

Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools

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Introduction

- 1. Since the Education Act 1981, arrangements for identifying and meeting special educational needs (SEN) have been subject to further legislation and guidance. The Education Act 1993 triggered significant developments. Under the act, local education authorities (LEAs) and school governing bodies must have regard to an SEN code of practice, which sets out in detail how they are expected to carry out their duties. Since then, the concept of inclusion for pupils with SEN, as well as for others with particular needs, has been defined and amplified within the revised National Curriculum and in further guidance from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).
- 2. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 provides a revised statutory framework for inclusion. It strengthens the right of children with SEN to attend a mainstream school, unless their parents choose otherwise or if this is incompatible with 'efficient education for other children' and there are no 'reasonable steps' which the school and LEA can take to prevent that incompatibility. Alongside that act, the Disability Discrimination Act 2001 places new duties on schools not to treat disabled pupils less favourably than others and to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.
- 3. These two acts and the guidance accompanying them underpin the government's education policy, which is part of a wider strategy aimed at removing barriers to successful participation in mainstream society. The new legislation expects mainstream schools to include all pupils fully, making appropriate changes to their organisation, curriculum, accommodation and teaching methods. It places duties on schools and LEAs to ensure this happens.
- 4. A revised SEN code of practice took effect in 2002. It retained much of the original code, but took account of the experiences of schools and LEAs and reflected the new rights and duties introduced by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. The revised code sets out five principles:
 - that children with SEN should have their needs met
 - that their needs will normally be met in mainstream schools
 - that the views of children should be sought and taken into account
 - that parents have a vital role to play in supporting their children's education
 - that children with SEN should be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in the foundation stage and later years.
- 5. Within the code there is greater emphasis on outcomes for pupils rather than on procedures and systems. The designation of stages of action was also modified.

In mainstream schools pupils are placed on the SEN list in line with this guidance if they require provision ('school action') which is different from, and additional to, that made for most pupils. If pupils fail to make adequate progress, further provision is to be made ('school action plus'). Where the pupil's needs are more severe or complex the LEA may issue a statement for the pupil describing the exceptional provision to be made.

- 6. The legislation and guidance referred to as 'the inclusion framework' within which schools and LEAs are now expected to work have been in place for over two years. Changes in approaches and systems in schools take time to embed and to affect the progress pupils make. LEAs have developed inclusion policies to carry out their duty to provide mainstream schooling for parents who choose this option. In the process, there has been much debate about what inclusion should mean for pupils in both mainstream and special schools, covering issues such as the role of special schools, the capacity of mainstream schools to meet complex needs and the progress made by pupils with SEN in mainstream schools.
- 7. An Audit Commission report of 2002, *Special educational needs a mainstream issue*, highlighted a substantial (11%) increase in the overall LEA spending on pupils with SEN between 1999–2000 and 2000–01. Official figures showed a total expenditure of £3.4 billion on SEN in 2001–02, excluding elements within the age-weighted pupil unit funding formula for schools.

Survey

- 8. In 2003, Ofsted reported on good practice in catering for pupils with SEN in mainstream primary and secondary schools (*Special educational needs in the mainstream* (Ofsted, 2003)). Much of this practice had been established over a long period of time, starting before the emergence of the inclusion framework. Staff expertise had developed and the schools visited had become known for their effective work.
- 9. The survey on which this report was based examined the extent to which the inclusion framework had an impact more generally on the capacity of schools to cater effectively for a wider range of needs. It sought to assess the extent to which the vision of inclusion is becoming a reality in schools and to make recommendations to support the government's recently published strategy for SEN, Removing barriers to achievement (DfES, 2004), which has taken further the principles enunciated in the previous legislation.
- 10. The survey was based on a range of evidence. Ofsted inspections of schools have been focusing on what the inspection framework describes as 'educational inclusion' since 1999. These inspections, together with inspections of LEAs and monitoring visits to schools causing concern, have provided background evidence for this evaluation of school and LEA responses. The survey also drew on meetings with representatives of voluntary bodies, higher education and others concerned with the inclusion framework.

11. In addition, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) made visits to 115 schools to look in detail at what schools do to raise attainment among pupils with SEN. Most of the visits were made between May and November 2003. They involved: interviews with headteachers, governors, SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs) and other staff; observation of lessons; study of pupils' work; and discussions with pupils and parents. In the visits, special attention was given to the progress pupils with SEN made in literacy, as this is a prerequisite for much other educational achievement and helps to form a firm foundation for success in adult life.

Main findings

- The government's revised inclusion framework has contributed to a growing awareness of the benefits of inclusion, and response to it has led to some improvement in practice.
- The framework has had little effect as yet on the proportion of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools, or on the range of needs for which mainstream schools cater. There has been an increase in the numbers of pupils placed in pupil referral units and independent special schools.
- Most mainstream schools are now committed to meeting special needs. A few are happy to admit pupils with complex needs. The admission and retention of pupils with social and behavioural difficulties continue to test the inclusion policy.
- A minority of mainstream schools meet special needs very well, and others are becoming better at doing so. High expectations, effective whole-school planning seen through by committed managers, close attention on the part of skilled teachers and support staff, and rigorous evaluation remain the keys to effective practice.
- Taking all the steps needed to enable pupils with SEN to participate fully in the life of the school and achieve their potential remains a significant challenge for many schools. Expectations of achievement are often neither well enough defined nor pitched high enough. Progress in learning remains slower than it should be for a significant number of pupils.
- Few schools evaluate their provision for pupils with SEN systematically so that they can establish how effective the provision is and whether it represents value for money. The availability and use of data on outcomes for pupils with SEN continue to be limited.
- Not enough use is made by mainstream schools of the potential for adapting the curriculum and teaching methods so that pupils have suitable opportunities to improve key skills.
- The teaching seen of pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings. Support by teaching assistants can be vital, but the organisation of it can mean that pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills, understanding and independence.
- Despite the helpful contributions by the national strategies, the quality of work to improve the literacy of pupils with SEN remains inconsistent.
- □ Effective partnership work between mainstream schools and special schools on curriculum and teaching is the exception rather than the rule.
- Over half the schools visited had no disability access plans and, of those plans that did exist, the majority focused only on accommodation.

Recommendations

- □ The DfES should continue to work with schools and LEAs to ensure that:
 - the ability of mainstream schools to cater for the diversity of special needs and disability is enhanced
 - the effects of local decisions on admissions involving pupils with SEN are kept under close review
 - productive links on curriculum and teaching are made between mainstream and special schools
 - pupils with SEN in mainstream schools are able to play a full part in school life, and receive a curriculum and teaching relevant to their needs
 - schools evaluate their provision for SEN thoroughly and act on the findings to improve standards of achievement.

Impact of the inclusion framework

Key points

- The proportion of pupils with statements of SEN in mainstream schools has not yet been affected by the inclusion framework.
- The inclusion framework has contributed to a growing but uneven appreciation
 of the potential benefits of inclusion, but not all schools appreciate the
 implications of it.
- The admission of pupils with behavioural difficulties continues to be the hardest test of the inclusion framework.
- Effective work by SENCOs and LEA support services has developed staff awareness but attitudes and practice have been slow to shift.
- Partnerships between mainstream and special schools are underdeveloped.

