know what is going to happen'*. This raised some concerns about the current lack of involvement of mainstream classroom teachers with special school pupils in their classes.
- Concern was expressed about the difficulties in finding 'suitable' classes for their pupils. They wanted to keep pupils with their age peers but encountered difficulties when this involved exam years - *'We have to think about others as well as ourselves'*. Although more significant at high school, this was considered as a restriction on increasing the number of days for inclusion.
- There was also concern about perceived resistance from mainstream class teachers about inclusion in sessions that were considered beneficial to special school pupils. Increasing the number of pupils involved would raise the profile of inclusion, and develop relationships within the classroom, but it would also add to timetabling concerns. Resolving these kinds of issues, and increasing inclusion for some pupils, was seen to require more direct intervention from senior management in schools.
- There was some concern about the maintenance of appropriate staffing ratios (said to be one-to-one for a number of children with PMLD or challenging behaviours).
- Support staff would like the opportunity to meet with other staff in the mainstream schools. They felt that this would give them a sense of belonging to that school and help to develop relationships.
- Support staff generally felt that inclusion would work more if transport were arranged to take the pupils directly to the mainstream school at the beginning of the school day (rather than arriving late via the special school). This not only would save time for everyone concerned, but would also allow the children to start the day with their peers.

Views of health professionals

In Leeds this is the first real attempt to include children with complex health needs in mainstream schools. The health professionals involved with these children were positive about inclusion but also concerned that this should not impact negatively on those children's health or health care. This, it was felt, would require significant resources, awareness, planning and preparation. It is worth noting that the health implications were very different for groups of children from the different Partnership schemes (e.g. while Broomfield is currently seeking to include its most able pupils in a well-resourced primary school, Penny Field is seeking to include pupils with a very wide range of impairments in less well resourced schools). Not excluding children with multiple or complex impairments was seen as important, and all of the health professionals agreed that mainstream teachers need a broader education about the health aspects of the inclusion. The current situation creates added strain for special school teaching staff, because they are expected to consider nursing and physiotherapy tasks as well as teaching when they are in the mainstream school.

Health professionals did not wish to judge schemes for inclusion purely on the physical state of the child, and valued educational and social outcomes equally. However, they expressed concern that some children may lose access to essential resources, reducing their level of physical activity. Overall, they were supportive of inclusion so long as pupils receive the same level of service.

- Much was said about the suitability and availability of accessible buildings, specialist equipment, toileting facilities and private space. Equipment is needed not only in specialist areas (such as a hygiene suit) but also in the classroom. Some equipment (like certain standing frames) may be shared between different children but may be required in different places and times as more children are included.
- One of the main concerns was that pilot schemes have begun before the space, equipment and staff were ready (e.g. where children have to remain in their wheelchairs all day because there is no space and trained staff to allow them out). The lack of space in classrooms between tables and the chairs means that sometimes children cannot move around the room and have to stay in the same place for a very long time.
- Specialist staff will be required to take responsibility for pupil health needs. This may range from generic school nursing activities (such as broad based group promotion activities and general nursing support) to more specific professional interventions such as tracheotomy care, suction, oxygen therapy and catheterisations.
- There was some difference of opinion about who should deliver this support. Where staff can be taught nursing tasks there is no need for professional nurses to be present in the mainstream school (although issues of willingness and number of pupils are important factors here).
- There was some concern that other staff may cut corners when moving and handling pupils out of school, putting themselves and children at risk. In addition, the presence of health staff on site gives other staff more confidence. Consequently, there was seen to be a potential need for the employment of more qualified nurses and therapists.
- While there was general support for the inclusion of all children, some therapists were concerned that children with complex medical conditions might not benefit as much from Partnership and might miss out on important aspects of health care available in the special school (such as physical stimulation, massage, posture management programmes, movement sessions, hydrotherapy etc.).
- In addition nurses were concerned about the provision of social support and advice to parents and about the vulnerability of children to abuse. These were concerns that they often addressed in the special school setting and there was concern about who would take on these tasks in mainstream school.

PARTNERSHIP: Key themes and issues

Examining the various stakeholders' views and goals, within the context of local and national policy and research, it is possible to identify a number of key areas where monitoring and evaluation of Partnership schemes may be useful. This section draws out some of the key themes arising from the preceding summary of stakeholder views.

Inclusion

The development and funding of Partnership schemes takes place within the context of a wider policy for the inclusion of disabled children within mainstream schools (both locally and nationally). We found little resistance to this vision during our research. Staff within special schools were particularly keen to emphasise that inclusion should not be seen as impairment specific (e.g. allowing the 'most able' pupils to be transferred while leaving 'more disabled' children behind). In this sense, any judgement on the success of Partnership would in part include the extent to which the arrangements provided opportunities for disabled children with the full range of impairments and needs to participate.

Flexibility

It was clear from talking to key stakeholders (including parents and staff) that successful Partnerships would require considerable flexibility - both organisationally and for individual children. This is perhaps the strength of the Partnership model as conceived within the policy framework. It does not necessarily commit parents and pupils to an 'all or nothing' transfer to a mainstream school where they might be expected to 'sink or swim' with limited resources. The potential flexibility of Partnership should provide some reassurances to parents about their child's ability to 'cope' in mainstream and the perceived risk of losing access to special school resources.

At an individual level, successful Partnerships will require schools to demonstrate that difference is positively valued, seeking to treat pupils equally rather than necessarily the same (e.g. adding flexibility into rules, procedures and curriculum in response to need). The diversity of children's needs and local circumstance means that much will rest on the ability of individual schools to learn and adapt in response to their experience of Partnership. While remaining positive and acknowledging that moving forward is important, everyone we interviewed felt that it might be counter-productive to push through arrangements for Partnership without the necessary groundwork. The following quote is perhaps representative of such concerns:

'My worry is that we have got a move now which says inclusion at all cost, that causes me concern, because we could be forcing it into a hole it is not ready to go into yet'. (Special school teacher)

Continuity

A third general theme in the data suggests that issues of continuity in inclusion should be considered important to the success of Partnership schemes. For children and their parents long-term commitments are important (allowing for the flexibility noted above). Most importantly, there will be organisational issues to address in planning for Partnership and inclusion across Key Stages (and particularly between primary and secondary education).

Currently, there is pressure of referrals to admit children to special schools during this transition phase (years 6, 7 and 8), emphasising this critical period in supporting inclusion. The combination of Partnership with the Support Work model will need to be targeted particularly at this period if the aim of reducing special school placements is to be achieved.

Areas for evaluation and criteria for success

This section identifies the key areas where monitoring and evaluation may contribute to successful organisational learning and change in Partnership schools. Drawing on our analysis of stakeholder views within key areas, we developed a series of value statements. The use of such statements as criteria for success is intended to be both practice-oriented and aspirational.

It is not suggested that any particular Partnership scheme could or should necessarily be shown to be achieving in all of these areas at the present time. However, we believe that there is considerable consensus amongst the key stakeholders that schools should be working towards these goals. We were able to validate this approach by feeding back the statements to research participants and discussing with them how they might be expressed and developed. In the subsequent section of this report we have used these criteria as a starting point for thinking about future evidence based practice.

Whole school organisation, ethos and policies

It was clear from our discussions and observations that the goal of Partnership must be to achieve more for special school pupils than simply opportunities to 'visit' a mainstream school. In terms of both policy outcomes and the views of most people concerned, this could in no way be considered as success. As one special school teacher put it:

'We do not want some local school operating a 'unit', which plays lip service to inclusion where our pupils are seen as 'special' and different. Whatever structures we develop are based on the premise that true inclusion means our pupils should operate fully within their peer groups for most, if not all, lessons.'

