

**SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS**

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SCRUTINY PANEL**

May 2008

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Task Group was established by the County Council at the beginning of 2007 to review provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) in Lincolnshire. The Group comprised 7 members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel of the County Council and met for the first time on 27th February 2007. Since that time the Group had the opportunity to hear from a wide range of people who are engaged in the delivery of services to young people with special needs and also talk with some of the consumers of the services . both parents and pupils. We also conducted a questionnaire survey of all mainstream schools in Lincolnshire and the results of this survey, (which had an unusually high response rate for a survey of this type) has been very helpful in further informing our thinking in the preparation of our report.
- 1.2 Special educational needs provision is an enormous topic and is both complicated and complex. The Task Group would have liked time to explore issues more widely but it had been agreed that we would report after one year and that is what we have done. The views expressed in our report are largely formulated at a strategic level - and more work would be needed to implement some of our recommendations - but the views expressed in the report have been based on detailed material and casework examples that have been presented to us.
- 1.3 It is important to say at the outset that we have had tremendous help from schools, headteachers and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), other professionals involved with young people with special needs, parents and carers and we wish to acknowledge all the time, knowledge, and expertise that was freely made available to us to inform our work.
- 1.4 It is also important to say that we have met some outstanding professionals who are both dedicated and very skilled at what they do and for whom we developed enormous admiration and respect. Likewise, we have seen some educational provision in special schools of which the County Council can be truly proud and the excellence of whose work has been recognized and accredited through OFSTED inspections. Further still, there is much excellent and creative work being undertaken to support pupils with modest learning difficulties in mainstream schools.
- 1.5 However, in the same way that the Parliamentary Select Committee (that reported in the summer of 2006) found major deficiencies in the provision of special education arrangements for some children nationally, so have the Task Group found similar shortcomings replicated at the local level in their examination of the position in Lincolnshire. There simply is not sufficient provision of the right sort for all the children who need it.
- 1.6 Given that some children have a lifelong disability (with all the sadness and difficulties that will mean for them) there are those children who are fortunate at least to receive the right educational placement and for whom one can truly say that we tried to do our very best for them. Sadly, however, that is not universally the case. For some children their educational placements are not appropriate and often lead them to experience misery and despair. Although never intended,

this is not acceptable. It never was acceptable and even more so now, in the context of the Every Child Matters agenda is it unacceptable.

- 1.7 Probably one of the main reasons that this problem has arisen but has been neglected for so long is that the structure of local government is such that local authorities, encouraged by Government, compare themselves with one another . and if they are doing as well or better . then they feel content. The fact that everybody may be doing badly is not identified as an issue. In summary, this broadly underpins the findings of the Parliamentary Select Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The modern structure of special educational needs provision began back in the 1960s with the Warnock Report. This Report sought to change thinking about the education of children with special needs and the concept of inclusion was born. The idea was that children should not be consigned to a special school just because they had special needs but that they should be entitled to attend ordinary mainstream schools with extra support. Admirable though the intentions were that promoted this idea, for many children the experiment simply has not worked and Baroness Warnock herself is the first to admit this . both in her evidence to the Select Committee and in other recent published writings.
- 2.2 Parents frequently embrace the concept of inclusion, however. For parents it is often hard to accept that their child has a disability; especially where that disability is at an intellectual level rather than physically evident. Parents desperately want normality for their child and therefore the prospect of going to school with the other neighbourhood children is appealing . it is what they always imagined. In the longer term, and with hindsight, it can become apparent that those placements were not for the best - but by then it is often too late.
- 2.3 The Autistic Society have recently been running a series of advertisements in the national media, on this occasion aimed at changing thinking about adults with autism. The thrust of the message, however, applies equally to children and it is this: Autistic adults - 1 in 3 have experienced severe mental health difficulties because of lack of support. Autism is a lifelong condition. Without the right support it can have a profound, sometimes devastating, impact on individuals.
- 2.4 Indeed, this statement is echoed in written evidence submitted to the Task Group by a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust. In evidence to us she stated .

'Unfortunately some children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) need a school in which social communication and social understanding lie at the heart of the curriculum – this is the essence of a specialist ASD school. For some children only this will do. Currently the children who have failed first in mainstream school and then in EBD schools in Lincolnshire have to be placed in specialist ASD schools across England. Surely it would be better, firstly for these children not to have to spend three quarters of their school careers proving that they cannot succeed in unsuitable schools before finally being placed in a suitable one.' She continues elsewhere – *'I have seen children transformed by a well matched school placement.'*

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A number of examples of individual cases came to the attention of the Task Group which demonstrated the point being made in these comments by the consultant psychiatrist.

- 2.5 The Task Group received evidence about the alarming rise in mental health problems and emotional and behavioural difficulties generally among the school age population in Lincolnshire. In addition, the equally alarming rise in the identification of children with autistic spectrum disorders is well documented locally and nationally. The findings of the Task Group are that only some of these children are receiving the right support.
- 2.6 A further consequence of the policy of attempting to include children with intellectual difficulties (including emotional and behavioural) in mainstream schools with support has been that it has resulted in bureaucracy which is to be seen in a number of features but most notably in the ~~st~~atementing procedures. Statementing was developed (by government statutes) to try and ensure that appropriate additional resources were made available to a school to meet a specific child's needs. The process however is now widely acknowledged to have become time consuming, expensive to administer, and often slow and unwieldy. It does provide some ring fenced support to a child once it is in place but the level of support is often criticized for being inadequate and allocations of support sometimes appears to the onlooker as being somewhat arbitrary. Huge amounts of professional time, however, are devoted to preparing reports and holding meetings and reviews to try and ~~get~~ it right and often the staff resources engaged in this attempt are themselves very scarce (e.g. educational psychologists).
- 2.7 During the course of the Task Group's deliberations, Lincolnshire Children's Services have come forward with proposals to try and improve the way additional financial resources are made available to schools to meet special needs but the details of the scheme are still being refined and have yet to be published.
- 2.8 The Task Group has cautiously welcomed an initiative designed to reduce bureaucracy but we were led to believe the proposals were modelled on a system in use in Nottinghamshire. Reports from that County suggest that the system is not popular with schools or SENCOs and has simply pushed the bureaucracy around to different places. We understand that Nottinghamshire are reviewing the way these procedures work. Certainly the new proposals for Lincolnshire did not appear to enjoy the confidence of parents/carers at a recent consultation event attended by representatives of the Task Group. We would urge, therefore, that very careful consideration is given to the development of these ideas before implementation is attempted.

3. The Task Group Report.

- 3.1 In the early stages of gathering evidence a very large number of issues were brought to our attention. However, as we progressed and came to review these issues we found that they largely consolidated around 13 topic areas and it is therefore these 13 areas which are addressed in our report. These topics are dealt with in our report in no particular order of importance. For convenience, they are listed below in the same order that they are dealt with in the main report.

- (1) Triggers for Intervention (How Far Behind Does a Child Have to be?)
- (2) The Statementing Process
- (3) The Number of Special Schools Places
- (4) The Educational Psychologist Service - Resources.
- (5) Responses to Behaviour and Discipline Issues
- (6) Issues Relating to Autism
- (7) Issues Relating to Support for Children with Mental Health Problems
- (8) Boarding Facilities for Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- (9) The Curriculum in Mainstream Schools for Pupils with Special Needs
- (10) Outreach / Support Services for Child / Parents / Family
- (11) Teacher Training for Special Needs
- (12) Transfer Arrangements from Primary to Secondary School for Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- (13) Post-16 Education Provision for Pupils in Moderate Learning Difficulties Schools

3.2 For the purposes of this overview report it is possible to group these topics into five main areas.

3.2.1 There are those topics that are significant and have important implications . not least in resources. For example: the number of special school places, the provision of boarding school places for pupils with special educational needs, and issues relating to autism.

3.2.2 Topics that are also of critical importance but relate to processes: the early identification of a child's special needs and rapid appropriate intervention (the triggers for intervention and the statementing procedures).

3.2.3 Other topics have both a national and local dimension: for example, teacher training arrangements, the supply and recruitment of educational psychologists, and the application (or otherwise) of the national curriculum in mainstream schools for pupils with special needs.

3.2.4 Topics that are complex and multi-agency: support for children with mental health problems, responses to behaviour and discipline issues and outreach support for the child within the family and for the parents/family.

3.2.5 Finally, there are those topics that one would hope can be addressed fairly easily and they relate to transfer arrangements between schools for SEN children and post-16 education provision in moderate learning difficulty (MLD) and emotional and behavioural difficulty (EBD) schools.

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4. Special schools, Boarding Placements, Autism Issues.

4.1 Special Schools.

4.1.1 **The question of the sufficiency of places at special schools was raised with the Task Group frequently and from a number of sources.**

- We heard from headteachers of special schools that they were aware of ~~waiting lists~~for places.
- We heard that they often had to turn down cases that were referred to them simply because they did not have a place.
- We heard from headteachers and SENCOs of mainstream schools that they had pupils who were inappropriately placed with them and badly needed a specialist placement.
- We heard that often the only way to get any action with pupils inappropriately placed in mainstream was permanently to exclude the pupil (a stressful process for parent and pupil, to say the least, that should not be necessary).
- We also heard from parents of the sometimes extreme and harrowing difficulties they experienced in trying to get an appropriate placement for their special needs child. By way of example, one parent told us that she had experienced many very severe problems with her special needs child over the years but by far the worst had been in relation to education.

4.1.2 We understand that Lincolnshire has retained more of its special schools than many authorities and is to be warmly commended for that. However, that is not to say that there is currently a sufficiency of places . and from the evidence we received, clearly there is not. In our report we recommend that a study is undertaken to identify the shortfall. Urgent action is needed because, even as we discuss these issues, cohorts of children are going through the system who are not being served as they deserve.

4.2 Boarding Placements

4.2.1 Boarding placements opportunities are another area where there is an apparent shortfall of provision against need. In response to our survey we noted a significant level of support by headteachers for the possibility of boarding placements for some pupils and we have addressed this issue in our report. For the avoidance of any misunderstanding whatsoever, what we are most definitely not talking about here is the taking of children into care. There is a case, however, that for some children a boarding placement would be beneficial where, for example, domestic circumstances have become chaotic and the question of education has become a complete irrelevance in the mind of an already disturbed child.

4.2.2 We heard from the Headteacher of St Lawrence School, an MLD school in Horncastle, and one of the very few special schools to have a small number of boarding placements. He highlighted the advantages boarding arrangements have brought for some of his pupils who are able to enjoy educational experiences that would otherwise never have been possible for them.

4.2.3 Additionally we heard from headteachers of other special schools of the very long (and expensive) journeys made by many of their pupils each morning and

evening and in some of those instances boarding placements would relieve the stresses of traveling upwards of three hours per day.

- 4.2.4 Representations were made to us by some of the EBD schools of how they had argued for some boarding provision when replacement facilities were being built in the County but that such provision had been denied to them solely as a matter of policy. We urge that if such a policy exists, it is revisited urgently and that the views of the professionals working most closely in the field with SEN pupils are heeded.

4.3 Autistic Spectrum Disorder

- 4.3.1 The rise in the incidence of autistic spectrum disorders (and/or the rise in the numbers of children identified with ASD as a result of improved diagnosis) is a matter of national concern. The work undertaken in the County by the Autism Outreach Service is a highly valued service by schools but it cannot always address the situation where the child is placed in fundamentally the wrong environment to flourish and in any event is a very stretched resource. (The Consultant Psychiatrist's comments quoted in paragraph 2.4 above are particularly pertinent here).

- 4.3.2 A number of parents of high functioning ASD children made representations to us of the need in the County for a specialist school designed specifically to meet the needs of such pupils. These children have usually been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and often have very specific needs in terms of an educational environment. At present, placements of such children vary between EBD or MLD schools but are mostly in mainstream schools with or without statements and support. Many of these children, however, find their time at school an enormously stressful experience and this will often display itself by extremely challenging behaviour at school or home or both. Where the difficult behaviour occurs in a mainstream school it is widely disruptive to other pupils and often difficult to manage. Where it occurs at home it can completely disrupt, and even destroy, normal family life . not least for siblings. The Task Group, too, noted examples of children transformed when moved to what was for them the right educational environment. In our report we discuss the issues further and make our recommendation.

5. **Triggers for SEN Intervention and Statementing.**

- 5.1 The process and procedural issues that we looked at in our review are often key to the success of meeting the needs of an SEN child. It is widely recognized that the earlier a child's needs are identified and appropriately met, the better the likely outcomes will be for that child.

- 5.2 Against that background, therefore, we examined the triggers for intervention with additional support for a child displaying special educational needs and we looked at the processes that might ultimately lead to a statement. Early intervention is largely related to the ability of professionals working with a child to correctly identify issues. For example, that a child is not simply badly behaved but perhaps actually has an underlying learning difficulty.

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5.3 The statementing process is widely believed by both parents and schools to be both cumbersome and slow. Many professionals working in this area believe there is scope to streamline the processes and it is hoped that work can be progressed with this in mind.

6. Teacher Training, Educational Psychologists, The National Curriculum

6.1 All professionals working with children need to be increasingly skilled in identifying the range of problems that can befall a child and how support can be effectively structured and delivered. Classroom teachers in mainstream schools often feel they have not been adequately trained to handle many of the difficult learning and behavioural issues they now encounter in school.