Numbers of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools

- 12. The proportion of pupils with a statement of SEN remained more or less the same from 1999 to 2003. The Audit Commission report of 2002 highlighted an increase in the numbers of pupils since 1997 identified with some types of SEN, in particular autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), and emotional, behavioural and social difficulties (EBSD). The figures also showed a reduction in the number of pupils identified with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD).
- 13. The inclusion framework has so far had little impact on the proportion, or on the range of needs, of pupils with statements of SEN who attend mainstream schools. Recent LEA inspection reports show that many LEAs are undertaking reviews of their special schools and some have plans to co-locate special schools on mainstream sites. These initiatives are likely to take some years to affect admissions of pupils with SEN with a range of needs to mainstream schools.
- 14. Contrary to a common perception of a decline in special school placements, the proportion of pupils placed in special schools (including pupil referral units) has remained more or less the same since 1999. While some special schools have closed, new special schools have opened, sometimes as a result of amalgamations. The proportion of pupils in pupil referral units has risen by 25% between 2001 and 2003.
- 15. The proportion of children in special schools varies more than tenfold across LEAs. This reflects a combination of factors, including the historical pattern of provision and local commitment to educating children with higher levels of need in mainstream schools. At the same time, the boundaries between the special

and mainstream sectors have blurred. A spectrum of provision has developed, including specially resourced provision in mainstream schools and dual-registration arrangements under which pupils in special schools spend part of the week in mainstream schools. In 2001, 2,330 children in England were dual-registered.

Figure 1. Number of pupils in all special schools (including pupil referral units) as a percentage of the number in mainstream schools 1999–2003.

16. Since 2001, there has been a 10% increase in the number of pupils placed in independent special schools by local authorities. This trend in part reflects the difficulties that mainstream and some special schools have in meeting severe or complex needs. Many of the pupils concerned demonstrate behaviour that is challenging and some have been excluded from maintained mainstream and special schools. Although the numbers of pupils involved are comparatively small, the costs of their placements in independent schools are very high. As much as £125,000 can be spent for a residential placement in an independent school for a pupil with high levels of need. On average, each placement in such a school costs twice that of a place in a maintained special school.

Diversity of SEN in mainstream schools

- 17. The inclusion framework and the debate surrounding it have contributed to a gradually and unevenly growing appreciation in mainstream schools about the potential benefits of the inclusion of pupils with SEN. More schools than before see themselves as inclusive and are keen to be identified as such. However, by no means do all schools regard themselves as having the experience, skills and resources to make effective provision.
- 18. In many schools visited in the survey, headteachers spoke with great commitment and pride about the ethos they had created and their wish to provide for all pupils, whatever their needs. However, even the more committed had reservations when they were asked to admit pupils with high levels of need, especially where they had previously attended other mainstream schools with little success.
- 19. Particular doubts were often evident in the case of pupils with SEN whose behaviour was difficult. Overall, the issue of admissions of pupils with social and behavioural difficulties was proving the hardest test of the inclusion framework and the one over which conflicts between meeting individual needs and 'efficient education for other children' were the most problematic to reconcile.
- 20. Stresses and strains around admissions of pupils with SEN surfaced in a number of ways. Some of the parents interviewed commented on what they saw as obstacles to admission, including delays in responses and visits to schools where its climate and approach were portrayed in such a way as to discourage pursuit of the admission. There was resentment among headteachers and staff in some undersubscribed schools about what was perceived as the attitude of oversubscribed schools in the neighbourhood which were in a stronger position to decline admissions. Some schools looked to their LEAs to find system-wide

- solutions, with some arguing for a stronger line and others for a more flexible approach to admissions policy.
- 21. For some schools, the concern was about the 'magnet effect' created by their reputation for specialist facilities and effective provision for those pupils with SEN. This was an image that some headteachers expressly wished to shed in order to build up, or protect, the balance of their intake. For some schools at least, the concern was understandable. There are, of course, benefits in terms of planning provision and developing staff expertise from having a 'critical mass' of children with particular needs attending a school, but there is also a risk that individual schools may become overstretched. Pupils' behaviour can become difficult to manage if there are too many classes without positive role models.
- 22. Often, the schools admitting large numbers of pupils with a wide range of needs were those whose roll was falling, either for demographic reasons or because the school was less popular with parents. This could result in significant shifts in the balance within classes and within the school as a whole, with a further effect on parental choice.
- 23. Similar problems were reported by secondary schools in urban areas where there has been a programme of re-organisation to reduce surplus places. Small, less popular schools with high numbers of low-attaining pupils have been closed, and their pupils admitted to better performing schools in the neighbourhood. Plans for school re-organisation did not always consider the full implications for staff in the receiving schools with limited experience of working with large numbers of lower-attaining pupils. The result could be serious disruption for both the pupils who transferred and the pupils already in the receiving school.
- 24. Set against examples of difficulties for some schools which took large numbers of pupils with SEN or other low-attainers, there were also examples of schools which had successfully adopted and seen through an inclusive approach.
- 25. For example, a new secondary department for a special school for pupils with PMLD had been built on the campus of a large inner-city school. The new accommodation included a range of specialist resources including hydrotherapy pool and sensory rooms available for community as well as school use. The base was run by the special school staff but was overseen by a steering group with representatives from both schools. Pupils with PMLD participated in a wide range of activities within the school while continuing to have the specialist teaching they needed to develop their skills and independence. The benefits of the new provision had been actively promoted by both headteachers and its management was well designed. As a result, pupils and parents had confidence in it.

School responses to diverse needs

26. As the visits confirmed, pupils with SEN often pose a challenge to schools to enable them to settle happily and make good progress in their learning and personal development.

- 27. Meeting the challenge by adapting the curriculum and teaching methods, as well as, sometimes, adapting accommodation and equipment, can be a struggle. Schools which admitted pupils with physical and sensory difficulties had generally found it easier to adapt their practice. Inclusive practice for these groups has been developing over a longer period, often helped by support services and sometimes helped by well-established special schools with good outreach services.
- 28. Much effective work has been done by SENCOs and specialist support services to develop staff awareness through training and information about classroom strategies. The best examples of training had included a focus on pupils' personal and social development and on creating a classroom ethos which acknowledged and valued differences. LEA support services, including educational psychology, sometimes provided helpful courses on the management of behaviour and on inclusive practice more generally.
- 29. Nevertheless, it was clear from the visits to a wide range of schools that attitudes and practice have been slow to shift. SENCOs in almost half the primary and secondary schools visited identified the perceptions of staff as a major barrier to effective inclusion. SENCOs themselves can lack confidence in developing provision in their schools for pupils with EBSD. Many have significant experience in teaching pupils with a range of learning difficulties but have not been expected in the past to take on the responsibility for pupils with behaviour difficulties. Schools' pastoral systems, and senior management teams have dealt with issues of behaviour and the overlap in this area often causes tensions.
- 30. Much of the expertise in teaching pupils with severe or complex needs still lies with staff in special schools. However, few mainstream schools visited had partnerships with local special schools which focused on promoting inclusion in a comprehensive and practical way. There were few incentives for special schools to reach out towards their neighbouring mainstream schools. Where there were pockets of good practice, special schools were effective in supporting individual pupils but they tended to have much less impact on curriculum and teaching at the whole-school level. A few of the special schools visited had established classes on mainstream school sites and offered expertise to support teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN. Where this had occurred, it had begun to improve the relationships between the schools but, generally, partnerships between mainstream and special schools were underdeveloped.