For the Partnership model to succeed, there must be evidence of whole school development and policy change towards the inclusion and participation of the children concerned. There should be evidence of inclusive policies at all levels. Pupils should be considered as members of the whole school and of the classes they take part in. The development of successful Partnerships should, wherever possible, ensure that over time special school pupils become part and parcel of every aspect of mainstream school life. The assumption of those most closely involved with the schemes is that pupils from special schools should spend as much of the school day as possible with mainstream pupils (including lunch times and break times). On the outcome side, successful Partnerships benefit individual children but should also have positive whole school impacts.

For Partnership to be successful, it must be considered as a joint venture between schools and have the commitment of all those concerned (with governors and senior managers taking a lead). Such a relationship will require development over time, as both schools need to move closer to a shared vision and working ethos. Partnership will require a shared commitment and awareness amongst staff at all levels (particularly within the mainstream school). It will be important to communicate effectively the aims and rationale for the arrangement and to tackle doubts and reservations with positive strategies for change. Senior management teams in both schools play a very important role in pushing the inclusion agenda forward.

There is general agreement that successful Partnerships will depend upon long-term commitments (between institutions and also commitments to children). Schools, pupils and parents may all need some reassurance about this in order to dispel concerns that successful Partnerships will fail in the future due to a change of political will or a withdrawal of resources.

'You get pressured to do short-term fixes, because you have got to be seen to be doing it... My worry is that we set the world rolling and that there is not the funding or the will to keep it going beyond two years. And where are those

children then?'

'There is a need to move away from a project-based commitment to becoming embedded as part of the central budget for the school'.

There is increasing evidence that the inclusion agenda can drive forward whole school improvement. In schools developing inclusive education, teachers are challenged by the presence of pupils who experience difficulties with existing curricular and organisational arrangements. This encourages reflective and innovative classroom practice, contributing to whole school improvement (e.g. Ainscow et al., 1994, *Creating the Conditions for School Improvement*, London: Fulton). Treated as a whole school issue, Partnerships offer opportunities to demonstrate this.

For Partnership to be successful long-term planning should aim to increase the number of special school pupils involved and the length of time they spend in mainstream schools. This will raise profile and carry forward the inclusion agenda in classrooms.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Partnership agreements should be consolidated through whole school organisation, management and planning.
2. The working Partnership should be considered as a commitment for the long term, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate organisational learning and change.
3. The positive valuing of difference should be actively promoted and shared by all those involved in school (including senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils, and governors).
4. School policies should promote inclusion.
5. Partnerships for inclusive education should contribute to whole school improvement (in attempting to better understand the interaction between diverse pupil needs and teaching, teachers will reflect upon and analyse their classroom practice).

Resources

It was clear from our discussions and observations that successful Partnerships will require considerable funding and resources (both in establishing a basis for inclusion and in maintaining subsequent involvement). There are resource implications for buildings, infrastructure, equipment, transport, staffing and curriculum resources. Partnership is certainly not a 'cheap option', although it may prove relatively cost effective in some situations (i.e. where supporting children in mainstream schools replaces provision in a special school).

Resources for access will need to include both teaching and non-teaching areas (such as canteen, play areas, etc.). Funding to maintain adequate staffing will include both teaching and support staff, plus training and development time. Certain equipment is essential for some children to access the curriculum (e.g. wheelchair accessible classroom tables, standing frames, Braille or large print production, etc.). While some equipment may be shared, there will be a greater strain as more children are included (particularly in high schools where similar equipment may be required in different rooms). Some key stakeholders suggested that there is a need for space, equipment and staff to be in place before pupils come on site - rather than 'playing catch up', and waiting until they become a 'problem' in school. Health professionals in particular, seem concerned about pupils suffering as the result of inadequate resources.

It may be useful for some special school pupils to have a 'base room' (for dignified rest and eating or to access some parts of their curriculum). Such a room may need to be specifically equipped to meet the needs of some children (e.g. electric hoist and tracking). The absence of an appropriate and accessible hygiene suite is currently preventing some pupils from being included in the Partnership schemes. The base room model is favoured within existing Partnership schemes, although currently dependent upon goodwill in the use of existing mainstream facilities (such as an SEN workshop). There is always a danger that dedicated

spaces may be used to keep children unnecessarily segregated from their mainstream peers, and their use should be carefully monitored. It may be appropriate for mainstream pupils access and to consider how such additional resource might benefit the school more generally. An accessible hygiene suite not only would respect children's dignity, it would also make the staff feel more supported.

Transport is a key resource issue. One of the main factors that would help special school children to be regarded as part of the mainstream school, is for them to take part in the whole school day. This would require transport directly to and from the mainstream school. At the moment, the pupils are taken to the special school first and then to the mainstream school. They therefore arrive late, when classes have already begun, and leave early. This does not seem to be in the interests of either special school or mainstream school pupils.

Under current circumstances, Partnership can be very staff intensive, including teachers, support staff and health professionals required at both sites. At the moment, some children cannot be included, and some parents have not been offered participation, because of inadequate staffing resources (particularly nursing cover). There were widely ranging views about the appropriate staffing levels required for different pupils. For example, where a co-ordinator felt that sending one teacher and one nursery nurse with five pupils was adequate, some of the teachers concerned considered this inadequate.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Successful Partnership arrangements should ensure that the mainstream school environment is accessible to disabled pupils (it should be both safe and suitable).
2. Where Partnership agreements generate a need for additional space, equipment and/or staffing, this should be considered at an early stage.
3. Partnership schemes will often involve the provision of an accessible 'base room' for use by special school staff and students within the mainstream school (although there is also a danger that inappropriate use may reinforce segregation within school).
4. It may also be necessary to provide an accessible hygiene suite for use by some pupils.
5. Some pupils may require the provision of specific equipment, furniture or classroom adaptation in order to access the curriculum.
6. Partnership arrangements should ensure that special school pupils have access to adequate and appropriate transport.
7. Successful Partnerships require adequate and suitably skilled staff (including teachers, health professionals, and support staff).

Curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation

Our discussions with stakeholders highlight the importance of curriculum planning and monitoring for successful Partnerships. There was also some concern that inclusion in particular lessons is easily blocked by individual mainstream class teachers unwillingness or inability to engage effectively with special school pupils in their classes. There was a strong feeling from staff that there should be collaborative planning between special school and mainstream staff, to develop ways of involving pupils from special schools in whole class activities.

This should include both longer-term curriculum development and short-term lesson planning (and might involve drawing up IEPs, target setting, differentiating work, etc.). It might also include planning for concerns about health and safety (e.g. how to involve some pupils in subjects like technology). In order to achieve this, teachers and support staff felt that they needed released time on a regular basis to plan collaboratively (e.g. it was suggested that this might involve about half an hour every fortnight).

Opportunities for shared evaluation and feedback were also seen as important (particularly by classroom based staff). Currently, inclusion co-ordinators and SENCOs do meet but other special school staff get few if any opportunities to talk to the mainstream teachers (or even to

use the mainstream staff room, because they spend all of their time on site with the pupils). Such opportunities would also help special school staff to be seen as part of the mainstream school rather than just 'visitors'. It would also allow both staff groups more opportunities to share and resolve their mutual anxieties about Partnership.

Work will be required in schools to identify, and if necessary modify, existing procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils progress and achievement (both for individuals and cohorts). It will be helpful if there is some convergence in the systems used by the two schools in order to maximise opportunities for joint planning and working between staff and to enhance the coherency of pupil progress.