6.2 Where the most challenging pupils are concerned, this situation is in contrast to the position of staff working in the special schools where, largely as a result of experience gained over time and from the experiences of colleagues working in the same field, effective and sometimes very creative solutions are identified for each child's needs in a small school setting.

6.3 The role of the SENCO in mainstream schools is, therefore, of paramount importance. The Task Group believe that all inexperienced SENCOs must be fully equipped and supported to do their job effectively and links with special schools are to be encouraged as a matter of good practice.

6.4 Educational psychologists are a key resource for schools. From our survey of schools we formed the view that in Lincolnshire they are highly regarded and very professional. However, they are a very scarce resource. Individual schools have educational psychologist time allocated to them . generally in terms of numbers of hours per school. However, in many instances, simple arithmetical calculations of the number of hours allocated against the number of pupils on a school's SEN register indicate that only the children with the very worst problems are likely to have any meaningful input from an educational psychologist.

6.5 In view of the shortage of this resource it is important that the time of the educational psychologists is used to maximum effect and that any unnecessary paperwork is avoided wherever possible. Lincolnshire's proposal to place educational psychologists in locality teams is likely to be helpful in saving on traveling time but recruitment and retention issues will also be important and will need to be monitored carefully.

6.6 We noted that for some pupils the application of the national curriculum becomes increasingly irrelevant as they struggle to cope with basic numeracy and literacy in an environment to which they do not relate. This is often at its most acute with some special needs pupils and can simply lead to increasing disaffection with school, misery and emotional and behavioural problems.

6.7 This is an issue that largely needs to be addressed at a national level but we saw, however, the outstanding results that can be achieved through the Solutions 4 programme which is commented upon further in paragraph 7.4.

7. Mental Health, Behaviour Issues and Family Support.

- 7.1 The issues covered in the report under these headings are often not only complex but involve multi agencies working together.
- 7.2 Mental health was raised with us as an issue on a number of occasions and appears to be a major increasing problem with young people. The reasons for this merit an investigation in their own right but were often attributed to family and circumstantial matters by those giving comments to the Task Group. Whatever the causes, however, the ability of appropriate agencies to respond quickly is paramount. Although significant improvements are being made we believe that mental health issues need to be viewed with the same urgency as would apply to physical health matters. There also appears to be a need for schools to have the ability to support parents by being able to access Child and Mental Health Services direct.
- 7.3 Emotional and behavioural issues are often closely linked with mental health and the Task Group Report examines the range of responses available.
- 7.4 We particularly noted the outstanding results that are being achieved with young people at Key Stage 4 who are placed on the Solutions 4 programme. This successful and pioneering work being undertaken by the County Council (and its partners who deliver the programme) is a remarkable testimony to how the attention and interest of disaffected young people can be captured in the right environment and with the right educational experiences.
- 7.5 In noting the difficulties experienced by many mainstream schools in meeting the needs of pupils displaying very challenging behaviours we were aware that these same types of problem were equally to be found in many home environments with parents unable or barely able to cope. We came to the view that both schools and parents need access to urgent skilled physical support in crisis situations and we suggest that the County Council explores the possibility of establishing a rapid response service to meet this need.

8. Transfer Arrangements between Schools and Post-16 Education in MLD and EBD schools.

- 8.1 The transfer arrangements for pupils generally and special needs pupils in particular are usually very good but the best arrangements need to be seen as normal good practice and to be available as a protocol for all schools.
- 8.2 Finally, the issue of post-16 education at MLD and EBD schools was raised with us. At present only serious learning difficulty (SLD) schools continue with education for their pupils after the age of 16 in Lincolnshire. Strong representations were made to us, however, that this should be available equally to pupils at MLD and EBD schools.
- 8.3 Arrangements are normally made, where appropriate, for MLD and EBD pupils to continue with their education at College but we were advised that these placements frequently break down as the pupil fails to cope in an unfamiliar and less sheltered environment. The case was made to us that frequently MLD and EBD pupils are anything up to several years behind their age peer group in

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attainment and particularly deserve the opportunity to develop further before being discharged into the world.

- 8.4 In the case of EBD pupils we were advised that a further 2/3 years of being educated and maturing in an EBD school setting could make the difference between a pupil making a success of their life as opposed to drifting into patterns of offending behaviour of one sort or another.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 All members of the Task Group have been totally committed to their investigation and believe it to have been a very important piece of work. We very much hope that positive action can be taken on most, if not all, of our recommendations.
- 9.2 In some cases action represents an opportunity for Lincolnshire to take a trail blazing approach nationally and lead in an area of education that is becoming increasingly high profile. In the case of Solutions 4 it is already doing just that.
- 9.3 Above all, however, it is essential that every effort is made to meet properly the needs of children with special educational requirements and that we do not marginalize them with inadequate or inappropriate provision.

David Bennett
Chairman of the Task Group
May, 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report contains a total of 19 recommendations, which for ease of reference are set out below, together with a reference to the relevant section in the report.

- (1) We note the information received on the triggers for intervention and the comments from the head teachers in the schools. We recommend that the Director of Children's Services reconsider, in consultation with partners, streamlining the process and the triggers for intervention for pupils with more complex and developing problems, so that intervention occurs at an even earlier stage. (Section 1)
- (2) We note that the statementing process is extensively prescribed by the Government's Code of Practice. However, in the light of comments received from head teachers, we recommend that the Director of Children's Services investigate to see if there are ways to streamline the statementing process, where possible, by putting more reliance on the input of professionals, already received prior to the statementing process. (Section 2)
- (3) We note proposals to reduce further the reliance on statements. We recommend that the *School Action* or *School Action Plus* funding delegated to schools (or provided to schools as part of the proposed arrangements, set out in paragraphs C17-C19 of this report) is clearly ring-fenced for SEN provision for identified pupils. (Section 2)
- (4) We note the performance management framework for Special Educational Needs (paragraphs C13-C16 of this report). We recommend that local performance indicators are developed to measure outcomes for SEN pupils, with reference to the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. (Section 2)
- (5) We note the submissions received as part of our survey and we note the information on the number of special school places in Lincolnshire. We recommend that the Director of Children's Services investigate the apparent shortfall in special school places, which has been identified to us by primary and secondary schools. (Section 3)
- (6) We note the arrangements whereby Educational Psychologists will be organised into locality based teams. However, in the light of the comments received from schools, we recommend that the Director of Children's Services consider and implement measures to improve the recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists and performance indicators developed to measure achievement against targets. (Section 4)
- (7) We recommend that the Director of Children's Services ensure that Educational Psychologists are able to spend more time directly supporting schools and pupils, and less time on official processes, and that this is effectively monitored by performance indicators. (Section 4)
- (8) We recommend that the County Council re-affirm its commitment to Solutions 4, and Solutions 4 continue to be operated by independent providers. We also recommend that a commitment is made to a three year rolling programme of funding to help with continuity and stability in planning and provision. (Section 5)

- (9) We recommend that the comments received as part of our survey in relation to the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service in secondary schools are addressed, in particular relating to:
- access to the service;
 - the responsiveness of the service; and
 - the need for an instant response team, possibly based as outreach support. (Section 5)
- (10) We note the excellent work that is undertaken to support autistic pupils and that some children receive provision of a very high standard. However, we recommend that the Director of Children's Services seek the views of parents and carers of Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils, together with experts, to ascertain the most effective form of education for Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils. This will ensure pupils are not disadvantaged or compromised by traditional educational delivery systems. (Section 6)
- (11) We recommend that the Director of Children's Services investigate the possibility of schools being able to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services directly, subject to parental consent, particularly in the light of proposals to reduce the reliance on statementing. (Section 7)
- (12) We note the information received from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services on their targets to reduce waiting times. We would request the Director of Children's Services seek to negotiate further reductions in waiting times, so that in serious cases pupils would wait no longer than a week for help. (Section 7)
- (13) We have received submissions which suggest that for some SEN children a boarding placement, whether long term, short term or weekly, would be beneficial for both education and social reasons. We recommend that increased flexible residential provision is considered for MLD and EBD schools in county. (Section 8)
- (14) We note that in effect the National Curriculum cannot be dis-applied for a pupil, unless that pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. We recommend that the County Council make representations through the appropriate channels to give head teachers the ability to dis-apply the National Curriculum for certain pupils at *School Action Plus*. (Section 9)
- (15) We note the pilot scheme in Fortuna School, Lincoln, whereby a social worker and two children-and-family officers are assigned to the school. We note the move to locality-based teams in Children's Services in Lincolnshire. We recommend that that as other services are developed to support children and families, where possible, these services be located in schools. (Section 10)
- (16) We also recommend that the needs of families with pupils demonstrating challenging behaviour are comprehensively identified by the Director of Children's Services and resources are made available to design services to meet these needs, because such support is not necessarily available at present. (Section 10)

- (17) We recommend that a protocol is developed in Lincolnshire whereby all inexperienced SENCOs receive mandatory and ongoing training; ideally the training and development will include mentoring by an experienced SENCO. (Section 11)
- (18) We recommend that best practice is identified and a protocol is developed and adopted, so that at least within the County the appropriate level of information is transferred between schools and pre-school settings on SEN and a draft protocol be presented to the Admissions Forum. (Section 12)
- (19) We recognise the approaches of Ambergate Additions and Priory Extra as models of good practice in terms of 16+ provision in Moderate Learning Difficulties Schools. We note the intention to include 16+ provision in the new secondary special school being constructed as part of Gainsborough Educational Village. We recommend the formal establishment of 16+ learning in all MLD and EBD schools as part of a range of options available to all pupils, in consultation with head teachers to ensure pupils' needs are effectively met. (Section 13)

A. INTRODUCTION

- A1. The scrutiny review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was originally included in the work programme of the Social Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and was consolidated by the County Council on 18 May 2007 into the work programme of the newly created Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.
- A2. The review was undertaken by a task group, chaired by Mr David Bennett (parent governor representative). The Task Group also comprised Councillors Peter Bedford, Kenneth Bridger, Alan Davidson, Howard Johnson, Mrs Amanda Puttick and Stephen Williams.
- A3. The scope of the review, which was approved by the Scrutiny Management Committee, poses the following questions in relation to : -
- the background to and content of the existing Lincolnshire SEN Policy (Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs - Policy Statement and Development Strategy)
 - how efficiently does the service work for pupils and parents;
 - how special educational needs are detected, particularly in an early years setting;
 - how outcomes are measured for individual children;
 - when and how the Lincolnshire SEN Policy is applied in each school and how much support Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) receive in schools;
 - how the needs of SEN pupils are accommodated in mainstream schools;
 - whether current policies always represent the best way of meeting the Special Educational Needs of all children; and
 - how successful the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) has been in preventing exclusion from school.
- A4. The review has specifically excluded services for children for whom English is an alternative language and support for talented and gifted children (unless such children receive SEN support otherwise), as these two groups are not included in the legal definition of special education needs.
- A5. We considered an interim report on 19 October 2007. This report identified 13 specific issues which the Task Group had identified and agreed that the review should focus on these issues. The structure of this final report follows each of these 13 issues, which are listed below: -
- (1) Triggers for Intervention (How Far Behind Does a Child Have to be?)
 - (2) The Statementing Process
 - (3) The Number of Special Schools Places
 - (4) The Educational Psychologist Service - Resources.
 - (5) Responses to Behaviour and Discipline Issues
 - (6) Issues Relating to Autism
 - (7) Issues Relating to Support for Children with Mental Health Problems

- (8) Boarding Facilities for Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- (9) The Curriculum in Mainstream Schools for Pupils with Special Needs
- (10) Outreach / Support Services for Child / Parents / Family
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- (13) Post-16 Education Provision for Pupils in Moderate Learning Difficulties Schools

A6. The topic of SEN is vast. It affects nearly one in five pupils in all schools, both nationally and in Lincolnshire. The above list of topics is not exhaustive and there are a number of SEN issues, which have not been covered by this report. It could also be argued that most of the items in the list could merit a detailed review in their own right. For this reason, our approach has been largely at a strategic level with an exploration of some of the issues. We would like to put on record the commitment and dedication of all staff involved in this process to improving outcomes for young people.

B. METHODS

B1. The review has used the following methods:

- a survey of head teachers in primary and secondary schools;
- written information from selection of head teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators, other education professionals; and a selection of parents and carers; and
- oral information from a selection of head teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators, other education professionals; and parents and carers.

B2. A list of contributors is attached at Appendix A. The Task Group has already considered a number of documents, including written submissions from contributors, listed at Appendix B. A key element was the survey of head teachers, which is summarised in Appendix C.

B3. Owing to the number of parents potentially involved, we have not been able to undertake a systematic exercise of consulting with parents and seeking their views. However, we interviewed representatives of the Parent and Carer Council. In most (but not all) instances these parents raised issues with the education of children with autism. Issues relating to autism are considered in Section 6 of our report.

C. BACKGROUND TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Definition of Special Educational Needs

C1. The definition of children with special educational needs¹ is as follows: -

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- (a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- (b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority; or
- (c) are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.+

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.+

C2. Special educational needs provision is defined as educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the same age.