Achievement

Key points

- The inconsistency with which pupils are defined as having SEN is a continuing concern.
- Gathering reliable data about the progress of pupils with SEN continues to prove problematic for schools and LEAs, with uncertainty in schools about what constitutes adequate progress. Use of comparative data is weak.
- Inspection evidence shows an improving trend, but a significant proportion of pupils with SEN are still not making good progress from key stage to key stage.
- There were distinct differences among the schools visited in rates of progress for pupils with SEN, with expectations of progress in reading and writing being too low in six out of ten schools.
- Few schools analysed the progress of pupils with SEN specifically enough in relation to the provision made.

Definitions of SEN

- 31. Schools currently identify one in five children as having difficulty in learning of such a kind that they need some form of extra help in class. These children are said in general terms to have SEN. One child in thirty is considered to need more support than their school can provide from its standard resources. For them, the LEA draws up a statement of SEN, which specifies their needs and the 'additional or different' provision to be made.
- 32. There are wide variations in the numbers of pupils defined as having SEN in different schools and LEAs. The criteria used by schools in the more general identification of pupils with SEN that is, those assessed as requiring 'school action' or 'school action plus' under the code of practice vary considerably, as does the application of criteria for determining eligibility for a statement.
- 33. The inconsistency with which pupils are defined as having SEN continues to be a concern. Some schools use the term to cover all who are low-attaining, or simply below average, on entry, whether or not the cause is learning difficulty. Clearly, if pupils are not achieving their potential this is a concern, regardless of whether the school has identified them as having SEN. However, looseness in the use of the SEN designation does not help to focus on the action needed to resolve problems and, in the worst cases, it can distract schools' attention from doing what is necessary to improve the provision they make for all low- or belowaverage attainers.
- 34. Many, though not all, pupils defined as having SEN certainly fall within the lowest-attaining groups in terms of performance in National Curriculum

assessments and 16+ examinations. Some pupils with SEN, including those with physical and sensory impairments, are of average or high attainment and make good progress in their learning.

Data about achievement

- 35. Comprehensive data about the performance of children with SEN remain difficult to obtain, so that schools lack national benchmarks against which they can measure the performance of their pupils. Many schools have difficulty setting targets and knowing what constitutes reasonable progress by pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Few LEAs have effective systems for monitoring progress for pupils with SEN. Data provided by most LEAs are not in a form which allows schools easily to compare how well they are doing with the lowest-attaining pupils when compared with other schools. This weakens the drive to challenge underachievement.
- 36. The government's national targets are intended to ensure that standards in mainstream schools rise rapidly. Except for considering the percentage of pupils achieving one or more GCSE grades, they do not explicitly include expectations for the lowest-attaining pupils. There are no targets specifically for pupils with SEN, with or without statements. Perhaps as a result, few LEAs focus with their schools on specific targets for the performance of schools' lowest-attaining pupils, as an Ofsted report, Setting targets for pupils with special educational needs (2004), illustrated.
- 37. The SEN code of practice places emphasis on whether the pupils' progress is 'adequate'. This concept is insufficiently well defined within the guidance. Those schools visited that set targets for raising standards for pupils with SEN made their own decisions about how much progress is to be judged adequate. Their criteria varied widely, even taking account of differences in the type of learning needs.
- 38. Too often schools were satisfied with progress which was not as good as it could be. For example, in one secondary school there was an expectation that 90% of the pupils with SEN would progress by one National Curriculum level during the three years of Key Stage 3. Another school considered that its pupils were achieving well if half made this kind of progress.
- 39. The widely varying targets that schools set themselves had a considerable impact on outcomes for pupils and on the schools' priorities for action. Among the schools visited, pupils usually made the greatest progress where schools set the most challenging targets. In one school, the governing body recognised the value of targets and, with the headteacher, established a target for improving the progress of all pupils with SEN. As a result, the school analysed its data thoroughly, agreed changes to provision and allocated resources accordingly. Pupils' progress towards achieving the targets was monitored rigorously.

Inspection data

- 40. Judgements made during the cycle of section 10 inspections of schools indicate that progress by pupils with SEN nationally has been improving.
- 41. The proportion of schools whose pupils with SEN are judged to be making at least good progress in primary schools rose from 54% in 2000 to 73% in 2003. In secondary schools, the picture in 2000 was worse, with only 43% of pupils making at least good progress, but this figure rose to 71% in 2003. This improved consistency between the phases was reflected in the survey visits, which indicated that pupils with SEN generally progressed at about the same rate in primary and secondary schools.

Figure 2. Progress of pupils in primary schools 2000-03.

Figure 3. Progress of pupils in secondary schools 2000-03.

42. However, while inspection evidence demonstrates a general improvement, and shows that some pupils with SEN do well, there are still too many whose performance is low on entry and who then fail to make good progress.

National Curriculum assessments

- 43. Data about the progress of pupils as they move through the key stages, now available nationally, confirm this. Annex A presents the data on the proportions of pupils who made the expected gains between Key Stages 1 and 2 and between Key Stages 2 and 3 in 2003.
- 44. The 2003 pupil-level data show that in primary schools some 25% of pupils who began Key Stage 2 with a Level 1 in reading failed to achieve Level 3 in English by the end of Year 6. In secondary schools, 24% of pupils who started Key Stage 3 at Level 3 in English failed to make at least the expected one-level gain to Level 4. Some 45% of pupils in 2003 who started Key Stage 3 at Level 2 in English failed to make a one-level gain by the end of Key Stage 3.