Joint staff training and development would provide opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and skills between staff and promote whole school responsibility for the education of pupils with complex needs. One of the major concerns of support staff is that they do not feel trained to adapt mainstream lessons, while often being expected to do this without preparation. For example, classroom observations indicated that special school staff could find themselves in lessons without any prior knowledge of the content or objectives. As the involvement of special school pupils increases, so the need for training and joint planning will also increase.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Collaborative planning between special school and mainstream staff should ensure that learning experiences are appropriate and valuable for all children.
2. Organisational, professional and pupil learning will be enhanced when staff have opportunities for shared evaluation and feedback on joint working experiences.
3. A shared programme of professional development for teachers, support staff and governors will assist in skills sharing and the reduction of concerns about implementation of the Partnership.
4. Successful Partnerships will want to plan for the longer-term inclusion of special school pupils in mainstream schools.
5. Successful Partnership arrangements will require new systems of monitoring and evaluation, to raise pupil achievement and social inclusion.

Classroom organisation, management and teaching

Inclusive policies promoted at whole school level should be reflected in classroom practice. This does not happen consistently at the moment. There will be a need to develop classroom activities that promote pupil achievement for all, and that encourage participation. There will be a need to develop new and more effective classroom relationships between mainstream and special school staff, and between teachers and support staff. More generally, successful Partnership working should lead to the development of varied, innovative and flexible teaching strategies in the classroom.

In an ideal world, teaching strategies should reflect the experiences of all pupils, and optimise their participation. There is some evidence that small group based approaches have value in engaging a wider range of pupils, and that peer support can be an effective learning strategy for all concerned (although this may require some preparation of pupils for these roles). More varied and flexible pupil groupings within class would promote greater social inclusion than is sometimes the case at present.

The effective management of classroom support staff is a key factor, becoming more complex when accountability and responsibilities are unclear. Involving staff and pupils from two schools in the same classroom can lead to initial misunderstandings and inappropriate division of labour if this is not carefully thought through. Seeing special school staff as a whole class resource, while identifying clear roles, may a productive strategy in this respect.

Another potential strategy is the promotion of team teaching, although some staff do not yet feel sufficiently confident about their training for this. Generally, the staff we met were positive about working with other adults in the classroom but acknowledged that this may be

challenging for some colleagues.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Effective Partnerships should promote both individual pupil achievement and the involvement of all pupils in whole class learning.
2. Both special school and mainstream staff should be regarded as a resource for the whole class, while drawing on their respective strengths to promote pupil achievement.
3. Successful Partnerships will require teachers to set clear examples of valuing difference within the classroom.
4. Successful Partnerships will require innovations in the variety of teaching and learning styles used within the mainstream school, in order to maximise pupil participation and learning.

Pupil experience

Pupil experience must be a central concern in evaluating Partnership initiatives. Changing schools, making relationships and learning new routines can be a stressful experience for pupils, although often rewarding. Successful Partnerships should be able to demonstrate how special school pupils benefit socially as well as academically from the scheme. Where possible, pupils should take part in registration, break time activities, lunchtime arrangements, assemblies, extra-curricular activities and school visits.

There should be greater opportunities to interact with a wider range of their peers, and to participate in the normal pattern of mainstream school life, while allowing for flexibility in response to individual needs. This is not currently a prominent feature of existing Partnership schemes. There are relatively few opportunities for special school pupils to interact with their peers and there are frequently logistical or administrative barriers to their participation in school life. Some students are currently more socially isolated during their visits to mainstream than they are at their special school.

Although some parents are concerned about the potential for bullying at mainstream school, most felt that the positive effect of more varied and positive behavioural role models outweighed this. Similarly, while there was some concern about the lack of necessary specialist equipment, special school staff were also enthusiastic about the wider range of activity and provision in larger mainstream schools. Partnership arrangements offered the possibility for special school pupils to benefit academically from a broader curriculum and be educated with their peers. However, this

Successful Partnerships will help special school pupils to feel an increasing sense of security, confidence and belonging within the mainstream school community. Our research raised some significant concerns about how far this was happening in practice (especially for older children). There was a feeling within mainstream schools that Partnership was having a positive influence on their pupils, helping to develop greater tolerance of diversity and disability, and with specific positive behavioural outcomes for some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Successful Partnerships will allow special school pupils to participate in the normal pattern of the school day, including extra-curricular activities, while allowing for flexibility in response to individual need.
2. Special school pupils should experience an increasing sense of safety, confidence and belonging within the mainstream school environment.
3. Successful Partnership arrangements will allow special school pupils to be educated with their mainstream peers wherever possible.

Home-school relationships and communication

Our research suggests that successful Partnerships will need to engage parents and provide them with information (particularly parents of special school pupils). It is essential that parents are involved from the beginning of moves towards Partnership, and that their concerns are addressed at each stage of the process. As indicated earlier, there may be specific concerns about child safety, duty of care, resources and so on.

With only one exception, we found that parents wanted to be involved and were interested to know more about the implications of Partnership for their child.

There are a number of specific communication and home-school issues that need to be addressed. For example, there needs to be increased clarity over arrangements for pupil progress reports and parental consultation evenings at school (but which school?), also the content of home-school agreements, Governors' report to parents, parent Governor roles between schools, etc. Resolving these procedural and practice issues at an early stage may go some way to avoiding difficulty and confusion in the longer term.

Parents' confidence increased over time, and as reassurance emerged about the potential permanency of placements. Good home-school communications, including parental consultation meetings and visits to the mainstream school, had a significant effect in allaying concerns and bringing parents on board with the projects.

Potential criteria for success:

1. Successful Partnerships will be able to demonstrate parental involvement in the inclusion of special school pupils at mainstream schools.
2. Trust and confidence will be increased when parents and carers are informed about the inclusion of their child.
3. Parents of special school pupils should feel increasingly confident, welcome and included within the mainstream school

The following section of this report examines each of these statements, with reference to the kind of evidence that might be useful in determining progress towards inclusion through Partnership.

Towards evidence based practice in Partnership work

Working with staff in schools, we were able to explore each of the broad criteria for success in Partnership and to identify the kinds of evidence that might be available for monitoring and evaluation. The following sections deal with each of the key areas and criteria in turn. Under each heading, we have included question prompts for self-review in schools, together with examples of evidence collection. These lists are indicative rather than definitive.

A. Whole school organisation, ethos and policies

A.1. Partnership agreements should be consolidated through whole school organisation, management and planning.

Our research suggests that this will be a pre-requisite for successful Partnership where the aim is to progress beyond 'visiting' to a more integrated co-relationship. This will be particularly important as the Partnership model develops and as increasing special school resources, staff and pupils are relocated to mainstream sites.

Questions for self-review

- *What steps have the Governing Bodies of the Partnership schools taken to consolidate their relationship?*
- *What arrangements are there for joint planning, involving senior management from the Partnership schools?*
- *How has the Partnership model been incorporated into whole school improvement and school development planning?*
- *What arrangements are there for joint staff meetings/development?*
- *Does the (formal) Partnership agreement identify the roles and responsibilities of all concerned?*
- *What are the procedures for managing disputes or difficulties that may arise during the period of the agreement?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Standards Fund application
- Partnership Agreement
- Governor minutes and annual report to parents
- Whole school policies
- School Development Plan and School Action Planning

Examples of good practice

- A Partnership policy
- Joint planning meetings and agenda writing from SMT
- Joint Governor committee meetings (e.g. curriculum group)

- A shared governor role between the two schools
- Joint Development Planning
- School development planning costed and linked to key issues in both schools

A.2. The working Partnership is considered as a commitment for the long term, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate organisational learning and change.