C3. There are in effect three levels of special educational needs: -

School Action. This is defined by the SEN Code of Practice as "When a class or subject teacher identifies that a pupil has special educational needs, they provide alternative interventions additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies. An Individual Education Plan will usually be devised.+

School Action Plus. This is defined by the SEN Code of Practice as "When the class or subject teacher and the SENCO are provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different strategies to those provided by for the pupil through School Action can be put in place. The SENCO usually takes the lead although day-to-day provision continues to be the responsibility of class or subject teacher.

Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is the highest level of need. Statements (issued under section 324 of the Education Act 1996) are statements of special educational needs that identify the needs of a child with special educational needs, allocate resources to meet those needs and decide the placement of the child.

¹ The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills 2001) cites the legal definition, which is found in section 312 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended).

Types of Special Educational Needs

- C4. The current Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs² categorises SEN into four areas: -
- communication and interaction;
 - cognition and learning;
 - behaviour, emotional and social development;
 - sensory and / or physical.
- C5. However, the Department for Children, Families and Schools now uses further classifications for the purposes of their statistics.

The Numbers of SEN Pupils

- C6. The following tables are based on figures published in June 2007 by the Department for Education and Skills (now the Department for Children, Families and Schools), which relate to census returns in January 2007. These figures reflect the numbers in primary and secondary schools respectively. They exclude special schools, early years provision and, for Lincolnshire, out of county provision.

Primary Schools	Lincolnshire		England	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Pupils with Statements	1,121	2.2	61,280	1.5
SEN Pupils at School Action Plus	3,664	7.1	242,870	5.9
SEN Pupils at School Action	5,915	11.4	484,830	11.8
Total SEN without Statements	9,579	18.4	727,700	17.7
Total SEN	10,700	20.6	788,980	19.2

Secondary Schools	Lincolnshire		England	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Pupils with Statements	1,294	2.7	69,510	2.1
SEN Pupils at School Action Plus	2,435	5.0	165,120	5.1
SEN Pupils at School Action	4,833	10.0	364,660	11.2
Total SEN without Statements	7,268	15.0	529,780	17.7
Total SEN	8,562	17.7	599,300	18.3

² Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills . November 2001)

Special Educational Needs Pupil Categories

- C7. The following table shows the number of pupils with statements of SEN or at School Action Plus by type of need in primary schools in Lincolnshire.

	Number	Percentage (of SEN)
Specific Learning Difficulty	749	15.7
Moderate Learning Difficulty	1,383	28.9
Severe Learning Difficulty	71	1.5
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty	19	0.4
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties	866	18.1
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	851	17.8
Hearing Impairment	75	1.6
Visual Impairment	50	1.0
Multi-Sensory Impairment	10	0.2
Physical Disability	156	3.3
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	361	7.5
Other Difficulty / Disability	194	4.1
TOTAL	4,785	100

- C8. The following table shows the number of pupils with statements of SEN or at School Action Plus by type of need in secondary schools in Lincolnshire:

	Number	Percentage (of SEN)
Specific Learning Difficulty	875	23.5
Moderate Learning Difficulty	907	24.3
Severe Learning Difficulty	39	1.0
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty	3	0.1
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties	1,020	27.4
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	146	3.9
Hearing Impairment	44	1.2
Visual Impairment	39	1.0
Multi-Sensory Impairment	14	0.4
Physical Disability	144	3.9
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	280	7.5
Other Difficulty / Disability	218	5.8
TOTAL	3,729	100

- C9. There are interesting comparisons to be noted between the numbers and percentages listed. For example, autistic spectrum pupils comprise 7.5% of both primary school and secondary school pupils. Conversely, pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties comprise 27% of secondary SEN, but only 18.1% of primary SEN. We can draw no firm conclusions from these figures, as the numbers do not include the pupils in special schools.

Funding

- C10. Funding for special educational needs falls into two categories: -

Delegated Funding . This funding is provided directly to each school as part of a school's delegated budget. The County Council's funding formula takes account of the number of pupils at each school at School Action and School Action Plus. We have been advised that for 2006/2007 each primary school received £251.30 for School Action pupils and £402.10 for School Action Plus pupils³. In 2008/2009 £7.85 million has been delegated to schools for School Action and School Action Plus funding.

Funding for the Statement . This funding follows the pupil directly as part of the statement. The bands are based on a notional allocation of teaching assistant time and represent a sum of money. This sum of money is immediately added to the school's budget allocation. The sum continues to be allocated to the school for subsequent financial years, as long as the pupil remains at the school and the statement remains in force. The funding for each band is calculated on the basis of the top grade for a learning support assistant (Spinal Column Point 11) based on a working year of 39 weeks. The funding includes National Insurance and Superannuation costs.⁴

Band	Hours of Teaching Assistant Support (per week)	Financial Allocation per Annum (2007/08) £	Pupil Numbers per Band⁵
1	2½	1,129	68
2	5	2,258	489
3	7½	3,387	449
4	10	4,516	667
5	15	6,774	637
6	20	9,032	413
7	25	11,290	256
8	32½	14,677	498

C11. All statements of SEN for primary and secondary schools lead to an allocation of resources, which is between Band 1 and Band 8. In most instances, where a pupil's statement names a special school there is no banded funding, as the special school would be expected to cater for the needs of the pupil. However, there are approximately 300 pupils who attend special schools and receive additional banded funding. In 2007/2008, this additional banded special school funding totalled £2.46 million. Paragraphs C17-C19 describe an initiative, which has been developed as part of the Additional Needs service Plan 2007/2008.

C12. Most teaching assistants who support pupils with statements are employed by schools on fixed term contracts. Employees on such contracts acquire certain employment rights after one year and after two years are entitled to redundancy payments. This has financial implications for the local authority. Where a pupil with SEN is entitled to teaching assistant support, the school can only commit to funding the teaching assistant post for as long as the pupil remains at the school

³ Special Educational Need Administrative Handbook for Schools . 4th Edition . Autumn Term 2006, page 9

⁴ Special Educational Need Administrative Handbook for Schools . 4th Edition . Autumn Term 2006, page 17

⁵ The actual pupil numbers in each band will vary, as statements are produced on weekly basis. These figures also include pre-school and independent schools and relate to point in the autumn term 2007.

and requires assistance. A fixed term contract will normally be issued. Where an individual comes to the end of a fixed term contract and has been employed for more than two years, there will be redundancy costs if the school cannot redeploy the individual into suitable alternative employment. Schools are being encouraged to engage in the redeployment of employees in order to minimise redundancy costs.

Special Educational Needs and Performance Management

- C13. There are only two Best Value Performance Indicators for the special educational needs service, which measure the time taken between the request from a school or parent for a statement and the issue of the proposed statement of special educational needs.
- C13. Best Value Indicator 043a measures the percentage of proposed statements issued within 18 weeks where all reports from contributing agencies have been received on time. The Council's performance in this area continues to be excellent. The County Council has achieved the target of 100% on 2006/2007 and up to 29 February 2008 was achieving the target. This level of performances puts the County Council in the top 25% of authorities.
- C14. Best Value Indicator 043b measures the percentage of proposed statements issued within 18 weeks regardless of whether reports have been received in time from other agencies. Thus this indicator reflects the actual number of proposed statements issued within 18 weeks. The performance against this indicator shows that four out of five proposed statements are issued within 18 weeks. Performance has improved during 2007/2008, but is still short of the Council's target. The Special Educational Needs Service Plan 2007/2008 included action to improve this. Performance is monitored by the Council's performance management arrangements.
- C15. The above two Best Value indicators are being superseded by a new indicator (NI 103) which measures (a) the percentage of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks excluding exception cases as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year; and (b) the percentage of final statements of special educational need issued within 26 weeks as a proportion of all such statements issued in the year. There is thus a change of emphasis in the new performance management regime in that it focuses on final as opposed to proposed statements.
- C16. The performance management framework for special educational needs is entirely and only focused on the timescales in the statementing process. The Panel is of the view that indicators need to be developed to measure the educational outcomes for children with special educational needs.

Work in the Additional Needs Service Plan 2007/2008

- C17. The Additional Needs Service Plan 2007/2008 identified several areas of work for the service. For example, Service Plan included the following tasks:
- the issue of revised assessment criteria to schools;

- the continued devolution of funding to schools to better support the needs of children and young people (including the funding released through the lower number of statements);
- the co-ordination of training and development in SEN for staff in schools; and
- support for individual children and young people at Early Years Action, Early Years Action Plus, School Action and school Action Plus in order to meet SEN at lower levels of the SEN Code of Practice (delivered through advice to schools and parents/carers)+.

C18. One strand of the work from the Service Plan was a review, which led to a report to the Children's Services Policy Development Group in February 2008. This report⁶ contained a proposal that the County Council adopt a position of issuing statements only in respect of pupils, whose assessed needs require 25 hours, currently band 7, or more, additional in-school support; have significant health or disability needs; or need to attend a special school.

C19. The report to the Children's Services Policy Development Group proposed that the assessment of need should be made using the current Common Assessment Framework (CAF) criteria plus educational factors taken from the Area Review Meeting. These CAF style assessments could be undertaken with the child's school, involving all the agencies. Local special schools should be a key partner in the decision making process to ensure a high level of professional input. The report referred to an additional sum of approximately £8.2 million being delegated to school led forums on a district area basis. This sum (the report continued) coupled with School Action and School Action Plus funding would eventually lead to a total of approximately £14 million for distribution for support at a local level over the next five years. A consultation exercise was being undertaken on this proposal with head teachers.

C20. We understand that consultation is continuing on these proposals and for this reason there has been no final decision. Two members of the Task Group attended as observers a consultation event, organised by the Parent and Carer Council on 23 April 2008. At this meeting a variety of concerns were expressed by parents on the proposals.

⁶ Item 8 of Agenda of Children's Services Policy Development Group . 8 February 2008

1. TRIGGERS FOR INTERVENTION

School Action and School Action Plus

- 1.1 The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice⁷ describes the triggers for intervention for both school action and school action plus. Section 4 of the Code relates to Early Years, which has not been a major element of this scrutiny review, but is discussed briefly below. Sections 5 and 6 of the Code respectively cover the primary and secondary phases.

School Action

- 1.2 The wording in the SEN Code specifying *School Action* is similar for primary and secondary⁸. The intervention at School Action would usually be initiated by the class teacher (primary) or a subject teacher (secondary), after consultation with the SENCO. The Code states:

The triggers for intervention through School Action could be the teacher's or others' concern underpinned by evidence, about a child who despite receiving differentiated learning opportunities:

- makes little or no progress even when the teaching approaches are targeted particularly in a child's identified area of weakness
- shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy or mathematics skills which result in poor attainment in some curriculum areas
- presents persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which are not ameliorated by the behaviour management techniques usually employed in the school
- has sensory or physical problems and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of specialist equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties, and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of a differentiated curriculum.

- 1.3 The Code makes some general suggestions on the nature of the intervention, which could take the form of specialist learning materials or extra adult time with the pupil. It also specifies the need for an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which would set out the targets for the pupil and the strategies to be used. The IEP should be reviewed at least twice a year. The Code requires that parents are involved in the development and review of IEPs.

School Action Plus

- 1.4 The Code sets out the triggers for intervention at *School Action Plus*. Again the wording is similar for primary and secondary and the intervention would usually come from the class teacher or subject teacher or SENCO⁹:

⁷ Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, Department for Education and Skills, 2001

⁸ Paragraphs 5.44 and 6.51 of Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, Department for Education and Skills, 2001

⁹ Paragraphs 5.56 and 6.64 of Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, Department for Education and Skills, 2001

The triggers for *School Action Plus* could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme and/or concentrated support, the pupil:

- continues to make little or no progress in specific areas over a long period
- continues working at National Curriculum levels substantially below that expected of pupils of a similar age
- continues to have difficulty in developing literacy and mathematics skills
- has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with their own learning or that of the class group, despite having an individualised behaviour management programme
- has sensory or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular advice or visits, providing direct intervention to the pupil or advice to the staff, by a specialist service
- has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede the development of social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

- 1.5 Usually external support services will be involved at *School Action Plus*. Again targets and strategies would be developed and incorporated into an IEP. As with the development and review of IEPs at *School Action*, parents should be engaged and involved in the process at *School Action Plus*.

Children in an Early Years Setting

- 1.6 We were advised by the Senior Educational Psychologist that pre-school children fall into two categories in terms of intervention: for children under two and a half years or not yet in an early years setting, the intervention would be triggered by the Community Paediatrician; the Portage Home Visiting Service or the Sensory Impaired Service. For children over two and a half and in an Early Years Setting, alerts would come from staff working in the Early Years Support Service (EYSS) and the Community Paediatrician. Educational Psychologists liaise with the EYSS twice each term. An educational psychologist will only become involved with a pre-school child if there is signed consent from the parent or guardian.

Obtaining a Statement

- 1.7 Whilst the Code of Practice outlines the criteria for School Action and School Action Plus, it does not detail the criteria for obtaining a statement other than stating that the pupil will have demonstrated significant cause for concern.⁺
- 1.8 The County Council has produced its own document: *Special Educational Needs Criteria for School Action/School Action Plus and Statutory Assessments*¹⁰. This is an extensive document in two sections. Section 1 specifies the expectations of relevant responses at *School Action* and *School Action Plus*. Section 2 specifies the sample pupil descriptors, focused *School Action* and *School Action Plus*. Section 2 sets out the level of need considered to be sufficiently severe and complex and therefore likely to need statutory assessment. The descriptors reflect the child/young person's continuing need following effective earlier

¹⁰ Special Educational Needs Criteria for School Action/School Action Plus and Statutory Assessments (Lincolnshire County Council Draft June 2007)

interventions as laid out in Section 1 of the document. The head teacher is responsible for seeking the statutory assessment.