Progress in the schools visited

- 45. Over two-thirds of the schools visited analysed data effectively to evaluate the progress of pupils towards meeting targets in the core subjects. However, few schools considered the progress of pupils with SEN specifically enough in relation to such targets. They seldom linked the progress of the pupils to the provision the school had made. Many staff in schools were well aware that their pupils did not make sufficient progress, but they tended not to analyse why this was the case. They did not make enough use of comparative data to consider the progress of the lower-attaining pupils in relation to the progress of other groups. Without such analysis, schools were not in a good position to check whether they were doing the best they could for such pupils.
- 46. Among the schools visited there were significant differences between schools with similar intakes in the proportion of children who ended the subsequent key

- stage with very low attainment in literacy. Some schools ensured that nearly all pupils achieve adequate levels of literacy; in others, the rate of progress was much lower.
- 47. In six out of ten primary and secondary schools visited, expectations of improvements in reading and writing were too low. Schools often judged the progress of pupils purely against their individual education plan targets. However, these sometimes reflected low expectations of what pupils could do and were too general to be of value in assessing progress closely. In the schools concerned, pupils' progress was often thought adequate even where their reading was improving only very slowly. Associated with this pattern was poor monitoring of progress and failure to evaluate the quality of the provision made.
- 48. In the schools that were most successful with pupils with SEN, systems for assessment and planning were fully integrated with those for other pupils. This helped to ensure that planning for pupils with SEN was done by all staff and not only by specialist SEN teachers as a separate exercise.
- 49. Assessment and planning for pupils with EBSD were often particularly weak. Individual education plans for these pupils often did not bring together targets for both improved behaviour and improved learning, despite the fact that generally the two are closely connected, with pupils learning more as their behaviour improves and vice versa. While schools were able to point to improvements in behaviour, for example, in the reduction of referrals and in the use of sanctions, few schools analysed the progress such pupils made in their learning and were therefore unable to evaluate the impact of their provision for them.
- 50. The few schools in this survey which used pupil-level data to evaluate their provision found national data helpful. For example, a large junior school in a deprived inner-city area found that 90% of their pupils who entered Key Stage 2 at Level 1 in English achieved at least level 3. They were able to link this to the additional provision they had made for the lowest-attaining pupils to improve their spelling in particular. To take a contrasting example, one secondary school in which only 20% of the pupils at Level 2 in English on entry had made a one-level gain in Key Stage 3 was not familiar with the national data and so was unaware that the rate of progress in the school was a cause for concern.

Curriculum

Key points

- Few of the schools visited had made substantial adaptations to the curriculum they offer to meet special needs.
- Additional programmes for literacy and numeracy within the National Primary Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy were helpful when systematically organised and well supported.
- Use of flexibility in the curriculum was more common in Key Stage 4, with good examples of opportunities for work-related learning.
- Mainstream schools have insufficient knowledge of curriculum organisation in special schools.
- 51. Adapting the curriculum to meet the pupils' needs is an essential part of an effective approach to inclusion. This is reflected in the statement on inclusion in the National Curriculum, which outlines how teachers can modify programmes of study to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work. The statement identifies three principles in developing a more inclusive curriculum:
 - setting suitable learning challenges
 - responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
 - overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.
- 52. The Disability Discrimination Act 2001 calls for schools to make reasonable adjustments to prevent pupils with disabilities from being at a disadvantage and to plan to improve their access to the curriculum.
- 53. Few of the schools visited had made substantial adaptations to the curriculum they offer. Nearly all schools felt restricted by the National Curriculum, despite the inclusion statement, and were reluctant to disapply elements of the curriculum in relation to pupils with SEN. Although some changes had been made to remove barriers to inclusion there is much to do to achieve the aim of providing a full range of opportunities tailored to individual needs.
- 54. In eight out of ten primary schools, pupils who were withdrawn for additional support in groups received more time to develop their literacy skills through the implementation of the National Primary Strategy additional programmes. These programmes raised standards where the work was organised systematically and well supported by specialist teachers and teaching assistants.
- 55. While curriculum adaptation remains limited in most primary schools, some good practice is emerging. For example, in one school in an area of significant social disadvantage, multi-agency working was embedded in classroom practice. Social

workers and therapists worked together with teachers and assistants to agree the reasons for difficulties and to identify strategies to improve the progress the pupils made in their learning. As a result, the balance of time allocated focused more strongly on the individual pupils' targets for development. They spent less time on some subjects in order to fit in a range of other provision including: language and communication programmes; a range of therapies; counselling; and anger management sessions.

- 56. Another example was in a large, urban primary school where a small number of pupils failed to acquire sufficient literacy skills to communicate their thoughts and ideas in writing by the end of Year 5. Additional literacy session time was allocated but the activities were planned to develop their communication skills in different ways: drama was used to produce video material to record pupils' understanding of other concepts. For example, in one lesson they were improvising a role play of life in Roman times; it showed considerable understanding of the main objectives of the lesson which pupils would have found difficult to express in writing.
- 57. At Key Stage 3, few specific curriculum adaptations or developments relevant to pupils with SEN were encountered on the visits. Schools tended to see their main strategy as being a combination of specialist support for literacy and numeracy and forming sets of lower-attaining pupils, including most of those with SEN, for the teaching of the core subjects and some foundation subjects. 'Catch-up' programmes in literacy and numeracy, using Key Stage 3 Strategy materials, were fairly common; the organisation of them was sometimes problematic. Allocations of time to subjects were usually identical for different ability sets. Subject material and the sequence of work used with lower-attaining sets were often more or less the same as those employed with higher-attaining sets. The main differences were in the depth and pace of the work expected.
- 58. It was rare to find examples of overall planning of the Key Stage 3 experience that recognised and attended to particular needs in a thoroughgoing and imaginative way and set learning in the broader context of personal development. Few mainstream secondary schools were aware of planning in special schools of this kind, which aims, for example, to consolidate and develop basic skills and approaches to learning across subjects, to re-draw conventional subject boundaries, to bring the curriculum alive, to make active use of practical experiences, and to allocate substantial prime time to personal and social development, supported by counselling and other support. Very few secondary schools had partnerships with special schools which supported planning for inclusion or developed the curriculum.
- 59. There were more signs of flexibility in the curriculum at Key Stage 4. Many secondary schools were increasingly using the new permissions in the Key Stage 4 curriculum to allow some pupils who have little interest or success in the standard subject-based curriculum to drop one or more subjects and to take courses which concentrated on basic skills and vocational learning. In some cases, those responsible for managing the options programme seemed too ready to say that all pupils with SEN needed such alternative programmes, with the result that they were deprived of the opportunity to stay with their peers and achieve GCSE qualifications. For some schools, rigid timetabling, inflexible

staffing and lack of inventiveness were handicaps to effective developments. Where alternative programmes for pupils with SEN and other low-attainers were set up, they were seldom monitored well enough. Assessment was sometimes inconsistent and the outcomes for pupils were not always clear. There were examples of alternative programmes being used merely to occupy disgruntled pupils rather than to extend and improve their achievement.

- 60. However, there were some examples of very good practice in providing alternative programmes adapted effectively to the range of pupils' needs. Among the best examples were vocational courses, sometimes involving college- or work-based placements. In one school, very good relationships with a nearby manufacturing company had enabled the school to set up a work-related learning centre housed on the company's premises. The pupils worked in an environment and in ways which were different to the school experience. They had access to industry-standard equipment under close supervision and they were highly motivated by the opportunities to succeed. This in turn led to improvement in their work in lessons in school.
- 61. While partnerships between mainstream and special schools were weak overall, secondary schools in some areas did take advantage of local opportunities in special schools when the curriculum had been more radically altered to ensure it was relevant for the pupils. For example, a school for pupils with EBSD ran a Saturday school which included accredited courses in hairdressing, catering and street performance. This was open to Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils from the locality. The provision had the effect of including more pupils of all ages in a wider curriculum and, in addition, the pupils who attended the special school had opportunities to work with a wider range of peers.