Questions for self-review

- *What is the current term of funding for Partnership and how secure is this in the longer-term.*
- *How is flexibility built into the working Partnership arrangement (for example, in relation to changing roles and responsibilities)?*
- *How will each organisation monitor and learn from the Partnership experiences?*
- *What opportunities are there for organisational review and organisational change (for example, in planning and review cycles)?*
- *Are pupil places within the special school secured (so that children may opt out of the Partnership arrangement if necessary in the future)?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Governor minutes
- Partnership agreement
- SDP
- Curriculum Review Plan
- Subject leaders' Action Plans
- Investment in training staff

Examples of good practice

- Joint planning meetings
- Joint Development Planning agreement negotiated by both schools
- Partnership agreement refers to changing cohorts and individuals
- An Action Plan setting short, medium and long-term targets and on going review

A.3. The positive valuing of difference is actively promoted and shared by all those involved in school (including senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils, and governors.

Questions for self-review

- *How does the ethos of the school value and celebrate the differences of all pupils?*
- *How do the school's aims, rules and prospectus promote the positive valuing of difference?*

- *Do staff understand disability as being created when people with impairments encounter negative attitudes and institutional barriers?*
- *How is this understanding and ethos communicated to parents and pupils*

Potential sources of information

- Prospectus
- School rules
- Whole school policy, equal opportunities
- Teacher planning, SDP, curriculum policies
- Agenda items on SMT meetings
- Letters to parents, newsletter

Examples of good practice

- Classroom staff taking responsibility for implementing equal opportunities and celebrating differences.
- Displays in school valuing different styles of communication, photos of pupils working inclusively in entrance, displays of pupil work include special school pupils.
- Reward certificates and schemes include special school pupils.

A.4. School policies promote inclusion.

Questions for self-review

- *Do school policies and working practices reflect an inclusive philosophy?*
- *Are inclusion policies known and clear to all concerned?*
- *Which school policies make reference to disability issues (for example, not only policies for SEN but also policies for equal opportunities, playground management, bullying, child protection, etc.)?*
- *Do these commitments and statements of intent for inclusion extend to all children, irrespective of their impairment?*
- *Are there implications for policies on gender and race/ethnicity equality issues?*
- *Which school policies need to be reviewed or amended to reflect new roles and responsibilities?*
- *How have school policies changed in the light of the Partnership agreement?*
- *What opportunities are there for such changes to be monitored and evaluated?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Shared review reports.
- OFSTED reports.
- Number of exclusions/unauthorised absences.

Examples of good practice

- Policies state percentage of time each pupil will be with their peers (social inclusion and curriculum inclusion).
- Frequency of use monitoring (e.g. base room, subjects being taught).
- All school policies, including those for outings, residential, swimming lessons, etc. mention diverse needs and how to include special school pupils.

A.5. Implementation of the Partnership contributes to whole school improvement (in attempting to better understand the interaction between diverse pupil needs and teaching, teachers reflect upon and analyse their classroom practice).

Questions for self-review

- *Is the presence of special school pupils seen as an opportunity to reflect on curricula and teaching approaches for all pupils?*
- *Is the removal of the barriers to learning and participation for special school pupils seen as an opportunity to improve the classroom experience of all pupils?*
- *How are experiences and perceptions of difficulties with behaviour related to strategies for improving classroom and playground experiences?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Shared review
- Improvements in exclusions, behaviour, bullying, gender issues, racial tensions etc.
- Records of pupil achievement (e.g. SATs, NC and 'P' scales data)
- IEPs/individual targets/tracking
- Lesson observations and monitoring
- Work sampling
- Staff training records

Examples of good practice

- IEPs for all pupils.
- SEN policies
- Use of database in behaviour monitoring.

B. Resources

Resource implications for Partnership will vary according to circumstance, the existing resources in mainstream schools and the needs of particular groups of children. Research suggests that resource planning should be carried out at an early stage within a longer-term strategy. Resource and space implications may place physical limits on the numbers and groups of special school pupils who may be included.

B.1. Partnership arrangements ensure that the mainstream school environment is accessible to disabled pupils (it should be both safe and suitable).

Questions for self-review

- *Is the school fully accessible to all pupils?*
- *Does the school provide a safe environment for pupils who have not previously been included? (e.g. Have these concerns been included in health and safety audits?)*
- *Does this concern extend to all aspects of the school building (including classrooms, corridors, toilets, garden, playground, sports facilities, canteen, displays, etc.)?*
- *What commitment is there to improving disability access within the mainstream school (e.g. Prospectus, Governors' Report to Parents, etc.)?*
- *Is disabled access part of the building improvement plan?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Governors' minutes
- SDP
- Action Plan
- Health and Safety Policy

Examples of good practice

- Investment identified and delivered in the planning stages of Partnership (e.g. access funding).
- Building Division involved in planning.
- Prior risk assessment with input from special school staff, physiotherapy, etc..

B.2. Where Partnership agreements generate a need for additional space, equipment and/or staffing, this is considered at an early stage.

Questions for self-review

- *How are decisions made about the kind of additional resources required to support pupils not previously included?*

- *How is the preparation and provision of these additional resources incorporated into the School Development Plan?*
- *How will improvements to school accessibility be funded, and to which school will these resources 'belong'?*
- *What arrangements are there to monitor and review the use of, and changing need for, resources used by special school pupils within the mainstream school?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Partnership agreement
- SEN policy

Examples of good practice

- LEA officers included in early stages of Partnership (e.g. financing resources).
- Long-term planning identifies resource implications in both School Development Plans.

B.3. The provision and use of any dedicated 'base room' (also 'hygiene suite' etc.) is appropriate to the needs of special school staff and students within the mainstream school.

Questions for self-review

- *What are the arguments for and against the provision of a dedicated base room in school?*
- *Is there adequate space within school, equipped to meet the needs of those children who need to use it (e.g. hoist)?*
- *What proportion of their school time, do special school pupils spend in this room, and what proportion is lesson time?*
- *For what proportion of time is the base room used as a learning resource for the whole school?*
- *Can mainstream pupils access the base room, and under what arrangements?*
- *Is there an accessible hygiene suite in the school and what are the arrangements for access to it?*
- *How well do these arrangements assure the dignity, privacy, safety and welfare of children?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Development planning
- Partnership agreement
- Medium and short-term plans for classes
- School, teacher and pupil timetables.
- Pupil feedback.

Examples of good practice

- Written agreement on frequency of the use of base room and area(s) of curriculum to be delivered there.
- Signing in and out logs for dedicated resource areas, reviewed termly.

B.4. There is sufficient specialist equipment, furniture or classroom adaptation to enable special school pupils to access the curriculum.

Questions for self-review

- *Do special school pupils have the necessary equipments to enable them to access the curriculum within the mainstream school?*
- *How is the need for equipment to support individual students assessed (e.g. standing frames, wheelchair accessible classroom tables, Braille or large print materials, etc.)?*
- *Is such equipment available only in a designated 'base room' or can it be used in mainstream classrooms?*
- *How many pupils are prevented from inclusion in mainstream classes due to a shortage of equipment or physical access? How often does this happen?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Statement and the costing
- Partnership agreement
- SEN inventory for equipment
- IEPs

Examples of good practice

- Involvement of health professionals in initial planning for Partnership.
- Itemisation of equipment in IEPs/Individual Inclusion Plans.

B.5. Special school pupils have access to adequate and appropriate transport.