Our Survey

- 1.9 We sought the views of primary school and secondary head teachers on the statement: *I am able to obtain a statement for every pupil I believe needs one.* 55% of secondary schools either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Similarly, 65% of primary school head teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. In response to the supplementary question: *What are the key issues in terms of obtaining statements for pupils?* we received a variety of comments:

Primary School Head Teachers

- *Collecting evidence for statementing process can be problematic: organising observations, reviews, time constraints and outside agencies and sometimes pupil attendance and parental attendance at meetings.*
- *The time it takes to obtain a statement is far too long. If we judge as professionals that a pupil needs a statement then the process can be quickened. Too often we hear the medical professionals are holding the process up.*
- *Statements are no longer considered for children with literacy difficulties, but I find that those children need more 1:1 support in every lesson than any others and this is not funded well enough under School Action Plus.*
- *It can seem that the more School Action Plus support that a school puts in with a child, so that they make good progress, the less likely it will be that the child will get a statement. We are told to continue with the School Action Plus support which may be unsuitable.*
- *The system fails to recognise teachers' professional knowledge when deciding if children need statements. We are required to try pointless strategies that we know will not work before a statement is considered.*

Secondary School Head Teachers

- *Paperwork cannot always describe or explain the needs of the students. The over-reliance on outside agency agreement is frustrating when it can take so long and then be ambiguous because of the lack of involvement.*
- *Inconsistency between what primary schools do, so on transition children with similar needs may or may not have a statement. Where a child's needs are behavioural, it is often very difficult to gain a statement until they have been excluded a number of times. We have to start from scratch with too many at age 11.*
- *I feel there is a danger that the more the school does to support the pupil concerned, the less help they will get in terms of funding.*
- *The key issues are (a) changing criteria; and (b) pupils not meeting criteria though they obviously have a need for a statement.*
- *Collecting sufficient evidence to demonstrate need. Having parents willing to fully support the process. Availability of agency input.*

RECOMMENDATION 1

We note the information received on the triggers for intervention and the comments from the head teachers in the schools. We recommend that the Director of Children’s Services reconsider, in consultation with partners, streamlining the process and the triggers for intervention for pupils with more complex and developing problems, so that intervention occurs at an even earlier stage.

2. STATEMENTING PROCESS

- 2.1 The Government’s SEN Code of Practice¹¹ provides detailed guidance on the statementing process. It stresses the importance of involvements of the appropriate statutory agencies.

The Area Referral Meeting

- 2.2 The County Council’s *Special Educational Needs Administrative Handbook for Schools* specifies the statementing processes within the County. The decision to initiate a multi-professional assessment is taken at the Area Referral Meeting. A referral to the Area Referral Meeting is made following a *School Action Plus* review meeting, where the school, parents and the support agencies involved consider that intervention at School Action Plus is not successfully meeting the child’s special educational needs.
- 2.3 The Area Referral Meeting in making its determination has to consider two issues: the actions which the school and the special needs support services have taken to help a pupil overcome learning and behavioural difficulties; and the pupil’s current level of attainment / behaviour in relation to the criteria specified by the Council for starting a formal assessment. Referral is usually made to the Area Referral Meeting by the school’s head teacher. However, requests can be made by parents or in some instances by other agencies.
- 2.4 The Area Referral Meeting comprises three members: an SEN education officer; a member of the County Psychology Service; and a senior member of staff from SEN services. The school may choose whether to be represented at the Area Referral Meeting, to support the case. The County’s *Special Educational Needs Administrative Handbook for Schools* specifies the documents which have to be submitted to the Area Referral Meeting. These include two individual education plans at *School Action Plus* and written evidence that the review meeting at *School Action Plus* had concluded that the available strategies had been tried over a period of time and the criteria had been met to move to the Area Referral Meeting. If there is a decision to proceed to a statement, parents are notified and formal reports are requested from the relevant agencies (these depend on the type of need).

Decision to Issue a Statement . the Statementing Panel

- 2.5 Once all the reports have been received as part of the statementing process, the information is considered by the Statementing Panel, which comprises the Head

¹¹ Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills . November 2001)

of Additional Needs, a senior educational psychologist; the education officer for the area; a seconded head teacher; and an education inspector.

- 2.6 If the Statementing Panel decides that a statement is required, a draft is sent to the parents, who have 15 days to comment and name the school which they would like the pupil to attend. This is the period measure by the Best Value Performance Indicators referred to in paragraphs C13-c14 above. Alternatively, the Statementing Panel may decide not to issue a statement or to issue a note in lieu. The latter contains detailed information on the child's learning difficulties which can be met by resources routinely available at School Action Plus. There is a right of appeal for parents to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, if they are not satisfied with the final content of the statement.

Our Survey

- 2.5 We included a question in our survey on the statement process. We asked head teachers to respond to the statement: *I believe that SEN procedures prior to the statementing process could be improved.* 82% of primary school head teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. 65% of secondary schools either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. We asked a supplementary question: *How could the procedures be improved?* and received a range of comments. We include a selection below.

Primary School Head Teachers

- *Too much paperwork and too rigid criteria make it difficult to fit a "square peg" into specified round holes. So much Educational Psychologist time spent on paperwork for multi-disciplinary assessments takes them out of school.*
- *Consider carefully what the school has presented especially when there is sufficient carefully staged paperwork presented. Reviews do not necessarily need to involve an Educational Psychologist, which would provide more time in school.*
- *Very slow processes could be quickened. Support service response times could be improved. Too much paperwork could be reduced.*
- *Procedures could be slimmed down. Electronic records could be improved so data and information can be sent out effectively. Criteria could be made clearer.*
- *Unrealistic expectations that the vast majority of SEN will be met by schools from their normal resources. SEN is becoming far more specialised and schools need access to better funding and training so they can deliver right support.*

Secondary School Head Teachers

- *The procedures are slow moving. For example, when staff feel a Year 7 student should be statemented, it can take a year or more before the school has sufficient evidence to support the request. Referrals for outside agency involvement take a long time to be processed.*
- *A fast track system should be introduced for students who present with difficulties previously undiagnosed or recognised.*
- *There should be improved understanding by SEN Services that in-house strategies have been effectively applied and monitored. Internal strategies*

should be as respected as the external agency approach that must be shown before a multi disciplinary assessment is granted. An open acknowledgement that there are students whose additional needs require resourcing beyond that of the normal school budget. (For example, setting up additional teaching groups for students unable to access Key Stage 3 curriculum and supporting pupils on a highly differentiated curriculum).

- *There should be speedier access to support services and more communication between agencies.*
- *Procedures are generally okay for academic students. But this is not the case for Emotional Behaviour Difficulties / Behaviour issues, because too many people and agencies are involved - slowing or stalling any progress.*

RECOMMENDATION 2

We note that the statementing process is extensively prescribed by the Government's Code of Practice. However, in the light of comments received from head teachers, we recommend that the Director of Children's Services investigate to see if there are ways to streamline the statementing process, where possible, by putting more reliance on the input of professionals, already received prior to the statementing process.

RECOMMENDATION 3

We note proposals to reduce further the reliance on statements. We recommend that the *School Action* or *School Action Plus* funding delegated to schools (or provided to schools as part of the proposed arrangements, set out in paragraphs C17-C19 of this report) is clearly ring-fenced for SEN provision for identified pupils.

RECOMMENDATION 4

We note the performance management framework for Special Educational Needs (paragraphs C13-C16 of this report). We recommend that local performance indicators are developed to measure outcomes for SEN pupils, with reference to the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

3. SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

- 3.1 Lincolnshire has 21 special schools and a higher than average number of special school places. Six schools are Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Schools. Eight schools cater for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). Four are Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) Schools. Two schools are hospital schools and one school is for Physical and Medical Disabilities. These 21 schools provided education for 1,519 pupils (Spring Term head count 2008). The total budget for special schools is £24.62 million. The unit cost per pupil varies from £28,972 per pupil for EBD schools to £11,615 per pupil in an MLD school. (2007/2008 figures). These average figures exclude the additional banded funding provided to special schools, which is explained in paragraph C11 above. The higher costs for EBD schools reflect the need for more adults (both teachers and teaching assistants) per pupil than in MLD schools. EBD schools also offer an extended day and we understand that the costs reflect the Private Finance Initiative costs of establishing these schools. The breakdown of pupil numbers and capacity by school type is as follows:

Type of Special School	Pupil Numbers (Jan 2008)	Capacity ¹²
Moderate Learning Difficulties	696	716
Severe Learning Difficulties	421	445
Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	212	225
Physical and Medical Disabilities	102	101
Sub Total (excluding Hospital Schools)	1,431	1,487
Hospital Schools	88	n/a
Total	1,519	n/a

- 3.2 The capacity figures in the above table are taken from the School Organisation Plan, which reflect the net physical capacity at the school, using Department for Children, Families and Schools guidance. The table superficially indicates some spare capacity in special schools, but this is simply a reflection of the fact that there is some turnover in these schools.
- 3.3 In November 2007, we heard evidence that 18 of the 21 special schools had been assessed under the new Ofsted framework and all these schools had been given a good or excellent rating.
- 3.4 As part of our review, we visited five special schools: -
- Ambergate (MLD) School, Grantham;
 - Fortuna (EBD) School, Lincoln;
 - Garth (SLD) School, Spalding;
 - the Phoenix (EBD) School, Grantham; and
 - the Priory (MLD) School, Spalding.
- 3.5 We would like to thank the head teachers, staff and governors at all these schools for their co-operation with our visits. We were impressed with the learning environments of each of these special schools. They were all well managed, with committed head teachers and dedicated staff. We believe they constitute a major asset for the county. Some of the issues arising from these visits are considered in other sections of this report; others are set out below.

Special School Visits

- 3.6 In particular, we were impressed by a pilot scheme at the Fortuna School, Lincoln, in which a social worker and two children-and-family officers are based and managed at the school and provide support to staff. This is genuine example of integrated children's services, as opposed to the former education and social services.
- 3.7 Home to school transport has not been included in this review. Many special schools pupils travel long distances, in some instances up to 90 minutes one way. Whilst some pupils get used to this level of travel, it cannot be without some impact. One of the special school head teachers expressed an interest in assuming direct responsibility for transporting pupils to and from his school. The benefits of this would be staffing continuity; and possible cost savings. This

¹² The source of information on capacities for special schools is the Lincolnshire School Organisation Plan Update (2007-2012)

suggestion is being progressed separately from this review, as part of the fundamental budget review of transport. Another school head teacher indicated that the working relationships with the taxi drivers were particularly good.

- 3.8 Two of the head teachers supported the idea of a residential facility, which could provide some form of short term respite care. This would benefit both children and families alike. This topic is considered in section 8 of this report.
- 3.9 We were also pleased to see the specialist unit for autistic spectrum pupils at Ambergate School. Issues relating to autism are covered in Section 6 of this report.

Developments in Special School Provision - Gainsborough

- 3.10 Currently in Gainsborough, the Beckett School has physical capacity for 35 SLD pupils, aged 3-19 and the William Harrison School has physical capacity for 104 MLD pupils, aged 3-16. As part of the Gainsborough Educational Village development, these two schools will close and two new special schools will open, each catering for both SLD and MLD pupils. The secondary special school will have capacity for 112 pupils and the primary special school will have capacity for 96 pupils, increasing special school net capacity by 69 pupils.

Survey Results

- 3.11 As part of our survey, we asked head teachers whether they agreed with the statement: *“have children in my school, either with or without statements, who would be better served in a special school.”* 60% of primary schools either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement; and 55% of secondary schools either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. The supplementary question in the survey was: *“If you agree, could you enlarge on the key issues?”* This question elicited a wide range of responses. A frequent general comment was a shortage of available special school places. We reproduce a selection of comments below: -

Primary School Head Teachers

- *Thinking of autism, where specialist equipment and staff could be provided centrally and more cost effectively, there would be less disruption to the learning of other pupils.*
- *Behaviour issues are becoming more serious. One exclusion of a five year old could have been prevented possibly if 1:1 or small group tuition had been available.*
- *Whilst we all try to provide an inclusive approach this is often very difficult within a tight budget and I believe some children's needs would be far better met within a special school setting.*
- *Some aspects of their needs are better met by specialist staff on site. Whilst I believe strongly in inclusion for all, as the gap broadens access to the curriculum can be very challenging.*
- *If schools believe in the inclusion principle, which we do, then all children bar the most challenging should be supported in mainstream, but we must be given the realistic funding to provide support and there must be an emphasis on high quality training.*

Secondary School Head Teachers

- *Very difficult to find places at special schools. The range of special school specialisms seems to be diminishing. Too many times we are told “There are no special schools to meet their needs”. Most stay in mainstream which is very distressing, when mainstream cannot meet the need.*
 - *Mainstream education for a very few number of students may not be the best option. Whilst appropriate support and a differentiated curriculum can meet the academic needs of the child, their social needs are more difficult to provide for as they get older and the gap between them and their peers widens. However, special school provision is inadequate. Last year, County and the head of a special school agreed with us that mainstream was not benefiting a student in Year 8. However, as no place was available at a special school, this student remains here, now as a Year 9 student.*
 - *We have parents who have requested special school placements and have been told that no places are available. This is clearly not good enough. We all have parents who will not look at special school placements.*
 - *We are an inclusive school - we believe in inclusion and we make it work well but there are a very small number who are significant in terms of their demands on resources and more importantly on the demands on their own emotional and academic potential.*
 - *Although all staff recognise that they are teachers of SEN, they are not experts in the increasingly complex difficulties that children are now attending school with. As a small school a high percentage of statemented pupils can have a massive impact on other pupils and the whole workforce.*
- 3.12 The findings of the head teacher survey indicate that there are pupils in mainstream who would be better served in a special school. We believe that the comments received from head teachers and other evidence support a contention that there is shortfall of special school places. However, we have not attempted to quantify this and believe further investigation is needed.