Teaching

Key points

- The quality of teaching seen for pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons having shortcomings.
- Despite the helpful contributions by the national strategies, work to improve the literacy of pupils with SEN remains of inconsistent quality, with too little exposure to challenging activities.
- Support by teaching assistants can be vital, but the organisation of it can mean pupils having insufficient opportunity to develop their understanding, skills and independence.
- The teaching outside mainstream classes of pupils with the most significant learning and behavioural difficulties often focused well on their needs, but risked disconnecting them from the work of the class.
- Only a third of secondary schools were effective in meeting the needs of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Learning mentors played a valuable role.
- High staff turnover is a barrier to inclusion in some schools.
- 62. The quality of teaching seen on the visits for pupils with SEN was of varying quality, with a high proportion of lessons involving pupils with SEN having important shortcomings.
- 63. In half the lessons seen, the teaching of low-attaining pupils, including those with SEN, was at least good. These lessons were characterised by the commitment and efforts of individual staff and by effective teamwork among teachers and teaching assistants. Specially devised or adapted materials and methods of teaching were tailored well to pupils' needs. Activities captured interest and encouraged participation, and careful grouping ensured that pupils with SEN worked productively with others. In the most effective schools, all staff showed positive attitudes towards, and high expectations of, pupils with SEN. The staff saw little tension between meeting their targets for raising standards generally and including the lowest-attaining pupils and those with SEN; indeed, they saw that an inclusive approach had positive benefits for all.
- 64. In the few lessons where all learners, including those with SEN, made very good progress, teachers had a clear understanding of what pupils already knew. They planned carefully, often with support staff and other professionals to remove barriers and develop a suitable learning environment. For example, in one successful inclusive school, the teachers used a checklist during planning sessions to make sure that all the factors which could prevent pupils being included effectively were considered. This list comprised the main areas which could prevent a pupil reaching their potential and included:

- consideration of the most appropriate grouping arrangement
- the support required for information and communication technology (ICT)
- multi-sensory resources for each part of the lesson
- personal targets incorporated into the learning objectives
- opportunities for independent learning embedded in the planning
- the next step in learning clearly spelled out.
- 65. However, in the other half of the lessons, the teaching for the lowest-attaining pupils had weaknesses which prevented those pupils fully reaching their potential, even when the teaching for the rest of the class was good. The main weaknesses related to the nature of the tasks set and the quality and use of support by teaching assistants.

Work on literacy and numeracy

- 66. Seven in ten schools visited believed that the primary literacy and numeracy strategies (now brought within the National Primary Strategy) and the Key Stage 3 Strategy had had a positive impact on the approach to the inclusion of pupils with SEN. Recommended lesson structures and active learning methods ensured a greater variety of activities and supported pupils who had difficulty concentrating. In primary schools, the organisation of the curriculum allowed opportunities for intervention programmes to be timetabled effectively and for pupils to practise reading, writing and number skills. Organising such programmes in secondary schools, using the 'catch-up' materials provided by the Key Stage 3 Strategy, was more difficult.
- 67. Despite the generally beneficial effect of these strategies on the quality of teaching overall, the quality of the provision made for pupils with SEN to improve their literacy varied widely in the schools visited. In half of them, focused short-term programmes were used which had been researched and evaluated and the pupils made better gains than expected. In some cases, over six times the expected gain occurred over a three-month intensive programme. However, in many of the other schools the methods used were unsystematic, attention to the detail of learning was too limited and the pace of learning too slow.
- 68. In its advice on interventions with pupils with significant literacy difficulties, the National Primary Strategy has advised schools of programmes which secure rapid progress for most pupils. In a few schools visited this guidance had been followed and these gains were observed. However, some schools used additional literacy programmes, most of which had not been evaluated. Some secondary schools used the Key Stage 3 Strategy 'catch-up' materials indiscriminately with pupils with severe reading difficulties a purpose for which they were not intended.

- 69. Three in every ten schools made additional teaching available for all pupils whose reading ages were more than one year below their chronological ages. Most other schools resourced individual or small group work only for pupils whose reading ages were three years below their chronological ages. This resulted in considerable inequality of provision. For example, in one small rural secondary school, some pupils with reading ages below their chronological ages received considerable additional provision, while similar pupils in a school with a high number of lower-attaining pupils were not selected for this type of extra help.
- 70. Activities which allowed pupils to avoid serious engagement with reading and writing were common. Pupils with poor literacy skills were too often invited to work with pictures, highly simplified texts and undemanding formats for writing which did not challenge them to read or write at a sufficiently high level. Well-intentioned though it may be, teaching of this kind does not help. Sometimes the approach was associated with the misconceived application of ideas about preferred learning styles.

Use of teaching assistants

- 71. Over recent years there has been a significant change in schools' approach to staffing in order to support pupils with SEN, with a trend towards employing teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff and away from specialist teachers. The majority of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools are receiving such support in class. Often the lower-attaining pupils are grouped with a teaching assistant who is expected to ensure that pupils engage with the tasks. In nearly all the lessons observed, teaching assistants supported the lowest-attaining pupils. Teachers in such lessons commented that these pupils would make little progress without that support and had come to rely very heavily on it.
- 72. School policy on inclusion has become dependent on this level of resourcing. In some cases it was having two negative effects: it reduced the extent to which the teacher planned tasks so that pupils with SEN could undertake them successfully; and it often meant that pupils had too few opportunities to work independently. In over half of lessons seen, the explanations and activities were well matched to most pupils' needs, but pupils with SEN depended on teaching assistants to break the tasks down further so that they could participate. In these lessons the focus of the teachers' planning was on how the pupils with SEN could be kept engaged, rather than on what the pupils needed to learn next. There was not enough stress on how to improve their understanding and skills. This was a common reason why a significant number of pupils with SEN made too little progress, despite good teaching for the majority of the class.
- 73. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson most pupils were working on more advanced punctuation marks while the lowest-attaining pupils were, with the help of a teaching assistant, undertaking an activity on full stops and capital letters. However, three pupils had very limited writing skills and were not yet able to write in complete sentences. The time would therefore have been better spent on consolidating their reading and writing skills by focusing on their own next steps in learning and this could have been supported by the teaching assistant. Instead, they completed the task only with considerable support and by the end

- of the lesson they still had very little understanding of the purpose of full stops in separating sentences.
- 74. When the pupils with the most significant learning and behavioural difficulties were taught outside the mainstream class group, the support often focused more sharply on their needs. They were usually taught on their own by a teaching assistant. In some schools the arrangements meant that the pupils remained out of the class group for much of the day, isolated from their peers and deprived of access to a broad curriculum. Additionally, those pupils who needed contact with the best teaching, whatever the personal qualities and skills of the teaching assistants, were denied it. In one primary school, a pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties was taught for most of each day by a teaching assistant on her own as there were no other pupils with similar needs and the mainstream lessons were unsuitable. The school did find some opportunities in music and art to include her with her peers but, overall, she had a lonely experience each day.