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Questions for self review

- *Who is responsible for arranging and funding transport for special school pupils to and from the mainstream school?*
- *Does the existing transport enable pupils to take part in the whole school day where appropriate? Can transport home from after-school activities be accommodated within this arrangement?*
- *Is there a commitment to fund transport in the long term for pupils who continue in the mainstream school?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Partnership policy

- Participation in extra curriculum activities

Examples of good practice

- Greater collaboration between schools and LEA

B.6. Adequate numbers of suitably skilled staff are available to support inclusion (including teachers, health professionals, and support staff).

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Questions for self review

- *Are an adequate number of skilled teachers and/or support staff present in classes involving special school pupils?*
- *Are an adequate number of qualified health professionals present in the school to support the needs of children with health needs? Is there liaison with the relevant Health Authority for the flexible deployment of human and physical resources?*
- *Are special school pupils prevented from attending mainstream classes because of a lack of staffing? How often does this happen?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Staff qualification and training records
- Job descriptions
- Partnership agreement
- IEPs

Examples of good practice

- Input of health professionals in planning, curriculum and PE
- Introduction of guidelines on staffing ratios and skills required, linked to IEPs.

C. Curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation

C.1. Collaborative planning between special school and mainstream staff ensures that learning experiences are appropriate and valuable for all children.

Questions for self review

- *Are staff from the mainstream involved in joint curriculum planning? Does this include planning for longer-term curriculum development as well as short-term lesson planning and work differentiation?*
- *Is there sufficient funding and supply cover for joint staff meetings? How often do these happen and who is involved?*
- *What proportion of funded time in the Partnership agreement is allocated for planning? How is this time spent? (e.g. drawing up IEPs, target setting, lesson planning, differentiation of objectives and work, etc.).*
- *How are classroom support staff involved in planning for the pupils they work with?(e.g. short-term target setting, IEPs, etc.)*
- *Are special school pupils denied access to mainstream classes due to a lack of time for planning? How often does this happen?*
- *What evidence is there of high expectations and challenging (but appropriate) target setting for special school pupils within the mainstream school?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Joint Development Planning
- Teacher planning records
- IEPs and monitoring records
- OFSTED reports
- School review

Examples of good practice

- Time allocated for curriculum planning in Partnership agreement and Individual Partnership Plans for each pupil.
- Supply cover and timetabled release for staff
- Collaborative goals incorporated in Performance Management targets.

C.2. Opportunities for shared evaluation and feedback on joint working experiences lead to enhanced organisational, professional and pupil learning.

Questions for self review

- *What opportunities are there for evaluation and feedback between mainstream and special school teachers on their shared experiences of teaching, learning and pupil behaviour?*

- *How much formal time is allocated for this purpose, and what informal opportunities exist (ideally, in close proximity to the session concerned)?*
- *What opportunities are there for team teaching between mainstream and special school staff, and how successful have they been?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Joint Development Planning, minutes of meetings
- Training agendas
- School timetable

Examples of good practice

- ◆ Good evaluation and record keeping.
- ◆ Established systems of communications between staff at both schools and senior management.
- ◆ Timetabled release for daily planning by staff
- ◆ Assessment notes on planning sheets.

C.3. Skills sharing is supported by a shared programme of professional development for teachers, support staff and governors, leading to a reduction of concerns about implementation of the Partnership.

- *What arrangements are there for joint staff development activities? How often do these occur? (e.g. Baker days, performance management targets, training Governor involvement, etc.)*
- *What opportunities are there for shared informal staff development and skills sharing?*
- *Do staff development activities support teaching and non-teaching staff in working effectively together in the classroom?*
- *Do mainstream staff need to acquire specific communication skills (e.g. Makaton, facilitating communication, objects of reference, etc.)? What resources are available from special school staff for training?*

Potential sources of evidence

- SDP
- Staff development records
- Partnership Action Plan.

Examples of good practice

- Joint Staff Meetings and training sessions
- Provision of appropriate courses and sharing of existing good practice by the LEA.
- Action planning identifies professional development needs in relation to Partnership.

C.4. Successful Partnerships will want to plan for the longer-term inclusion of special school pupils in mainstream schools.

Questions for self review

- *What evidence is there of long term planning for Partnership and sustained inclusion of special school pupils? (e.g School Development Plan, see also A.2.)*
- *Do long-term goals and planning reflect a commitment to increase the number of special school pupils attending the mainstream school? What evidence is there that this is happening? (If not, what obstacles have been identified?)*
- *What plans are there to ensure continuity of inclusion for special school pupils moving between mainstream Key Stages (particularly those moving from primary to secondary schools)?*

Potential sources of evidence

- SDP
- Performance Management Targets
- Planning meetings
- Action Plan
- IEPs

Examples of good practice

- The long-term outcomes of Partnership Schools should be written in the agreement
- Medium and long term goals for projected numbers of pupils involved.
- By partnership agreements, schools will maintain and increase their close relationship.

C.5. Systems of monitoring and evaluation develop in response to Partnership and contribute to raising pupil achievement and social inclusion.

Questions for self-review

- *How is monitoring and evaluation for special school pupils linked to systems in place within the mainstream school?*
- *What evidence is there that pupil achievement is valued in relation to individual potential, rather than the achievement of others in the cohort?*
- *Do mainstream staff have sufficient knowledge and skills to record and evaluate success in pupil achievement outside the normal range of their mainstream year groups? How will they acquire these skills?*
- *What criteria are in place to judge both pupil progress and the overall success of the Partnership arrangement? How will success be measured?*
- *Are staff and pupils from both schools involved in monitoring and evaluating the success of the Partnership? What additional resources are allocated to make sure that this*

happens?

Potential sources of evidence

- Individual and cohort targets
- Tracking information

Examples of good practice

- External guidance and support for Joint Development Planning, such as Standards Officer.
- Systems of School Self Evaluation (SSE) adapted in response to needs of Partnership agreement.
- Use of observation sheets for inclusion

D. Classroom organisation, management and teaching

D.1. Partnership promotes individual pupil achievement and the involvement of all pupils in whole class learning.

Questions for self review

- *What evidence is there of high expectations for achievement for all pupils, including those from special school?*
- *Are there shared lesson objectives for pupils from both schools within the same lesson, and how are these differentiated?*
- *What evidence is there that special school pupils are taught as members of the class, rather than as an isolated 'group'? (e.g. How are pupil groupings organised to include special school pupils while promoting individual differentiation and achievement for everyone? How flexible are pupil groupings in class?)*
- *What evidence is there that special school pupils are involved in whole class teaching when this has been planned as part of the lesson?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Joint Development Planning
- Joint Curriculum Planning
- Pupil records
- Work sampling
- Progress through IEPs, tracking/target setting
- Observation
- School review

Examples of good practice

- Rationale for inclusion or withdrawal for each lesson/subject included in IEP.
- Individual target setting for increased inclusion

D.2. Both special school and mainstream staff are regarded as a resource for the whole class, drawing on their respective strengths to promote pupil achievement.

Questions for self review

- *How often do special school and mainstream teachers use team teaching in class? How*

successful has this been?

- *Do staff working in partnership share responsibility for ensuring that all pupils participate?*
- *How much interaction is there between special school pupils and mainstream staff during lesson time, and between mainstream pupils and special school staff?*
- *How do mainstream pupils benefit from the skills and contribution of classroom staff from the special school?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Planning and class record keeping.
- Planning and assessment files.
- IEPs

Examples of good practice

- Whole class team teaching involving staff from both schools
- Effective liaison between SENCO and other staff.
- Special school staff involved in planning for mainstream pupils with statements

D.3. Teachers set clear examples of valuing difference within the classroom.

Questions for self review

- How does classroom practice reflect the positive ethos of inclusion for special school pupils?(see A.3.)
- Do mainstream and special school staff work positively and collaboratively to promote positive role models, and challenge disabling behaviour, in class?
- What evidence is there that lesson and curriculum content reflect the experiences of all pupils within the class?
- What strategies have been particularly successful? (e.g. How are issues of disability and impairment discussed in class or included as part of the curriculum?)