RECOMMENDATION 5

We note the submissions received as part of our survey and we note the information on the number of special school places in Lincolnshire. We recommend that the Director of Children’s Services investigate the apparent shortfall in special school places, which has been identified to us by primary and secondary schools.

4. THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST SERVICE

- 4.1 The Government's response to the Education and Skills Select Committee report stated:

“Educational psychologists play an important role in assessing SEN and in helping to formulate support arrangements for children with a wide range of needs.”

- 4.2 In Lincolnshire we have been advised that:

“The County Psychology Service primarily provides a consultation service to schools and pre-school providers. Psychologists work with all those involved in the education of young people, both as individuals and/or in groups. They focus attention upon the ways in which teaching and learning can be enhanced, using their knowledge and expertise in the area of psychology. The work of the service follows a pattern of ‘plan, do, review’, making sure that all those involved (e.g. young person, parent, teacher etc) know exactly how the Psychologist contributes to positive change. In cases where the parents give permission for statutory assessment, the Psychologist may provide advice to the Local Education Authority about the special learning needs of a young person, based upon their working knowledge of the young person’s needs.”

- 4.3 Nationally, the Educational Psychology Services appear to be a limited resource. The Parliamentary Select Committee in 2006 highlighted a shortage of educational psychologists nationally, but noted plans to improve the numbers of educational psychologists with a new pattern of entry training qualifications. The Government stated in 2006 that the local authority employers and relevant professional interests must arrive at arrangements which secure the supply of trained Educational Psychologists to match anticipated demand.
- 4.4 In Lincolnshire, we understand that each school receives an allocation of hours per annum, depending on the size of the school (rather than based on the needs of the school). We have not received evidence of how this allocation of hours is made, but a recurring concern for schools is that the allocation is not enough. Indeed, a simple arithmetic comparison of the number of hours allocated with the number of SEN pupils on roll would indicate that some pupils have a very small, or even no, allocation of support.
- 4.5 In our survey we asked head teachers asked if they agreed with the statement *“I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Educational Psychology Service.”* 71% of secondary school head teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, which indicates a high level of satisfaction. Only 29% of secondary schools disagreed or strongly disagreed. Primary School head teachers showed a slightly lower level of satisfaction at 53%, with 42% showing some form of dissatisfaction. We believe that the responses to the question reflect the quality of the work of educational psychologists rather than the quantity of hours available.
- 4.6 In terms of the supplementary question: *“Do you have any comments on the level of support received?”* The following is a selection of comments:

Primary School Comments

- *The support from our Educational Psychologist is excellent. However his time is stretched and it is getting increasingly difficult to secure his time. I feel the Educational Psychologist service is becoming purely advisory in the future.*
- *The school feels it has an excellent relationship with our Educational Psychologist, but would benefit from a much greater time allocation. There is often conflict between the needs of those individuals and those required by the Department or school.*
- *The bureaucracy gets in the way of the very real service which educational psychology can give. The psychologists with whom we have worked have been helpful and professional and we have valued their input.*
- *Last year only three pupils were agreed for support. Previous year they were prepared to support only two. Occasional support and interest is not adequate provision. I would be prepared to pay for a tailored service.*
- *Due to the maternity leave of our allocated Educational Psychologist, the replacement can only give us a specific day around when we need to work. Due to two years of retirement her knowledge of current issues is limited. We see her once a month on average.*

Secondary School Comments

- *We have an excellent working relationship with our current Educational Psychologist and are very pleased with the quality of support and guidance he provides.*
- *More flexibility in the "block allocation" would help.*
- *Support from actual Educational Psychologists is always good, but there is rarely enough or at the time you want it. We have been seriously affected by staff shortages.*
- *Very little support due to staff illness and absence. I am now reduced to an hour and half telephone support once a week. Whilst I appreciate the agenda is early years provision, some cover for secondary schools would be appreciated. We do have children who arrive at secondary who have never seen an Educational Psychologist, due to being overlooked at primary or frequent movement and yet we are often left unsupported. When a parent makes a formal complaint, they are able to find an available Educational Psychologist. When I request support, it is unavailable.*
- *We have no Educational Psychologist (maternity leave and training are the reasons given). Lots of notice is needed to get any kind of support. Statements take up to 10 hours of the allocated time - no time for anything else. A high number of students with mental health issues are not getting support.*

- 4.7 One of the issues identified by the Education and Skills Parliamentary Select Committee¹³ was the separation of the assessment process and the funding for statements. The Committee recommended that the Government give a considered a response to the proposals for the separation of assessment from funding and to examine carefully the potential effectiveness in helping to

¹³ House of Commons Education and Skills Committee . Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Funding . Tenth Report of the Session 2006/07 (25 October 2007) . in particular Paragraph 20.

enhance parental satisfaction with the ways special needs are identified and addressed.

- 4.8 At present the Government¹⁴ has largely rejected this approach, but agreed to a review of ways parental confidence in the system can be improved. The Government has also agreed to provide non-statutory guidance to local authorities about the role of educational psychologists, which will remind local authorities that educational psychologists must be allowed to exercise their judgement freely.
- 4.9 The Educational Psychology Service, together other services in Children's Services, is being re-organised into locality-based teams in each district in Lincolnshire. The Head of Additional Needs has stated that this will improve their availability. We also note that the proposals in paragraphs C17-C19 of this report will rely on the Common Assessment Framework, which will not necessarily require input from an Educational Psychologist. In spite of this release of educational psychologist time, we still see a shortfall of time.

RECOMMENDATION 6

We note the arrangements whereby Educational Psychologists will be organised into locality based teams. However, in the light of the comments received from schools, we recommend that the Director of Children's Services consider and implement measures to improve the recruitment and retention of Educational Psychologists and performance indicators developed to measure achievement against targets.

RECOMMENDATION 7

We recommend that the Director of Children's Services ensure that Educational Psychologists are able to spend more time directly supporting schools and pupils, and less time on official processes, and that this is effectively monitored by performance indicators.

5. RESPONSES TO BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE ISSUES

Emotional and Behavioural Support Service

- 5.1 The Emotional and Behavioural Support Service (EBSS) is provided by the County Council and has a range of functions, which are outlined in *Special Educational Needs Administrative Handbook for Schools* as follows:
- (i) to work in partnership with schools to support vulnerable children;
 - (ii) to provide support to schools for pupils at risk of exclusions and those with complex needs;
 - (iii) to provide education to pupils permanently excluded from schools;
 - (iv) to offer school based support and advice to schools and families on general practice in relation to the management of pupil behaviour;
 - (v) to provide strategic advice, consultancy and training with other agencies;

¹⁴ House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee: Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Funding: Government Response to the Tenth Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006/07 (4 February 2008)

- (vi) to ensure children in public care make progress and receive their educational entitlement;
- (vii) to provide oversight of the provision made for pupils statemented for statemented for behavioural problems;
- (viii) to provide direct advice in relation to individual pupils at each Stage of the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs; and
- (ix) to provide support to schools in the development of Pastoral Support Plans.+

5.2 In addition EBSS also includes the management of the Council's four Pupil Referral Units; the Council's Home Tuition Service; and Solutions 4 for Key Stage 4 students. We interviewed the Head of Emotional and Behavioural Support Service, who advised us that there are 11 teams in the EBSS: -

- Emotional Health Team
- The New Links Team, supporting looked after children in schools and in foster placements.
- 73 home study tuition teachers
- 4 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- Solutions 4 (approximately 280 pupils access the project)
- 3 Area Inclusion Teams

5.3 Since our interview the Emotional Health Team has transferred to the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust, as part of an agreement under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006.

5.4 We have been advised that in a typical month, there might be 50 referrals to the EBSS. The EBSS database contains over 3,000 pupils. Some of these pupils will receive regular support, for example on a weekly basis. For other pupils, support may be termly. For a member of EBSS staff the caseload may vary from 25 to 70 pupils, depending on the nature of the referrals. Time constraints prevented the Task Group investigating EBSS issues in more detail, but in view of the number of pupils involved and the rising trend in referrals, EBSS merits further investigation.

Pupil Referral Units

5.5 The County's four Pupil Referral Units are located in Boston (The Chestnuts Education Centre), Grantham (Hillview Education Centre), Lincoln (The Mary Knox Education Centre) and Skegness (The Willows Education Centre). The Council's Reintegration Panel considers the situation of all pupils out of school by reason of exclusion and determines a strategy for meeting their needs. In some instances the Reintegration Panel may determine that a pupil should be admitted to a Pupil Referral Unit. We have not as part of our review considered the role of Pupil Referral Units in detail, owing to time constraints.

Solutions 4

5.6 Solutions 4 provides an alternative curriculum for between 260 and 280 pupils at Key Stage 4, for pupil aged 14-16. Solutions 4 is legally a Pupil Referral Unit. Solutions 4 is provided by independent providers at eleven centres across the County. Solutions 4 is highly cost effective. We were told that the unit cost per pupil in Solutions 4 (excluding transport costs) was £5,300 per pupil per annum,

excluding any funding provided as part of the statement. This compares with an annual cost of home tuition at £38,000 per pupil (assuming full time one to one tuition at £200 per pupil per day.) Solutions 4 was subject to an Ofsted inspection in March 2007. It received an outstanding report, which is summarised below:

Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
Achievement and Standards	Good
Personal Development and Wellbeing	Outstanding
Teaching and Learning	Good
Curriculum and Other Activities	Outstanding
Care, Guidance and Support	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

- 5.7 We visited the First Steps Training Centre at Hubberts Bridge, near Boston, which is the largest Solutions 4 centre. The centre at Hubberts Bridge provides vocational education for 60 children, including a number of courses leading to a BTEC qualification. These courses include small animal care; introduction to brickwork; introduction to joinery; introduction to hair care; and introduction to beauty therapy.
- 5.8 We were very impressed with the First Steps Training Centre and were not surprised to see that Solutions 4 had received an outstanding Ofsted report. We believe that one of the strengths of Solutions 4 is that the training centres are independent of the local authority, and are not seen by the students as traditional educational settings. However, this strength also makes the service vulnerable in that a Solutions 4 provider is reliant on the local authority for their funding. We were made aware of some uncertainty over the future commitment of the County Council to Solutions 4. At a time when aspects of SEN provision are being reviewed. We would strongly argue against any change in this service.

Our Survey

- 5.9 Our survey of schools invited schools to respond to the statement: *"I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service."* 71% of primary schools agreed with this statement. However, at secondary level only 35% agreed with this. There is a clear disparity between the satisfaction levels in primary and secondary schools. We believe that the reason for this is that there is more challenging behaviour in secondary schools. The evidence for the assertion that there is more challenging behaviour in secondary schools is supported by the higher levels of permanent exclusion from secondary schools. A selection of comments is set out below:

Primary School Comments

- I have a planning meeting termly with the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service to highlight those children we have concerns about. Referral is speedy and by e mail and the representative from Emotional and Behavioural Support service will come in quickly if I have concerns.*
- Last year caused a problem with Emotional and Behavioural Support Service only seeing children at risk of exclusion. So far this year support has been adequate.*

- *They have responded well when we have requested support and attended School Action and reviews to help and advise both teachers and parents.*
- *This service appears to be struggling. Three years ago we had an excellent link since that member of staff moved there has been no link at all. Fortunately we have developed capacity in school to manage all but the most challenging.*
- *Too many cancelled appointments, which were not rescheduled, and unreturned phone calls.*

Secondary School Comments

- *We work closely with this service and they give us support and advice as required but would welcome an increase in the level of support.*
- *The service will now only take on pupils close to exclusion. Other pupils who would benefit have no opportunity.*
- *So ineffective in terms of successful outcomes that the school has employed a Student Support Mentor and a Reintegration Tutor to support students with emotional/behavioural problems.*
- *Referral processes have changed a number of times without notification or consultation. Telephone contact with the service is poor. Time allocation in school is inadequate as is the infrequent pupil/outreach worker contact. The service is difficult to contact in times of significant need. Students at risk of exclusion simply do not get enough support. Recommendations back to the school can be patchy and need to be formalised.*
- *We received a letter saying unless a student was at the risk of permanent exclusion no support was possible due to staff shortages, as yet we have had no update. Prior to this we had established a good working relationship with this service.*

5.10 The EBSS is being re-organised into locality based teams, based in each district in Lincolnshire.

RECOMMENDATION 8

We recommend that the County Council re-affirm its commitment to Solutions 4, and Solutions 4 continue to be operated by independent providers. We also recommend that a commitment is made to a three year rolling programme of funding to help with continuity and stability in planning and provision.