Pupils with social and behavioural difficulties

- 75. Poor attendance and exclusion are often indicators that things are not going well in school. There are clear links between these indicators and long-term underachievement. Children with SEN are significantly over-represented in national statistics for poor attendance and exclusion.
- 76. Only a third of secondary schools were effective in meeting the needs of pupils with EBSD. They identified them carefully and made specialist provision available. For example, some schools restricted the numbers of teachers that pupils met each week to provide a more consistent approach, together with training in social skills and counselling. In these schools exclusion was often very low and attendance above the national average.
- 77. The pupils with the most significant behaviour difficulties, who required specialist teaching approaches, were seldom as successful in secondary schools. Their learning needs remained unidentified for too long. Fixed-period exclusion, quite often without any provision for work to be done while out of school or for catching up when they returned, meant that such pupils missed substantial periods of time from their education.
- 78. Many schools with a high number of pupils with challenging behaviour and poor attendance have appointed learning mentors over the last three years, often through the Excellence in Cities programme. One headteacher, for example, commented:

'Learning mentors have been used to support individual pupils in working towards targets in individual education plans and have helped involve pupils closely in their learning and progress. Discussion with the learning mentor has helped the children to focus on their achievement and plan future targets and has given them ownership of their learning.'

- 79. Learning mentors were effective in nearly all schools in supporting the most vulnerable pupils and provided good opportunities for making links between home, school and other agencies working with them.
- 80. In over half of the secondary schools visited the composition of some groups made the teaching of them very difficult. In those groups with a high proportion of low-attaining boys, including those with SEN, girls tended to receive less attention. Behaviour was often disruptive and sometimes very poor. Attendance was often unsatisfactory, particularly in Key Stage 4. Decisions on pupil grouping were sometimes evidently based on a desire to protect more able pupils from disruption. The quality of the provision for low-attaining groups and its effect on achievement and self-esteem were seldom well enough assessed.

Teacher turnover

81. In schools where it was hard to recruit and keep teachers, the consequent high staff turnover was a barrier to effective inclusion. New staff sometimes received expensive training but then left. Information from courses was sometimes disseminated to new teachers through staff handbooks and other methods, but this tended to have limited impact. Absorbing information and guidance on teaching pupils with SEN was not necessarily seen as the main priority for new staff faced with so many demands. In addition, because they had not taken part in the original training for inclusion, they had not completely understood the written material.

Managing change

Key points

- Few schools evaluate their provision systematically, making use of comparative data.
- Given the investment that schools make in teaching assistants, the systems for managing their work are often, particularly in secondary schools, weak.
- Over half of schools visited had no disability access plan.

Features of effective practice

- 82. Ofsted's 2003 report, *Special educational needs in the mainstream*, based on studies of effective practice for pupils with a variety of difficulties, summarised the factors which helped to bring about and sustain that practice. The key factors which help schools' efforts to be inclusive were defined as:
 - a climate of acceptance of all pupils, including those who have distinctive needs

- careful preparation of placements, covering the pupils with SEN, their peers in school, parents and staff
- the availability of sufficient suitable teaching and personal support
- widespread awareness among staff of the particular needs of pupils with significant special needs and an understanding of practical ways of meeting them in classrooms and elsewhere
- sensitive allocation to teaching groups and careful modification of the curriculum, timetables and social arrangements
- the availability of appropriate materials and teaching aids and adapted accommodation
- an active approach to personal and social development, as well as to learning, especially to lessen the effects of the divergence of social interests between older pupils with SLD and, sometimes, those with ASD, and their peers
- well-defined and consistently applied approaches to managing difficult behaviour
- assessment, recording and reporting procedures which can embrace and express adequately the progress of pupils who may make only small gains in learning and personal development
- involving parents as fully as possible in decision-making, keeping them well informed about their child's progress and giving them as much practical support as possible
- developing and taking advantage of training opportunities, including links with special schools and other schools providing for a similar group of pupils with SEN.
- 83. The same factors were evident in the effective practice seen in the survey on which this report is based.
- 84. The majority of schools visited were happy to respond positively to the expectations of the inclusion framework that specific additional needs should be met within mainstream settings as far as possible and outcomes for all pupils improved. Not all of the schools fully appreciated the implications of the framework.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 85. Only four out of ten schools, primary and secondary, knew in reasonable depth how inclusive their practice was as a result of high-quality self-evaluation which explored the link between the provision made and the outcomes for pupils.
- 86. In the schools which did know, management teams were well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of SEN provision and were pursuing plans to make the necessary changes. Their improvement planning cycle included evaluation of the curriculum for pupils with SEN and scrutiny of work and progress, drawing on annual reviews of statements along with other evidence, including what pupils and parents thought. In these schools, the SENCO was invariably able and given the opportunity to take a broad view of provision and outcomes across the school. These schools worked deliberately and persistently to translate a policy for inclusive education into improvements in results.
- 87. For other schools, the majority, hopefulness, rather than certainty, about the effectiveness of their efforts was commonly the case. They tended to have better evidence about the effectiveness of efforts to improve attitudes and behaviour rather than of their efforts to improve academic learning. They reacted to events rather than taking the initiative to prevent failure: they undertook too little forward planning to ensure that provision was in place to meet the needs of the pupils with SEN, rather than simply waiting to see how they would cope. Where they coped poorly, this was often attributed to pupils' difficulties rather than the school's inability to provide adequately.
- 88. The admission of pupils with severe learning difficulties into primary schools provides an example of one kind. In these cases, what was sometimes a complacent view about progress in the early years gave way to anxiety about lack of progress in later years, anxiety which had not been pre-empted by any action to acknowledge the consequences of differing rates of development and to take into account the implications of these. As a consequence, pupils were failing before action was taken.
- 89. The size and organisation of secondary schools make evaluation and planning of provision for SEN more complex than in primary schools. In the majority of secondary schools, senior managers and governors relied very heavily on information given to them by specialist staff. Many did not feel they were in a position to add to it from other sources, or to challenge it, because they lack detailed knowledge of SEN. As a consequence, they did not always feel well equipped to evaluate the quality of provision and identify weaknesses. This was not an attitude that they tended to take about other aspects of the school's provision in which they did not have specialist background. Managers and governors were sometimes guilty of being too entranced by the bureaucracy with which SEN administration remains associated, too preoccupied with funding additional provision and insufficiently concerned about the value of that provision.
- 90. By contrast, very good practice in self-evaluation and action-planning was straightforward. In one school, for example, data about the progress of all pupils were analysed systematically and each department was required to make

judgements about how well they catered for the needs of pupils with SEN. If the progress the pupils made was below the agreed targets, an action plan was agreed through team reviews. These were conducted in conjunction with the senior leadership team which ensured rigorously that no groups of pupils were left unconsidered and that whole-school issues which arose were addressed through the school development plan.

- 91. Even in the better practice, there was often insufficient attention paid to the involvement of pupils in decisions about the nature of the support they would receive or in reviewing that support and the progress they make as a result of it. Schools which did take pupils' involvement seriously, as expected by the inclusion framework, used a range of methods. They included: ensuring that pupils know the targets they should achieve and involving them in reviewing their progress each term; holding discussions about suitable rewards to encourage appropriate behaviour; 'focus groups'; questionnaires; and providing opportunities to agree work-related learning opportunities with older pupils. This is a feature which needs development in most schools. They are relevant to the points for action in the government's recent strategy for SEN, *Removing barriers to achievement*, (DfES, 2004).
- 92. Some suggestions about criteria for school self-evaluation of the effectiveness of provision for SEN are given in Annex B. They are adapted from the criteria used by HMI in this survey.