Potential sources of evidence

- SDP and JDP
- Observation of staff/pupil interactions.
- Monitoring, OFSTED
- Reward systems.

Examples of good practice

- Pupil work displayed in classrooms
- Curriculum planning for each pupil using Individual Partnership Plans.

D.4. The implementation of Partnership leads to innovations in the variety of teaching and learning styles used within the mainstream school, maximising pupil participation

and learning.

Questions for self review

- *What evidence is there of shared learning between staff from the two schools in the implementation of teaching and classroom management strategies.*
- *How has Partnership influenced teachers in accommodating and responding to different learning styles?*
- *Do teachers look for alternatives to individual support in the classroom, for example, through the planning shared use of resources and group teaching?*
- *Which lessons/subjects have raised the biggest challenges to providing alternative access (e.g. using science or PE equipment)*
- *What new strategies have been most productive in support the learning and participation of all pupils?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Staff development records
- JDP
- Medium and short-term planning
- observation of teaching

Examples of good practice

- Funding for staff training, to work in one another's schools and to team-teach.
- Involvement of staff from one school in the provision of training at the Partner school.
- Conscious learning about shared knowledge from other authorities and available training packages (e.g. Newham).

E. Pupil Experience

The pupil experience must always be a key factor in gauging the success of inclusion initiatives. Partnership raises some issues of identity and belonging for students who are part of two schools in the initial stages and it will be important to address these issues directly. The views and preferences of pupils should be sought routinely.

E.1. Successful Partnerships will allow special school pupils to participate in the normal pattern of the school day, including extra-curricular activities, while allowing for flexibility in response to individual need.

Questions for self review

- *Are special school pupils included in morning/afternoon registration? (e.g. Do school transport arrangements permit them to arrive and leave at the same time as their peers)?*
- *What existing activities, during the school day, provide opportunities to promote positive social interactions between mainstream and special school pupils? (e.g. break time activities, school meal arrangements, lunchtime clubs, assemblies, movement between lessons, etc.)*
- *How are staff trained to promote social interactions between mainstream and special school pupils (including lunchtime and playground staff)?*
- *What arrangements are made to ensure that special school pupils can attend lunchtime or after-school activities in the mainstream school? (e.g. staff support, parental permission, health and safety, transport arrangements, etc.)*

Potential sources of evidence

- School policy documents
- Membership of extra curricula clubs
- School/class timetable
- Newsletter

Examples of good practice

- Transport (or driver/escort) available for out of school activities.
- Extra curricular activities included in Individual Partnership Plans

E.2. Special school pupils should experience an increasing sense of safety, confidence and belonging within the mainstream school environment.

Questions for self review

- *What evidence is there that pupils from the special school are considered as more than 'visitors', or part of a 'unit' within the school?*

- *What evidence is there that special school pupils feel ownership of their mainstream classrooms (particularly in primary schools)? (e.g. increased confidence in using the space, knowing where to sit, participation in classroom responsibilities such as tidying up, etc.)*
- *How are special school pupils included in the celebration of success and achievement within the mainstream school? (e.g. sharing work assemblies, displays of pupil work and public records of achievement, Governors' Report to Parents)*
- *What evidence has been collected from pupils to support these observations? How has this been done? Has it been successful?*
- *How is dignity protected for children who require invasive healthcare or feeding procedures, or help with personal hygiene and toileting? (e.g. access to safe, appropriate and private spaces for withdrawal, other than for curricular activities)*
- *Are there different arrangements for dealing with allegations of bullying by, and of, mainstream and special school pupils within school? Do special school pupils know whom to turn to if they experience bullying in the mainstream school?*

Potential sources of evidence

- School Development Plan
- Partnership Agreement
- School handbook
- Pupil feedback
- Observation

Examples of good practice

- Planned increase in the time spent in Partnership School.
- Sports days include activities in which everyone can take part
- Named classroom coat pegs include special school pupils

E.3. Special school pupils are educated with their mainstream peers wherever possible/appropriate.

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Questions for self review

- *Which age/Year group(s) are involved in the Partnership arrangement? Does this include children in the mainstream school entry year (e.g. Reception or Year 7)? If not, what is the rationale for not including this cohort?*
- *What proportion of timetable time do special school pupils spend in class with their mainstream year group? What reasons are given for withdrawal from mainstream classes?*
- *What evidence is there of attempts to minimise the withdrawal of special school pupils from mainstream lessons? Is withdrawal, rather than inclusion, viewed as the exception?*
- *How are pupils involved in decisions to attend or withdraw from particular classes or curriculum subjects?*
- *Is there an attempt to minimise the organisation of teaching groups according to labels of*

impairment? What rationales, if any, are used to determine the number of special school pupils included in each class?

- *What opportunities exist for collaborative and helping relationships between mainstream and special school pupils? How successful have such initiatives been?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Class records
- Long, medium and short-term planning,
- Timetable
- IEPs
- Annual Reviews
- Observation

Examples of good practice

- Individual Inclusion Plans include goals for increased percentage of inclusion time
- Use of peer tutoring, co-operative group work, or buddying schemes between mainstream and special school pupils
- Movement of funding from annual bids to LEA main budget for schools.

F. Home-school relationships and communication

Our research suggests that there will be a number of parental concerns about the suitability and appropriateness of Partnership inclusion. However, we also found that parents were very positive about the principle of inclusion. It will be important for schools to engage parents at an early stage in thinking about Partnership, to keep them informed and to encourage their participation in the school community.

F.1. There is evidence of parental involvement from both schools in the inclusion of special school pupils.

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Questions for self review

- *How were parents involved in establishing and planning the Partnership? What evidence has been collected of parent views?*
- *How are the aims and reasons for the Partnership explained to parents of special school and mainstream pupils? (e.g. the reasons for including particular pupils, expected outcomes and benefits, practicalities, methods of assessment, etc.)*
- *How are parental concerns and aspirations identified? (e.g. fear of bullying, security of long term funding for transport, options to return to special school, etc.)*
- *Are parents of special school pupils invited to visit the mainstream school before their child attends? How many have done so?*
- *Are there opportunities for joint parents' meetings, both at the initial consultation stage and during the implementation of Partnership (e.g. Annual Parents Meetings, PTA meetings, etc.)? How often have these happened?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Annual reviews
- IEPs
- Monitoring records

Examples of good practice

- Parents from both schools invited to pre-partnership discussion meeting
- Parents of special school pupils invited to consultation evenings and school concerts etc. in the mainstream school
- Annual review meetings held at the mainstream school
- Development of joint PTA activities (e.g. fundraising or social events)

F.2. Parents and carers are well informed about the inclusion of their child, building trust and confidence in the Partnership.

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Questions for self review

- *Are parents of special school pupils invited to parental consultation meetings at the mainstream school? Are mainstream teachers able to advise such parents on their children's progress? Do special school teachers need to be involved in this?*
- *Are children and their parents/carers from both settings provided with the information they need about the scheme and the schools involved?*
- *Are parents of special school pupils informed of extra-curricular and social opportunities at the mainstream school for them and their child (see E.1 and E.2).*
- *Do special school pupils have a home-school agreement with the mainstream school? Is this the same agreement that is used with mainstream pupils? Does this present any inconsistency in parental relationships with the two schools?*
- *Are there clear procedures, understood by pupils and teachers for responding to extremes of challenging behaviour?*

Potential sources of evidence

- Annual Reviews
- Monitoring records
- Parents consultation meetings.