RECOMMENDATION 9

We recommend that the comments received as part of our survey in relation to the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service in secondary schools are addressed, in particular relating to:

- **access to the service;**
- **the responsiveness of the service; and**
- **the need for an instant response team, possibly based as outreach support.**

Emotional and Behaviour Difficulties Schools

- 5.10 As stated in section 3 above, the County operates four EBD special schools (three secondary and one primary). These schools were developed and built as part of a Private Finance Initiative bid to replace the former Stubton Hall (Stubton) and Deighton Close (Louth) schools. These are covered in section 3 of this report.

6. ISSUES RELATING TO AUTISM

Definitions

- 6.1 The National Autistic Society offers the following definition of autism:

“Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. It is part of the autism spectrum and is sometimes referred to as an autism spectrum disorder, or an ASD. The word 'spectrum' is used because, while all people with autism share three main areas of difficulty, their condition will affect them in very different ways. Some are able to live relatively 'everyday' lives; others will require a lifetime of specialist support.

The three main areas of difficulty which all people with autism share are sometimes known as the 'triad of impairments'. They are:

- *difficulty with social communication*
- *difficulty with social interaction*
- *difficulty with social imagination.”*

- 6.2 The National Autistic Society also provides the following definition of Asperger's Syndrome.

“Asperger's syndrome is a form of autism, which is a lifelong disability that affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people. Asperger's syndrome is mostly a 'hidden disability'. This means that you can't tell that someone has the condition from their outward appearance. People with the condition have difficulties in three main areas. They are:

- *social communication*
- *social interaction*
- *social imagination.*

While there are similarities with autism, people with Asperger's syndrome have fewer problems with speaking and are often of average, or above average, intelligence. They do not usually have the accompanying learning disabilities associated with autism, but they may have specific learning difficulties.”

Context

- 6.3 Nationally, autism comprises one of the largest group of SEN pupils and presents particularly complex problems. Unlike other special needs, autism is very difficult

to diagnose. In Lincolnshire in June 2007, there were 361 pupils with statements or at *School Action Plus* in the county's primary schools with autism and 280 pupils in secondary schools with statements or at *School Action Plus*.

Autism Outreach

- 6.4 We have been advised that outreach support for pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder in Lincolnshire schools has been developed in three areas:

South of the County . Gosberton House Special School, Spalding
Lincoln area . St Christopher's Special School, Lincoln
North of the County . Moorland Infant School, Lincoln.

- 6.5 There are three outreach centres, which offer advice on the basis of email and telephone helpline. The decision about whether a young person requires a visit will be made after discussing the situation and the school's level of expertise with the Headteacher or SENCO by the member of staff in the Outreach Service. The permission of the parent or carer needs to be given before involvement of the Outreach Service.
- 6.6 We were told that that the Learning Support Service provides one autism outreach teacher. The Additional Needs Service funds both Gosberton House Special School and St Christopher's Special School, each to provide an outreach teacher. The post at Moorland Infant School is a result of funding being retained when the Learning Support Service was delegated.
- 6.7 Our survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the Autism Outreach Service. 69% of primary school head teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I am satisfied with the Autism Outreach Service*. 61% of secondary schools either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The levels of dissatisfaction for primary schools were particularly low.

Primary School Comments

- *We have tremendous support from this service - always there to offer advice at the end of the phone/by email. It provides an excellent service.*
- *The support and advice we have received has been invaluable.*
- *Good support - but service needs to be extended. This is an area in which "whole staff" training, including lunchtime supervisors, is essential to fully understand and meet needs of the child.*
- *They always make the effort to contact us with regard to one child we have with a statement. They appear very organised in their follow up and help with reviews.*
- *They offered enormous support to staff and to the families of pupils who made up their case load.*

Secondary School Comments

- *A great deal of sound practical advice for students, parents and SENCO! Despite being busy calls are returned promptly and time is made available.*

- *They always attend annual reviews if requested and they have delivered INSET to staff. However, their knowledge appears more geared towards primary age children.*
- *Autism Outreach is overstretched and cannot give us the hours we would like for the growing numbers of Autistic Spectrum Disorder students, many of whom have no Statement of Special Educational Needs. Their support within school, as an additional specialist voice, is welcomed and valued by ourselves, parents and most of all by the students themselves. The courses and training offered by Autism Outreach are always practical and worthwhile. Time rarely permits for Autism Outreach to attend an annual review, for example. Again any request for increased provision for an autistic pupil would need a report from Autism Outreach for it to be considered. We have access to Autism Outreach for approximately one afternoon per term at the current time. We have over 30 students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.*
- *Their support within the school as an additional specialist voice, is welcomed and valued by ourselves, parents and most of all by the students themselves.*

Parental Comments

- 6.8 We have not systematically sought the views of all parents. We have however, sought contributions from representatives of the Parent and Carer Council. The Parent and Carer Council is an arms-length body facilitated by the County Council, which represents the views of parents and carers.
- 6.9 A recurring theme with the parents was the difficulties experienced by children with autism. The first aspect of this is the communication needs of autistic pupils. An example of this in practice is the way teachers give instructions to pupils. The second aspect is the interaction needs of pupils. Autistic pupils often feel isolated from other pupils.
- 6.10 A particular concern was the time taken to address and resolve the issues of the pupils. There were instances of autistic pupils being excluded; and their needs not being understood by general class and subject teachers.
- 6.11 We received 17 written submissions from *Parents and Autistic Children Together* members supporting the establishment of a school specifically for high functioning autistic children. This term is not defined, but could be construed as children with ASD, but without learning disabilities.
- 6.12 We also received a written submission from a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, at the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust, who also supported specialist provision for autistic children. She stated that once children with ASD and without learning disabilities have failed in mainstream school, Lincolnshire's only option for a school place for the child is in an EBD school. Such children need more specialised help with the social demands of life than EBD schools can provide. She continues:

“Unfortunately some children with ASD need a school in which social communication and social understanding lie at the heart of the curriculum - this is the essence of a specialist ASD school. For some children only this will do. Currently the children who have failed first in mainstream and then in EBD

schools in Lincolnshire have to be placed in specialist ASD schools across England. Surely it would be better, firstly for these children not to have to spend three quarters of their school careers proving that they cannot succeed in unsuitable schools before finally being placed in a suitable one, and secondly for Lincolnshire to have in-county provision of this nature for its children. Such in-county schools could quickly become the hub of services and supports for children with ASD and professionals working with them.”

- 6.13 For many autistic children all school settings present a challenge. However, the evidence we received from parents and education professionals suggests that the primary setting, where there is usually a single class teacher in one classroom, can often accommodate autistic children. The real difficulties occur at secondary school, where there is a completely different and challenging routine. There is also an issue of continued provision beyond the age of 16.

RECOMMENDATION 10

We note the excellent work that is undertaken to support autistic pupils and that some children receive provision of a very high standard. However, we recommend that the Director of Children’s Services seek the views of parents and carers of Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils, together with experts, to ascertain the most effective form of education for Autistic Spectrum Disorder pupils. This will ensure pupils are not disadvantaged or compromised by traditional educational delivery systems.

7. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- 7.1 Support for children with mental health problems is an increasingly significant issue. This assertion is demonstrated by the comments we received from schools on this topic. Support is delivered largely by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, which are provided by the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust. The Government’s major policy document on special educational needs, *Removing Barriers to Achievement*¹⁵, states:

“A key priority will be improving access to comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and behavioural support services for all children, including those with learning difficulties and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. One area of action will be to increase preventative work with schools, raising staff awareness of children’s mental health issues.”

- 7.2 The Education and Skills Select Committee stated in 2006: -

“There needs to be much closer working at the local level, between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and educational providers on addressing the needs of children with SEN and disabilities who either do access or are eligible to access such activities.”

- 7.3 In Lincolnshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Child Psychological Therapies and other related services were integrated by an

¹⁵ Removing Barriers to Achievement . The Government’s Strategy for SEN (The Department for Education and Skills, 2004), Paragraph 4.29

agreement under section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006, with effect from January 2008. This involved the transfer of 18 posts from the County Council to Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust and the establishment of a single staff group. The total budget for CAMHS is £4.8 million, of which £3.6 million is received from the Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust and £1.2 million is received from the County Council as part of the section 75 agreement.

7.4 The consultation document on the new service stated that the new service would offer assessment, diagnosis, management and treatment of children and young people where there are concerns about their mental health or psychological well-being, to do with:

- emotional health;
- development;
- physical health &/or disability (including learning disabilities & difficulties)
- behaviour;
- the apparent onset of mental ill health.

7.5 Other community services offered include: -

- A specialist service is provided for children who are looked after by the local authority, both to the children/young people & their carers
- Primary mental health workers are available in most areas to provide advice, consultation, support, liaison and training to professionals working at primary care level
- A limited specialist service is available to provide forensic risk assessment
- Specialist nursing input to Youth Offending Services

7.6 The consultation document states that the types of help that can be provided may include: family therapy, individual therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, group-work, psychiatric intervention, psychotherapeutic intervention, counselling and, where necessary, medication. The Service does not accept the following types of referrals:

- referrals about apparent mild or transient concerns;
- referrals for court reports or civil proceedings;
- referrals for school based problems without mental health or family based issues
- referrals where social and environmental factors dominate without any mental health or psychological needs;
- referrals where there are current child protection concerns under investigation, or pending the outcome of legal proceedings (unless the mental health needs of the child/ young person are paramount)

7.7 We understand that referrals can be made by:

- Doctors
- Social Workers
- Specialist Youth Offending Service Nurses
- Educational Psychologists

- 7.8 We understand that all referrals are considered by a multi-disciplinary team and, if assessed as being appropriate for the service, allocated to an appropriate clinician. Children and young people with serious mental illness, serious self harm and serious eating disorders may be seen as a priority. Children and young people who are looked after children with disabilities, children who offend and those from other recognised vulnerable groups will be prioritised whenever possible. Referrals about most other mental health concerns are currently placed on waiting lists in date order.
- 7.9 In our survey head teachers, which predates the newly established arrangements, were asked to respond to the statement *I believe that there is sufficient support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for pupils who require the service*. Only 22% of primary school head teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. 53% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. At secondary level only 35% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, 61% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.
- 7.10 The issues raised in the supplementary question: *Do you have any comments on the level of support received?* included (from both primary and secondary schools):

Primary School Comments

- *We have been able to access support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, but again the process is lengthy and support not always immediately available. At times there is not enough reciprocal communication from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.*
- *This is my greatest area of concern. No personal contact with clinical psychologists and therapists for school staff. Children are discharged before issues are thoroughly investigated. There is a lack of regard for children in school and class setting and demands on child.*
- *Not active within educational settings. Parents have to take children to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. Long waiting lists slow to respond or even not considered appropriate by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services even when referred by many other professionals. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services not committed to multi agency work.*
- *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services support has been excellent, but there is not enough available and it is dependent on parental support.*
- *It is okay in my experience if parents want to take it up. Sometimes they do not for the perceived stigma.*

Secondary School Comments

- *Excellent support from our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services worker, but Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services as a service often do not attend multi agency reviews and they need to work more cohesively with schools towards achieving the agenda of Every Child Matters.*
- *Children who have been seen by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services very often receive a good level of support and we have a good liaison with the outreach workers to benefit students. The system seems accessible to many students who would benefit.*

- *Accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services remains a real difficulty for many in education. We have no direct means of accessing support. This must come through a GP referral or a request from Children's Services. Schools cannot directly access this service. Even if Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are involved in a case, their own workload is so busy, that is a protracted process to get an agreed meeting date with them.*
 - *Referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services take far too long for appointments to come through. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services team is far too small and far too overstretched to meet the needs of all other pupils who require support. The consequence of this is support is limited, even though the people we work with are good.*
 - *Students with strong evidence of significant and complex needs are refused support as not meeting their criteria. Sometimes they are not accessible. There is no triangulation of information / contact. The perception of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in how schools' resources can meet the needs of the students is often unrealistic. Recommendations from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services can therefore also be unrealistic for staff and students alike.*
- 7.11 The Director of Child and Family Services at the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust attended the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on 18 January 2008 and his statement to the Panel addressed some of the concerns raised. The Director of Child and Family Services stated that a reduction in waiting times is part of the Lincolnshire Local Area Agreement. The target was an 18 week maximum, reducing to a 15 week maximum by December 2007 and a 12 week maximum by December 2008. The Director indicated that this was still too long and the service needed to be much more ambitious. There have been sustained improvements since May 2007 and the maximum waiting time at 12 weeks already. The average wait is 4-5 weeks and this has been achieved with no additional funds.
- 7.12 The Director of Child and Family Services also referred to the service being commended by the Government Office for its work on a national project: the National Pathfinder for Mental Health in Schools. Since 18 January an announcement has been made and £700,000 has been allocated for work in four secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in the County.
- 7.13 The Director of Child and Family Services in particular responded to the request from schools that they should be able to refer directly to CAMHS. He indicated that this would not address the issue of parental co-operation, which is required by the service. The list of those able to refer now includes educational psychologists, who are expected to be in close touch with schools. Paul Jackman indicated that the Common Assessment Framework would provide the potential for an increased scope for referrals.

RECOMMENDATION 11

We recommend that the Director of Children's Services investigate the possibility of schools being able to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services directly, subject to parental consent, particularly in the light of proposals to reduce the reliance on statementing.