Involvement of teaching assistants

- 93. Given the investment that many schools make in teaching assistants to support pupils with SEN, the systems for managing their work and making use of the intelligence they can provide were surprisingly weak in many of the schools, particularly the secondary schools, visited. The inclusion of teaching assistants within the school's formal arrangements for performance management was rare. Usually assistants were monitored only when a teacher's performance was being observed. Even where SENCOs undertook some monitoring of their practice, they seldom received deliberate and pertinent feedback, with the conversations tending to focus on pupils' responses and work rather than on what the assistants did to improve these.
- 94. Senior managers appeared to expect less of the SENCO's management role in this respect than they did of other middle managers. One consequence was that the well-grounded insights which teaching assistants can offer about the reality of classroom work were not tapped as well as they could be. Residual uncertainty about working relationships with teachers was another factor limiting the use of teaching assistants' knowledge of how things are working. This uncertainty was shown in other areas, for example, in the extent to which teaching assistants were included in staff training, meetings and other events.

Funding

- 95. Since 2001 there has been greater clarity about the costs and funding of pupils with SEN. LEAs now provide more transparent information about the amounts of money allocated through the schools' delegated budget. Schools are also clearer and more open about how these funds are allocated. Over half of schools review what they offer across all year groups and cost it. They are aware of how much they spend, including on pupils with specific needs. However, they seldom use this information in conjunction with data on the progress of pupils and other evidence to evaluate how cost-effective their provision is. In addition, in the majority of schools, SENCOs play no role in financial decision-making, nor do they contribute sufficiently to the overall evaluation of provision for pupils with SEN.
- 96. Funding arrangements were identified by some headteachers as a major barrier to inclusion. They cited the difficulty of planning for the longer term where specific funding is based on a set amount for each pupil with a statement, which ends when individual pupils leaves the school, although in practice the school and the LEA anticipate that other pupils with statements will join the school. Headteachers and governors are reluctant to take the risk that the position may change, so employ staff on short-term or hourly contracts who are less likely to participate fully in curriculum planning and other school routines. In a few cases, headteachers appeared reluctant to see the additional needs element of the ageweighted element of the budget as relevant to the calculations. Those schools in LEAs which delegate more funding for pupils with statements or additional needs were able to manage their staff more effectively.
- 97. Smaller primary schools have much less flexible funding than larger ones and usually less scope for economies of scale. Those visited relied more heavily on LEA support services for specialist teaching. This was often effective in ensuring specific needs were planned for and met. Occasionally, however, it was insufficiently well focused and too much time was spent on planning rather than providing the support.

Role of LEAs

- 98. Ofsted's annual report for 2002/03 identified that only a quarter of LEAs have strong strategic management of SEN and the majority have weak evaluation systems. Only seven out of ten LEAs provide at least satisfactory value for money. This state of affairs was reflected in the survey visits. Most LEAs did not evaluate effectively the outcomes of the provision they funded. Funding was seldom linked to improvements in learning and pupils' progress was often not at the heart of negotiations on placements and annual reviews. Eight out of ten schools said the LEA largely responded to requests for additional funding rather than thinking ahead about placements and planning strategically for the longer term. In this respect and in others, few of the schools visited believed that their LEAs were as effective as they could be in promoting inclusion.
- 99. The response from schools was different in relation to support for schools' work with individual pupils. Eight out of ten schools found LEAs supportive in finding

ways to include pupils more effectively. They generally appreciated the advice of specialist support services and found it helpful.

Planning for disability access

- 100. The Audit Commission report of 2002 found that schools had made improvements in physical access as a result of the Schools Access Initiative. The government has significantly increased the funding made available under the scheme since 2002. Between 2003 and 2006, £300 million will be made available to help schools and LEAs meet the duties they have under the Disability Discrimination Act 2001. In 2001–02, only 23% of primary schools and 10% of secondary schools were deemed to be fully accessible.
- 101. Schools are required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2001 to plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils. This planning duty applies to access to premises, the curriculum and to providing written information in alternative formats. Schools were required to produce their first accessibility plans by April 2003.
- 102. In four out of ten schools visited there was satisfactory planning for improved access to premises, particularly when this could be achieved with relatively small adaptations. A few schools had planned for increased access to the curriculum. In one school the disability access plan included wide-ranging changes to the curriculum to ensure what the school called 'presence, participation and achievement'.
- 103. However, over half of the schools had no disability access plans and, of those that did exist, the majority focused only on accommodation. Delays in writing these plans had in part been caused by schools waiting for LEAs to provide access audits and further support with planning. In too many cases the plans were merely paper exercises to fulfil a statutory responsibility rather than demonstrating a clear commitment to improving access.
- 104. Schools are also required by the act to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of their disability. Schools are required to alter the way they work to find ways of including pupils effectively. Over half of the schools visited appeared unaware of this duty. A few had declined to admit pupils on the grounds that they did not have the resources to meet the pupils' needs. Others had admitted pupils with disabilities and then made the reasonable adjustments necessary to ensure that they could participate fully in school life. For example, one secondary school admitted a pupil with physical difficulties even though it was at the time insufficiently well adapted, and subsequently reorganised rooms for classes so that his classes were taught on the ground floor. At the same time, the school sought the funding to make the rest of the school accessible for him. Many other pupils have since benefited from this provision which developed over time.
- 105. About 20% of schools had undertaken major modifications, although, in some of these, headteachers reported that designers have still not taken into account fully the needs of the pupils who will use these facilities. Too often,

accommodation remains a major barrier to the full inclusion of pupils with physical and sensory difficulties. Two-thirds of schools reported that they were very short of space and that the range of adaptations required called for significant re-building. LEAs had tried to overcome these difficulties by adapting and resourcing at least one school in an area to provide for pupils with particular physical or sensory needs. In addition, LEAs looked to schools where the adaptations were least expensive and where there was spare capacity. This is a pragmatic approach, although it does have the effect of restricting parental choice and leading to some pupils travelling further to school. There were instances quoted in interviews carried out in the survey where a parent's strongly expressed wish for their child to attend a particular school had led an LEA to designate that school for additional resources.