Examples of good practice

- Regular contact with involvement in mainstream through newsletter.
- Use of pupil home-school diaries to communicate with parents of children who have communication impairments.

SUPPORT WORK: Key themes and issues

It was not possible to develop ideas around Support Work to the same extent as for Partnership, since the scheme has been much slower to roll out in implementation. In this section of the report, we review some of the information available at this early stage and identify some of the changes that may be required to ensure more successful implementation in the future.

While the LEA is keen to see clear evidence that the scheme working, so far the present rate of referral has been low. At the time of writing, Broomfield is supporting 3 children and Grafton is supporting 6 (only 4 formally supported). It is therefore difficult to make any conclusive judgment on how effective this model may be for the children concerned. The common understanding of all the people we spoke to is that the system is, at present, unsatisfactory and ad hoc. However, there were many positive indicators of potential benefit.

Views of special school staff

Everyone involved in providing the support agreed that the scheme had already made a difference for those pupils included, who would otherwise have been admitted to special school. The most important impact was seen in Years 5, 6 and 7 (particularly in Year 7) when the curriculum and pace of learning is increased. Currently, there are often admissions to special school shortly after transition from primary to secondary and this would seem to be an important target population for Support Work. To date there have been no referrals for Support Work from any high school.

One of the key tasks will be to establish a more structured referral system. While at the moment demand is unclear (partly because the options have not yet been fully communicated to schools) everyone we spoke to envisaged that there would be a big demand for support work (due to the lack of appropriate support and guidance for teachers who have pupils with complex needs). However, such referrals are not currently coming through. The main difficulties perceived by special school staff are: (a) lack of communication and adequate publicity, (b) lack of a clear referral procedure and (c) a fear of receiving too many referrals.

Currently, the Support Work option is only publicised centrally to educational psychologists and not to schools. Some special school staff reported that psychologists continue to refer mainstream children directly for a place in special school, rather than for support to maintain their current placement. Staff felt that head teachers and SENCOs should also be informed about the service and how they might use it, and that referrals should not rely solely on the judgement of psychologists.

There are at the moment no clear criteria for referral and no clear guidelines on referral procedures. There were some concerns that the procedure might be too bureaucratic. For example, one teacher received a call from a SENCO asking if support could be provided for a child in mainstream. The response was that this would have to go first to the educational psychologist, then to the LEA to make a referral, then to the Inclusion Co-ordinator and then back to her. As the SENCO responded: 'so we won't see you then, will we?'. Although an isolated instance, this example highlights the difficulty in developing a system that is both carefully regulated and responsive to pupil need.

Another key factor is perceived to be time allocation for Support Work. Views varied and more work would be needed to establish the kind of average range of intensity and duration of Support Work involvement with pupils in mainstream. Some children will need intensive interaction and communication work. For example, one teacher spending half a day per week supporting two children (seeing each child every other week) felt this was insufficient to support their current needs. Early intervention may also be a factor in reducing the intensity

and regularity of support required if a referral comes through at a later stage.

For the scheme to be successful it will be important to have access to adequate teaching materials. At the moment, outreach advisers use special school resources, which they are unable to leave in mainstream schools for children to use. This will become an increasing problem as the number of children supported also increases.

Clearly cost effectiveness or best value will be important to the LEA in establishing support work as a model. Staff in special schools tended to agree that early intervention and provision when needs are identified will be more cost effective than later intervention at a point of crisis, or in dealing with established learned behaviour. This may run counter to the current implementation of referrals through the psychology service at the point of concern about sustainability in mainstream.

'I could have helped that child if he'd only just come in, and they hadn't had a year of bad experience with him'. (outreach adviser)

Assessment is key, and writing appropriate targets involves establishing where children are in their learning and achievement. Mainstream staff may find difficulty in monitoring children who are not easily recorded as working towards levels of peer achievement and advisers can be particularly useful in this context. For example, it was clear in one instance that the biggest contribution of Support Work had been in establishing an appropriately targeted learning programme.

There was a shared view that supported inclusion should mean different things for different children and that it should not necessarily mean sustaining a child in the mainstream classroom for the whole time at any cost.

Ironically, schools with a policy and practice commitment to inclusion may be less likely to benefit from the current Support Work model simply because they are unlikely to refer a child for placement in a special school. This particularly affects children who are not regarded as particularly 'disruptive' in class. This is an issue that will need to be addressed in reviewing the referral procedure.

Although there was widespread agreement that everyone can benefit from well-timed and appropriate Support Work, there was also some concern that it might not work as easily for everyone. For example, pupils with EBD who are disruptive in the classroom were felt to be less likely to benefit specifically from special school input (over and above other kinds of support) although appropriate individual education programmes might sometimes improve behaviour and self-esteem. General labels such as 'autistic' are not a good predictor of whether children will benefit.

Second, there was some concern about pupils who require a high level of specialism in support (e.g. those who use sign language, or very structured teaching methods). So far, one of the most important inputs from inclusion advisers has been in relation to language development. Although attempts have been made to teach some signs and techniques to mainstream teachers, this requires a high level of long term commitment from mainstream staff.

Views of the mainstream staff

All of the mainstream staff agreed that the contribution from special schools had been invaluable in developing their skills and raising awareness of pupil needs and learning strategies. While they acknowledge that the main concern has been with the concrete aspects of establishing IEPs, curriculum differentiation, and classroom management (for example on how to engage pupils more positively) in many cases, what they really desired was increased personal confidence in providing for pupils. Identifying the need for training, one mainstream head teacher told us:

'As it is now, when we assess [a child], we cannot be sure whether her

performance is the result of her condition or is it the lack of our resources. We don't know whether we should be content with her progress... We need to know not only how to differentiate work for her but also what to teach her out of class'.

While agreeing with the principle of inclusion, all of the mainstream staff we spoke to acknowledged that adequate resources and reliability must be available to back effective support work. It is likely that some schools will perceive Support Work more as a permanent additional teaching resource than as a short or medium term intervention to increase their capacity for inclusion. Clear guidance will be needed as to the role of Support Work in the longer term. This was reflected in some teacher concerns:

'At the moment we are getting a lot of support from [the special school] through [the outreach adviser] but if she is suddenly not here that would hurt us. We must be able to rely on them so that we can plan with them'.

There have also been concerns about a lack of clear communication, and about ambiguity in the purposes and objectives of the initiative. There is some divergence of opinion between the views of the mainstream staff and those of the LEA. While mainstream staff generally agree ideologically that it would be desirable for pupils to be taught in mainstream schools, they often favour withdrawal from mainstream classes. Dual registration was also seen as a useful strategy for some pupils, and this is likely to overlap with initiatives for Partnership outlined earlier in this report. In this context, there might be options to 'visit' the special school or resource base as a mainstream pupil rather than the converse.

There is concern about the provision of supply cover for mainstream teachers to spend time planning and preparing programme resulting from Support Work interventions. The Support Workers, who identified arranging to meet mainstream teachers as their biggest problem, also raised this as a key issue.

There was general agreement that Support Work is harder to set up at secondary level than primary. Even within primary, mainstream teachers felt that in most cases their provision was more suitable for pupils at Key Stage 1 than 2 (as the curriculum develops). This view was shared by the LSAs we spoke to, who were concerned about the widening gap in learning and social participation for older children.

Most mainstream staff expressed concerns about the impact of the inclusion programme on standards and SATs results. As one SENCO told us:

'We have to be able to justify it when it comes to OFSTED inspection and this has been difficult in the past, because they haven't been the most understanding of pupils in that respect. If Mr Blunkett is insisting on going this way forward then he has to make that understood by the OFSTED team'.