RECOMMENDATION 12

We note the information received from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services on their targets to reduce waiting times. We would request the Director of Children's Services seek to negotiate further reductions in waiting times, so that in serious cases pupils would wait no longer than a week for help.

8. BOARDING FACILITIES – RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS

8.1 *Removing Barriers to Achievement*¹⁶ considers the issue of residential provision from the point of view of planning and expenditure. This document states the Government's position:

"We will improve the use of residential placements by:

- enabling better planning – by commissioning an audit of specialist services across education, health and social care provision in maintained schools and health and social care settings and of unmet needs, drawing on the information held by the SEN Regional Partnerships.*
- giving priority to work on regional planning and the commissioning of specialist services through the SEN Regional Partnerships, building on the valuable work already taking place in some areas.*
- helping local authorities to better manage expenditure on residential placements by sharing good practice in reinvesting resources in local provision and services, so enabling children to be educated nearer home. We will commission further research to identify and disseminate best practice, evaluate the impact of the LGA-NASS agreement and SEN Regional Partnership initiatives, and explore the scope for collective planning and commissioning of residential placements."*

8.2 The same document states that the Government will develop practical guidance on reducing reliance on high cost placements in residential special schools.

8.3 In Lincolnshire three special schools provide boarding provision: St Lawrence (MLD) School, Horncastle; St Francis (Physical and Medical Disabilities) School, Lincoln and St Bernard's (SLD) School, Louth. Between them these schools have capacity for 98 pupils.¹⁷ We understand that these places are allocated to pupils on the basis of the need to avoid travelling long distances, rather than on any educational or social criteria. There are a number of surplus places in each case.

8.4 There are no residential facilities at any of the County's four EBD schools. The decision not to include residential provision was taken when plans for four new EBD schools as part of a Private Finance Initiative Bid were approved in 2000. The two former EBD schools with residential provision (Stubton Hall and Deighton Close Schools) closed in 2003.

¹⁶ *Removing Barriers to Achievement*. The Government's Strategy for SEN (The Department for Education and Skills, 2004), Paragraph 2.31.

¹⁷ School Organisation Plan 2007-2012, page 24.

- 8.5 By default of appropriate in-county arrangements, the County Council makes provision for out of county placements. For 2007/2008 the additional needs element of the out of county placement budget stood at £5.67 million. The number of pupils supported in out of county placements varied during the course of the year, but at 31 March 2008 stood at 92 pupils. We have not considered out of county placements as part of this scrutiny review, other than to note their existence.
- 8.6 Head teachers were invited to comment on the statement: *I believe that there is a role for boarding placements for some SEN pupils.* 69% of secondary schools either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. 55% of primary school head teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. In each sector there was a high proportion of 'no answers', 26% secondary and 33% primary.
- 8.7 In relation to the follow up question: *What are the advantages and disadvantages of boarding provision?* we received a variety of comments and would summarise the advantages and disadvantages as follows: -

Primary School Comments

- *Some SEN pupils would benefit to ensure security, continuity and delivery/support. Life skills can be taught. Opportunity to develop semi independence, consistency and stability can be routinely provided.*
- *For the majority of pupils their needs are best met in the family home with a sufficiently high level of support for care needs, including opportunities for respite care. A very small percentage of pupils may benefit from high quality specialised boarding.*
- *Where specific levels of core or high quality specialised support cannot be provided by the school, and parents are unwilling/unable to provide for their children, then a boarding placement may be worth considering.*
- *Children should live in a family atmosphere with the support that is needed.*
- *An advantage is to remove the child from the family situation. A disadvantage is removing a child from the local community and friendship networks.*

Secondary School Comments

- *Any boarding placement needs to be very carefully and sensitively considered. Advantages: The students have direct access to the teaching and resources to meet very specific need. They have opportunities to develop social skills that sometimes over protective families prevent. Family life for the remaining family members can assume some normality.*
- *The placement needs to be in a special boarding school, not mainstream. Occasionally if there is not adequate provision in the county a boarding placement may be appropriate. Advantages: It may give the child an appropriate educational placement; it may enable them to succeed in a highly structured environment; it may take them away from negative influences at home; and it may ensure a child's safety.*

Disadvantages: Children may not get the 1:1 emotional care that they could get in their home environment; and they might see it as a punishment and develop a negative self-image.

- *We are mainstream school so do not feel this is appropriate for mainstream SEN pupils. Sometimes those who have been misplaced would benefit, but there are often many other factors involved.*
- *The Every Child Matters Agenda addresses the needs of the child at the centre of thinking for the future development of an effective understanding and inclusive society. Therefore, the educational and social needs should be addressed within a family context. The impact of resourcing the more complex-needs children should include the “respite” benefits to the family unit assessed accordingly, under the Every Child Matters agenda.*
- *Boarding placement can provide stability in students’ lives where a dysfunctional family is continuously disrupting their chances of an education.*

RECOMMENDATION 13

We have received submissions which suggest that for some SEN children a boarding placement, whether long term, short term or weekly, would be beneficial for both education and social reasons. We recommend that increased flexible residential provision is considered for MLD and EBD schools in county.

9. THE CURRICULUM IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

- 9.1 The Government’s position is that the National Curriculum allows individual schools considerable flexibility to develop their own curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of their pupils and to introduce new approaches to teaching and learning. But where the full National Curriculum is not the most appropriate route to maximising pupils’ learning and achievement, dis-application of the National Curriculum, may be considered.
- 9.2 The dis-application is permitted for individual pupils through their statement of special educational need. (Dis-application may also be permitted for a period up to six months, for example after a spell in hospital, family crisis or illness.) There may also be a temporary dis-application by the head teacher in advance of a statement being prepared or reviewed.
- 9.3 We surveyed head teachers by asking them to respond to the following statement: *I believe that there is enough flexibility in the curriculum to enable all pupils with special educational needs to reach their potential.* 50% of primary school head teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. 44% of primary school head teachers either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. At secondary level 38% of schools either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement and 51% either strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- 9.4 The following is a selection of the comments received from primary head teachers in response to the supplementary question: *Are there ways there could be more flexibility?*

- *Useful for schools to have more information, for example, shared good practice documents produced by the local authority.*
- *There is enough flexibility. However, to be flexible usually means more differentiation in lessons and would require greater staffing levels.*
- *Disapplication from Standard Assessment Tests. Mainstream schools only have a limited number of resources.*
- *Flexibility is not a strong feature of the statement process.*
- *The curriculum itself is flexible, but the constant testing and expectation that children should achieve certain levels at a particular age can destroy the confidence and impede the progress of all pupils with SEN.*

9.5 The following is a selection of the comments received from secondary schools in response to the supplementary question: *Are there ways there could be more flexibility?*

- *On the basis of our experience the curriculum has not conspired to prevent any of our previous students from achieving their potential. It is important, however, that there is sufficient scope for decisions to be taken at a local level, which can be made in the best interests of each individual.*
- *Little regard is taken of those pupils who can barely read when they join secondary school in Year 7. They are expected to gain their GCSEs along with the remainder of the pupils, even though they are barely able to access the curriculum. There should be far more practical work within the curriculum so that these pupils can gain some self esteem, as often they are good practically and can shine in these subjects and feel that they are achieving something. We have introduced BTEC courses to help some of these pupils, but even these courses are quite reliant on reading and writing skills.*
- *Hopefully the new 14-19 Agenda will address this. Introduction of "Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network" or "Certificate of Personal Effectiveness Level 1 has led to some increased flexibility."*
- *I feel that the introduction of the new secondary curriculum into Key Stage 3 and 4 will greatly enhance life chances of pupils with SEN. Resources need to be enhanced in order to find smaller classes for students with SEN.*

RECOMMENDATION 14

We note that in effect the National Curriculum cannot be dis-applied for a pupil, unless that pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. We recommend that the County Council make representations through the appropriate channels to give head teachers the ability to dis-apply the National Curriculum for certain pupils at *School Action Plus*.

10. OUTREACH / SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Information

10.1 We are pleased to note that *Going to School in Lincolnshire 2008/09* (as well as at least the three previous editions of *Going to School in Lincolnshire*) includes a chapter on Special Educational Needs. This chapter includes the definition of special education needs; how the needs are met; and contact numbers for a

number of services. The chapter also lists the County's 21 special schools and identifies the schools by type.

Services

10.2 Whilst going to School in Lincolnshire 2008/09 provides information on a range of contacts for parents, we focus on one of these services: the Lincolnshire Parent Partnership Service, which has the following objectives¹⁸.

Children, young people and families

- will be listened to and influence the way things happen
- will have opportunities to be actively involved in giving their views about services they receive;
- will have feedback about how their views have made a difference+

10.3 We were advised that the Service implements its objectives by providing support to parents of children with additional needs and/or disability to promote successful outcomes for their children. The Lincolnshire Parent Partnership Service is funded 20% less than the Council's statistical neighbours and is 40% less than the national average. The Service's Annual Report 2007 also states that it provides good value for money. The Annual Report includes reference to the Children and Young People Service Plan and identifies several areas for future development. We highlight two of these:

- the establishment of a website for Lincolnshire Parents which will complement the Children's Information Service by providing an additional means of accessing information and advice on a wide spectrum of subjects of interest to parents;
- the local authority target to reduce reliance on Statements has the potential to bring more parents into dispute with the local authority and thereby bring additional workload to the service.

10.4 We would also highlight the pilot scheme at Fortuna School, whereby a social worker and two children-and-family officers are attached to the school, as an example of best practice.

10.5 We are aware of *Team Around the Child*, a national initiative, which is provided across the county and operates out of three Lincolnshire special schools: St Bernard's (Louth), St Francis (Lincoln) and Willoughby (Bourne). The initiative is aimed at children aged 0-5 and aims by early intervention to keep these children out of social care. The service currently supports 90 children and their families. It operates via a group of professionals working together, when needed, to help one particular child. In this sense, the Team can be described as a 'virtual' team; in practice, practitioners will find themselves working with a range of different colleagues at different times to support different children

10.6 However, whilst noting the above services, generally we believe that there appears to be a lack of support for parents and carers of challenging children in the home environment. The issue of effective, but flexible, support to parents and carers needs to be addressed.

¹⁸ Lincolnshire Parent Partnership Services Annual Report - September 2007 . (Introduction)

RECOMMENDATION 15

We note the pilot scheme in Fortuna School, Lincoln, whereby a social worker and two children-and-family officers are assigned to the school. We note the move to locality-based teams in Children's Services in Lincolnshire. We recommend that as other services are developed to support children and families, where possible, these services be located in schools.

RECOMMENDATION 16

We also recommend that the needs of families with pupils demonstrating challenging behaviour are comprehensively identified by the Director of Children's Services and resources are made available to design services to meet these needs, because such support is not necessarily available at present.

11. TEACHER TRAINING

Initial Teacher Training

- 11.1 Education and Skills Parliamentary Select Committee gave consideration to initial teacher training; continuous professional development; the training for SENCOs; and related matters in their 2005 report¹⁹.
- 11.2 The Government's²⁰ response to the Select Committee's recommendations to strengthen initial teacher training included the following: -

As part of their initial training all student teachers are required to demonstrate that they:

- *understand their responsibilities under the SEN Code of Practice, know how to identify children with SEN and where to seek advice from specialists on less common types of special educational needs*
- *can identify and support children working below age-related expectations, those who are failing to achieve their potential in learning, and those who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties;*
- *are able to differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs."*

- 11.3 The Government indicated that these standards were under review by the Teacher Development Agency and highlighted the role of the Ofsted inspection regime in schools.
- 11.4 We asked head teachers to respond to the statement: *I am satisfied that newly qualified teachers have received sufficient information on SEN issues as part of their teacher training course.* 32% of secondary schools agreed with this statement. 42% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. We

¹⁹ House of Commons Education and Skills Committee . Third Report of the Session 2005-2006 Special Educational Needs (Volume I), paragraphs 289 . 323.

²⁰ Government Response to the Education and Skills Committee Report on Special Educational Needs (October 2006) . Paragraph 7.

should note that a significant group (26%) offered no opinion on this. At primary level, only 23% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; with 53% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Again, we should note that 23% offered no opinion on this statement. The survey indicates more dissatisfaction at primary level.