Conclusions

- 106. This survey considered, from several perspectives, how well mainstream schools are enabling pupils with SEN to be included effectively in the full range of educational opportunity. It shows a picture of continuing variability.
- 107. While most pupils with SEN are educated in mainstream schools, progress towards inclusion in mainstream schools has slowed, although work is in progress on school re-organisations in some LEAs. The evidence from this survey on which the report is based provides the information now to direct future developments.
- 108. Some pupils with SEN continue to face barriers to participation and achievement, including inaccessible premises and shortfalls in support to reach their potential. They are more likely to be persistent non-attenders and to be permanently excluded than other pupils.
- 109. Too little is still known by schools about the attainment of pupils with SEN. Schools currently identify one in five of their pupils as having SEN and, for one in thirty, they consider they need additional external advice and support, provided through a statement. These are significant numbers. The funding that supports SEN provision is also significant.
- 110. The general commitment in mainstream schools to an inclusive approach has grown and the new inclusion framework has helped to increase and to focus that commitment. The schools that translate this commitment into effective, thoroughgoing action have strong leadership and teamwork and rigorously evaluate their provision in the light of pupils' progress. However, a high proportion of the schools visited in this survey have still a long way to go to match the provision and the outcomes of the best. They are generally not reaching out to take pupils with more complex needs, especially if their behaviour is hard to manage. Mainstream and special schools are still too isolated from one another; they are not providing the necessary expertise to ensure staff in mainstream schools are able to develop a coherent approach to inclusive education.
- 111. Expectations of the success that pupils with SEN can have remain at the heart of the matter. Many of those in mainstream schools could do better, provided that the curriculum, teaching and other support were better adapted to their needs and greater rigour was applied to setting and pursuing targets for achievement. Until more is expected from the lowest-attaining pupils, improvement in provision for pupils with SEN and in the standards they reach will continue to be slow.

Annex A. Pupil progress in English in primary and secondary schools 2003

Tables 1 and 2 provide data about the progress pupils make in English between Key Stages 2 and 3.

The level the pupils achieve at the end of the preceding key stage is listed at the left of the table, and across the top is the level they achieve at the end of the key stage.

Table 1 shows that, for those pupils who achieved Level 1 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1, 1% were disapplied, 10% were working at below the level of the test and were not assessed (B), a further 10% achieved no level in the test (N), 4% achieved a level 2, and 45% achieved a level 3. Only 28% of these pupils reached or exceeded the expected level 4.

Table 1. Pupil progress in primary schools, Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 English.

Key Stage 1 Reading	Percentage achieving Key Stage 2 level								
									Level 4 or
	Disapplied B		Ν	2	3	4	5	Total	above
Disapplied	38	33	4	1	11	10	2	100	12
W	7	43	16	4	20	6	0	100	6
1	1	10	10	4	45	27	1	100	28
2C	0	1	2	1	33	57	4	100	61
2B	0	0	0	0	14	71	13	100	84
2A	0	0	0	0	5	68	26	100	94
3	0	0	0	0	0	34	65	100	99
4+	0	0	0	0	0	3	97	100	100

Notes. D – disapplied; B – working at below the level assessed by the test; N – no level awarded; and 2–5 – National Curriculum test levels. Absent pupils are not shown in this table. The table was generated from the national pupil database and may not represent the results of all re-marks or amendments. Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding, and the omission of absent pupils.

Table 2. Pupil progress in secondary schools, Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 English.

Key Stage ² Percentage achieving Key Stage ³ level English

										Level 5 or
	Disapplied B		N	3	4	5	6	7	Total	above
Disapplied	29	37	10	4	8	4	1	0	100	5
В	10	40	18	8	11	2	0	0	100	2
N	5	28	27	12	14	2	0	0	100	2
2	3	17	25	16	25	4	0	0	100	4
3	1	4	8	11	42	25	1	0	100	26
4	0	0	1	1	15	52	24	3	100	79
5	0	0	0	0	1	18	48	32	100	98
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	87	100	99

Notes. D – disapplied; B – working at below the level assessed by the test; N – no level awarded; and 3–7 – National Curriculum test levels. Absent pupils are not shown in this table. The secondary school data was provided by the DfES, and is available – along with further information – from www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000437/sfr37-2003.pdf. Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding, and the omission of absent pupils.

Annex B. Criteria for self-evaluation

The criteria set out below have been adapted from those used in the survey visits. They are offered as a contribution to the process of school self-evaluation of the effectiveness of provision for SEN in mainstream schools.

1. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and their achievements are in line with those of pupils with similar difficulties and circumstances.

Supporting criteria:

- at least 80% of pupils make the nationally expected gains of two levels at Key Stage 2 and one level at Key Stage 3
- 78% of pupils who begin Key Stage 2 at level 1 in English achieve level 3 by the end of Key Stage 2
- at least 34% of pupils below Level 2 in English in Year 7 make a one-level gain by the end of Key Stage 3 and 55% of pupils at level 2 make this gain
- pupils withdrawn for substantial literacy support make an average of double the normal rate of progress
- the attendance of pupils with special needs is good (above 92%) and unauthorised absence is low.
- 2. The curriculum enables all pupils to learn and prepares them for the next stage of education and for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

Supporting criteria:

- sensitive allocation to teaching groups and careful modification of the curriculum, timetables and social arrangements
- the pupils whose reading ages fall below their peers have access to special help
- the curriculum is reviewed annually in the light of a regular audit of pupils' needs and the school responds to the outcomes of the review by establishing additional and/or different programmes of study to meet their needs
- plans to innovate are included in the school disability access plan
- partnerships between mainstream and special schools focus on the development of the curriculum and teaching and enhance

the opportunities available for pupils in both mainstream and special schools.

3. The teaching enables the pupils to learn and inspires them to think for themselves and enjoy learning.

Supporting criteria:

- there is widespread awareness among staff of the particular needs of pupils and understanding of practical ways of meeting those needs in classrooms
- assessment is regular and thorough and is used to plan future work and help pupils understand how they can improve
- teachers have high expectations of what can be achieved and set challenging targets
- lessons use appropriate methods to ensure pupils learn and enjoy their work
- suitable resources including information and communication technology are available to enable access to the curriculum.
- 4. The pupils make a positive contribution to the school community.

Supporting criteria:

- there is an active approach to personal and social development, as well as to learning, in the school, especially to lessen the effects of the divergence of social interests between older pupils with SEN and their peers
- all pupils learn about disability issues
- pupils with SEN have a voice in the school which is heard regularly
- pupils with SEN are able to participate fully in the life of the school
- there are well-defined and consistently applied approaches to managing difficult behaviour.
- 5. The school reviews its policy and practice on inclusion and acts on the findings to increase the range and diversity of the pupils admitted and retained and to promote good achievement by them.

Supporting criteria:

- the school monitors its admissions and exclusions and analyses the information, together with the LEA, in relation to placements in other schools
- pupils with disabilities whose parents request a place at the school are admitted wherever possible and the school makes reasonable adjustments to include them in the life of the school
- there is careful preparation of placements, covering the pupils with SEN, their peers in school, parents and staff, with careful attention to the availability of sufficient suitable teaching and personal support
- trends over time in National Curriculum and other assessments are analysed in the context of available data about comparative performance and are scrutinised
- pupils' work is regularly discussed and the quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is regularly observed
- evaluation of the quality of the provision is linked to the information about the outcomes for pupils
- those responsible are held to account for the quality of the provision and plans to improve the outcomes are implemented
- the school integrates its systems and procedures for pupils with SEN (including arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting) into the overall arrangements for all pupils
- deliberate steps are taken to involve parents of pupils with SEN as fully as possible in decision-making, keeping them well informed about their child's progress and giving them as much practical support as possible.