Similarly, as one head teacher in a mainstream school commented:

'the whole curriculum needs re-designing and the social expectations from schools needs changing. If schools are measured, as it is the case now, by the proportion of children reaching level 4 in the national curriculum, someone like [this girl receiving support] would represent 3% of that population. Therefore the standards would go down. But if the schools are expected to take them to their potential and the resources would allow you to operate equal opportunities, then there would be no problems'.

An initial model for evaluating Support schemes

While it was not possible to develop our ideas on Support Work to the same extent as for Partnership, due to lack of available evidence and experience, we have included below a number of key bullet points for further thinking in this area.

A. Whole school organisation, ethos and policies

- School policies should promote inclusion.
- Successful support work will require a clear communication between everybody involved (including senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils and governors) to clarify the purpose and objective of the programme.
- Support work will be successful if the mainstream staff have positive attitude and interest to learn new skills.
- There needs to be an early referral/intervention. The support should be provided as soon as the need is identified and before it becomes a big problem. As the child grows, the gap gets wider and wider.
- The scheme would be cost effective if a high level of input is provided at the beginning before there has been any learnt behaviour.
- There should be clear and standardised criteria on who should be referred.
- A referral letter should clearly identify the needs.
- There should be clear guidelines on referral procedures.
- Referrals should be made for all the levels including the secondary level. Particular attention should be given to the upper key Stage 2 (years 5,6 and 7).
- The special school management team should monitor the caseload for the support work.
- Admin time should be built in to the work of those involved.
- The positive valuing of difference should be actively promoted and shared by all those involved in school (including senior managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils and governors). The common understanding should be that inclusion does not have to be the same for everybody. Inclusion implies that pupils should be treated equally rather than the same. Pupils could be included in different ways.
- All the roles and responsibilities should be clearly identified before the staff begin their outreach work.
- The support work should be considered as a commitment for the long term, allowing a long term planning.
- The support input would be most effective if it extends the skills of school staff working with the pupils concerned.
- It should increase the confidence of school staff and help them to see that the child's needs are not as extreme as those of most children in special school.
- It should explore the link between school and home and facilitate closer working arrangements.
- Given that the teachers from special schools have an advisory role, successful support work will require giving the ownership back to the school.

B. Resources

- Successful support arrangement should ensure the mainstream schools have access to

appropriate teaching material and not rely on special school material. This becomes more of a problem when there are more kids to support in the mainstream.

- Successful support work requires adequate and suitably skilled staff (for example, a figure of 20 children, at different stages of involvement, was suggested as an upper caseload limit).
- Designated space may be required for work with those who have to be withdrawn from classes.

C. Curriculum planning, monitoring and evaluation

- Teachers in the mainstream school should have protected time to meet up with the special schoolteacher to discuss the learning programme.
- The supply cover should be maintained.
- Identifying the needs and establishing targeted appropriate learning programme would enable the pupils to make a measurable progress.
- Psychologists, head teachers and SENCOs should work together in identifying the need for support.
- Collaborative planning between special school and mainstream staff should ensure that learning experiences are appropriate and the work is differentiated to the correct level for the pupils.
- Staff should have opportunities for joint professional development to assist them in skills sharing. This should include opportunities for shared evaluation and feedback on joint working experiences.
- There needs to be a joint meeting for the staff from different special schools running this scheme. This is to exchange information and any problems they may have.
- There should be planning meetings between SENCO, teacher, specialist teacher, LSA to develop an appropriate IEP and draw up a timetable; it is important to make sure that the targets are relevant.
- Successful support work will require systems of recording and monitoring and evaluation of the pupils' progress. It should monitor the delivery of the IEPs and help the school to establish an effective monitoring system. The progress might be educational, attention, attitude and /or behaviour.
- For the scheme to be successful it would have to ensure that agreed targets are implemented.
- There should be an input in training the mainstream staff how to differentiate the work and how to approach the work making sure that it is the right level for the child.
- The special school staff should know how to be sensitive to the mainstream environment.
- A successful support programme will give the mainstream staff enhanced confidence in giving their pupils the maximum support. This will include not only supporting them in how to differentiate work for the pupils, but also what to teach them out of class.
- Successful support arrangements will allow the pupils concerned to be educated with their peers wherever possible. Sometimes, pupils may get more out of it, if they spend their time out of the class doing more focused work.

Conclusion

Research shows that, nationally and locally, more and more special schools are linking with mainstream schools but that pressures associated with local management of schools and the national curriculum have made these links difficult to sustain.

If Partnership and Support schemes are to achieve their stated policy aims (a reduction in the number of pupils attending special schools on a full-time, long-term basis, and an increase in the number having their needs met within mainstream school) then the success of individual schemes will need to be sustainable and meaningful to all concerned. Effective evaluation of success will assist both commissioners and providers to focus resources more effectively on improving the quality of support for pupils from special schools.

By collating data from various stakeholder views, alongside policy documentation and existing research, we have identified some of the key characteristics that may be viewed as contributing to the success of Partnership arrangements between special and mainstream schools. Amongst these diverse sources, there are a number of common values and assumptions that may provide a basis for a shared framework of evaluation:

- Partnership should be for everyone, irrespective of their impairment.
- There should be a continuum of provision - between all Key Stages, and across all geographical areas of the authority.
- Partnership should offer special school pupils access to a broader curriculum and greater opportunities for social interaction.
- Partnership arrangements should be flexible.
- Individual pupil needs are varied. It is therefore difficult and often inappropriate to base planning and organisation solely on categories of need.
- Partnership should offer and achieve benefits for pupils from both schools.
- Early intervention is the key factor for success. Social acceptance is much more problematic at the secondary level than in primary schools because the secondary pupils are unlikely to have had much prior experience of inclusive education.

Ideally, Partnerships would provide equal opportunities for inclusion to all disabled children in special schools (irrespective of their individual social, educational and impairment needs). It would offer them the entitlement and benefits of a broader curriculum and greater social inclusion, whilst maintaining the security of skills, trust and resources established by the special school settings - and it would achieve this in a cost effective way. The research and development outlined in this report offers a model for thinking about success within this context. As discussed in the report, the use of statements as success criteria is intended to be both practice-oriented and aspirational and does not suggest that any particular scheme could or should necessarily be shown to be achieving in all areas at the present time.

In terms of the Support Work, since the scheme has been much slower to roll out in implementation, it was not possible to develop ideas around it to the same extent as for Partnership. However, the report does highlight some of the main changes that may be

required to ensure more successful development of the scheme in the future. This includes among other things: a more structural referral system, adequate publicity and clear communication, early intervention and adequate resources.

While the monitoring and evaluation items are directed primarily at schools themselves, it is important to note that there are also concerns and issues that extend beyond the remit of the school. These include:

- The need for a more standardised system of contact (between mainstream and special schools) for referral of pupils to Partnership schools and Support Work. This would go some way to allaying concerns about equity and consistency (especially in terms of different geographical areas within the authority).
- The concern that mainstream schools should not be forced to focus on exam results, under pressure to operate formula funding and to raise whole school achievement through SAT results.
- The need for an ongoing review of best use of special schools resources on a citywide basis.
- The need to generate increased parental and professional confidence in the systems and procedures used to identify individual children's needs.
- The need for planned funding models that target resources at greatest need.
- The need for longitudinal, multi-method, research to establish patterns of inclusion through Partnership over time.

Fully inclusive neighbourhood schooling is a political ideal, but in working towards that ideal there are many practical issues that must be addressed. We are hopeful that this report will assist the authority in identifying those issues, so that they may plan more appropriately, and reflect more critically on selected courses of action.