11.5 A selection of the range of comments from the survey are below: -

Primary School Comments

- *I think students often do not have a full understanding of the different types of SEN found in school or the levels School Action, School Action Plus and statements that are on the SEN Spectrum. Working specifically with groups of SEN children in a school setting may help.*
- *Basic training should be received on the more common syndromes eg. Dyslexia, Emotional and Behavioural Support Service, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and behavioural issues. Visits to SENCOs and special schools.*
- *Newly Qualified Teachers need to study procedures, learn about interventions and it must be an essential part of placements. They need training on writing SMART targets.*
- *In my experience most Newly Qualified Teachers are not aware of SEN issues and how to address them. The quality of training is generally poor leaving them ill equipped to deal with supporting SEN children effectively in the classroom.*
- *There needs to be more input for Newly Qualified Teachers before they start teaching with strategies for behaviour management, specifics; and how the system works in Lincolnshire.*

Secondary School Comments

- *There are inconsistencies in the quality of training and some newly qualified teachers are better prepared than others for the SEN challenges facing them in the classroom. Greater efforts need to be made among those responsible for teacher training to prepare newly qualified teachers for the classroom. Practical guidance and helping them to develop a range of strategies ready for teaching would be welcomed by schools and the newly qualified teachers themselves.*
- *Our Newly Qualified Teacher went through the Post Graduate Certificate in Education route and received woefully inadequate training. This might be a fault of the system, being only a year course which has to fit so much into it.*
- *It would be a good idea to include a couple of sessions for Newly Qualified Teachers or as part of their conferences on general issues. Their experience very much depends on the placement they have undertaken. Within school our induction procedures cover this element. Students do not appear to be aware of their own responsibilities towards SEN pupils, before specialist help is enlisted.*
- *Too little time spent dealing with SEN issues in post graduate courses. Newly Qualified Teachers should know about the Code of Practice and be able to differentiate their lessons to meet the needs of lower ability students.*

11.6 The County Council is not responsible for the provision of initial teacher training.

Continuous Professional Development

11.7 The SEN Advisor at the Centre for British Teachers advised us of a range of initiatives that support the continuous professional development of teachers. The first level of support is provided by centrally funded services:

- **Sensory Impaired Service** provides support for pupils with hearing and visual impairments
- **Emotional and Behavioural Support Service** . see section x of this report
- **Educational Psychology Service** – see section x of this report
- **Autism Outreach Service** . see section of this report
- **Physical Disabilities Outreach Service** provides support for pupils with physical disabilities.
- **Additional Needs Support Service** provides support to schools in managing the process of accessing a statement of special educational needs, ensuring that the correct procedures are implemented for the benefit of the pupil

11.8 The second level of support is provided by other services, although some of these may be free, they are largely services which a school may choose to buy into:

- **Learning Support Service** provides support for pupils with general learning difficulties and also specific learning difficulties, for example, dyslexia.
- **Centre for British Teachers** (CfBT) provide support by delivering training to various staff groups in differing aspects of special educational needs, Some of this training is free at the point of delivery and some school buy other support.
- **Special Schools** provide support to mainstream colleagues on an ad hoc basis. There is no funding to support this, other than that provided through Autism Spectrum Disorder and Physical Disabilities Outreach services.
- **Independent Providers** . Schools may access independent organisations to provide training and support.

11.9 We were advised that the vast majority of schools in Lincolnshire buy into a CfBT training package. The continuing professional development of teachers is of paramount importance and we encourage efforts to provide in service training for schools.

Training for SENCOs

11.10 The Government's response to the Education and Skills Parliamentary Select Committee's report²¹ states:

“Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) play a key role in building schools’ capacity and skills in meeting children’s SEN because of their crucial role in advising other members of staff on SEN matters and

²¹ Government Response to the Education and Skills Committee Report on Special Education Needs (October 2006), paragraph 20.

linking with parents. Each school is required, by regulations, to publish the name of the person with the role of coordinating the provision of education for children with SEN. In making the appointment, we would expect the head and governing body to take into account factors such as:

- *the skills and experience required in connection with the role, and the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated these or could acquire them*
- *the range and complexity of SEN represented within the school; and*
- *practical issues such as authority (credibility) in relation to members of the teaching staff, parents and external parties.”*

11.11 We concur that a well-trained SENCO is essential in all schools. We are pleased to note that the Government has commissioned the Teacher Development Agency to develop an accreditation system for SENCOs. The Government²² states an intention to require all new SENCOs to undertake nationally accredited training.

11.12 In Lincolnshire, we were advised that there have been a large number of new SENCOs appointed in the last three years. To address this, we understand that four experienced primary SENCOs have provided advice and support to newly appointed SENCOs. Each SENCO receives three and half days support per year. A total of 150 primary schools have been supported in this way. Support is provided free of charge. The only criterion is that the SENCO must be available during the school day when the support is available. This is an example of a successful project, which is now being extended to the secondary sector.

RECOMMENDATION 17

We recommend that a protocol is developed in Lincolnshire whereby all inexperienced SENCOs receive mandatory and ongoing training; ideally the training and development will include mentoring by an experienced SENCO.

12. TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

12.1 One of the issues which we included in our survey was the transfer arrangements between primary and secondary schools. To address this we asked head teachers to respond to the following statement: *I receive sufficient information on the Special Educational Needs of pupils joining my school from their previous educational setting.* 58% of the secondary schools agreed with this statement. Many secondary schools comments positively on the arrangements they had developed with their feeder primary schools. However, the figures for primary schools, where there are various types of pre-school setting, led to a response of only 38% agreeing with the statement.

12.2 We asked a supplementary question: *Are there ways the information received could be improved?* A selection of the responses is set out below:

²² Government Response to the Education and Skills Committee Report on Special Education Needs (October 2006), paragraph 23.

Primary School Responses

- *Every school is different and so is the information they send on. There is no uniformity. This could be addressed by creating a national format.*
- *We should have a transfer checklist for SEN and make sure all the necessary documentation has been included.*
- *It depends on where they have come from. Sometimes there is very little information. Sometimes secondary schools do not seem interested in the information we provide for transition.*
- *Sometimes information is good but all too often we receive only bland data, especially in S25S electronic transfers.*
- *A uniformity of forms - especially those received from out of county. Here should be a time limit on passing paper work, some forms took 6 months to arrive. Some nursery schools could do better.*

Secondary School Responses

- *We ensure we work closely with primary schools prior to transition so we understand the needs of pupils transferring to our school.*
- *We have a good relationship with most feeder primary schools and attend Year 5 and Year 6 reviews which provides information from school and parents.*
- *Some primary schools are excellent and provide detailed information but some refuse to do any work with pupils who are not statemented. Some Year 6 pupils with statements have not had an annual review. There needs to be consideration of how strategies employed by primaries will transfer to a secondary setting for children at School Action Plus.*
- *The school has funded various strategies to support our links with feeder primaries, including the use of a teaching assistant working and Year 6 SEN in placement. This allows parent partnership links to develop. Increased funding for this sort of work would ensure the details we require are provided which are not supplied sufficiently by the Code of Practice documentation.*
- *My biggest headache is with out of county transfers and those from abroad.*

12.3 Undoubtedly there is evidence of good practice. It is not universal, but needs to be so.

RECOMMENDATION 18

We recommend that best practice is identified and a protocol is developed and adopted, so that at least within the County the appropriate level of information is transferred between schools and pre-school settings on SEN and a draft protocol be presented to the Admissions Forum.

13. POST-16 PROVISION IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

13.1 All the MLD and EBD schools in the County offer provision, which formally ceases at the age 16. This compares with provision in SLD schools, which continues until the age of 19. The review sought to establish whether Lincolnshire is unique on this point. We understand that some local authorities operate MLD schools with 16+ provision.

- 13.2 We visited two MLD schools in the county and at each of these schools, arrangements had been made to make provision post-16. At Ambergate School, Grantham, former pupils are enrolled at Grantham College, but are taught under a franchise arrangement at Ambergate School. This is called Ambergate Additions. The purpose of Ambergate Additions is to help young people who need additional support to make a successful transition from Ambergate to College. The courses are individually tailored and all students follow an individual learning plan. We emphasise that the purpose of 16+ provision is not only for educational reasons, but also for emotional development and social reasons.
- 13.3 We also learned that the Priory School, Spalding, there is a similar scheme called Priory Extra. We stress the importance of both Ambergate Additions and Priory Extra and urge that these are promoted as models of good practice. However, in some instances, where pupils obtain a college place, the placement breaks down, because of the pupils' difficulty in coping with an entirely different environment. The overall aim is that pupils emerging from MLD schools are better prepared for the life that lies ahead of them.
- 13.4 We received representations that pupils leaving an MLD or EBD school at the age of 16 often had the intellectual abilities of a 13 or 14 year old. Therefore, they particularly need the extra years in school up to the age of 18 or 19 to acquire the competencies to make their way in the world.
- 13.5 As part of the Gainsborough Educational Village development, a new special school for secondary pupils is being constructed. This school (see paragraph 3.9 of this report) will contain provision for pupils aged 11-19.

RECOMMENDATION 19

We recognise the approaches of Ambergate Additions and Priory Extra as models of good practice in terms of 16+ provision in Moderate Learning Difficulties Schools. We note the intention to include 16+ provision in the new secondary special school being constructed as part of Gainsborough Educational Village. We recommend the formal establishment of 16+ learning in all MLD and EBD schools as part of a range of options available to all pupils, in consultation with head teachers to ensure pupils' needs are effectively met.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The following contributors have been interviewed by the Task Group:

Date	Contributor
27 Feb 2007	Peter Broster, Head of Additional Needs Dr Caroline Smith, Principal Educational Psychologist
14 March 2007	Peter Broster, Head of Additional Needs Dr Caroline Smith, Principal Educational Psychologist
2 April 2007	Mrs D McRae, Head Teacher, Moorland Infant and Nursery School, Lincoln Mr T Culpin, Head Teacher, and Claire Fisher, Deputy Head Teacher and SENCO, Westgate Junior School, Lincoln Mrs E Hadley, Head Teacher, Halton Hologate Church of England Primary School, Spilsby
8 May 2007	Mr A Craven, Head Teacher, Horncastle Community Primary School Anne Tait, Autistic Outreach Service
15 May 2007	Sue Fenton-Smith, Head of Emotional and Behavioural Needs Mr D Bland, Head Teacher, The Priory (MLD) School, Spalding
5 June 2007	Mrs D Freeman, Head of Special Needs, City of Lincoln Community College
15 June 2007	Mr M Taylor, Head Teacher, The Thomas Cowley High School Donington Mr D Smith, Head teacher St Lawrence (MLD) School, Horncastle
6 July 2007	Mr P File, Head of Special Needs, Christø Hospital School, Lincoln.
2 October 2007	Parent and Carer Representatives: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therese Lord, Vice Chairman of Parents and Autistic Children Together • Coralie Cross, Vice Chairman of Parent and Carer Council and member of the Can Do Sports Club, Spalding • Louise Turner, Parent Partnership and member of Parents and Autistic Children Together.
12 November 2007	Trevor Howe, SEN Advisor from the Centre for British Teachers

28 November 2007 Terry Earland, Consultant Employed by the Children's Services Directorate
Mrs W Adams, Parent

18 December 2007 Mrs T Burland, Parent
Mrs N Kennedy, Parent

VISITS

10 December 2007 Priory Special School, Spalding
Garth Special School, Spalding

9 January 2008 First Steps, Hubberts Bridge, Solutions 4

17 January 2008 Phoenix School, Grantham

21 February 2008 Ambergate School, Grantham

28 March 2008 Fortuna School, Lincoln

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

18 September 2007 Email from Therese Lord, enclosing 13 emails from members of Parents and Autistic Children Together.

9 October 2007 Email from Dr A Thompson, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust

9 & 10 October 2007 Emails from four members of Parents and Autistic Children Together

2 November 2007 Email from Kathleen Taylor, Primary Education Co-ordinator, Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln

30 April 2008 Notes from Hilary Barrett, Head of Service for Children with Disabilities, Lincolnshire County Council, on Team Around the Child

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

The Task Group has reviewed the following documentation:

1. Special Educational Needs . Code of Practice
(*Department for Education and Skills – November 2001*)
2. Removing Barriers to Achievement . The Government's Strategy for SEN
(*Department for Education and Skills – 2004*)
3. Special Educational Needs . Third Report of the Session 2005-06 . Volume I
(*House of Commons Education and Skills Committee – June 2006*)
4. Government Response to the Education and Skills Committee Report on Special Educational Needs
(*Cm 6940 – October 2006*)
5. Special Educational Needs Administrative Handbook for Schools
(*Lincolnshire County Council – Autumn Term 2006*)
6. Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs . Policy Statement and Development Strategy
(*Lincolnshire County Council – December 2004*)
7. Autistic Spectrum Disorders . in the Early Years . Information for Parents in Lincolnshire
(*Lincolnshire County Council . undated*)
8. Preventative Working in Special Educational Needs . A Four Year Development Programme to Implement Lincolnshire's SEN Strategy (*Lincolnshire County Council – 9 August 2006*)
9. Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Information for Parents in Lincolnshire:
Four booklets: An Introduction
 Who Can Help
 In the Early Years
 Schools
(*Lincolnshire County Council . undated*)
10. Autistic Spectrum Disorders . A Brief Introduction for Teachers in Mainstream Schools (Louise Stanton, Gosberton House and Anne Tait Lincoln Learning Support Service
(*Lincolnshire County Council – undated*)
11. Information and Advice for Learning Support Assistants . Working with Pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (Louise Stanton, Gosberton House and Anne Tait Lincoln Learning Support Service
(*Lincolnshire County Council – undated*)
12. Promoting Awareness and Developing Strategies for the Inclusion of Children and Young People with an Autism or Asperger's Diagnosis in Schools. (*Lincolnshire County Council – Ann Tait*)

13. Lincolnshire Removing Barriers to Achievement . The Government's strategy for SEN . Update on Progress 2005-2006 (*DfES National Adviser Team - 6 October 2006*)
14. Preventative Working in Special Educational Needs . A Four Year Development Programme to Implement Lincolnshire's SEN Strategy (*Lincolnshire County Council – 9 August 2006*)
15. Additional Needs Service Plan for 2007/2008 (Lincolnshire County Council July 2007)
16. Involvement of Educational Psychologists with Pre-School Children (*Dr Caroline Smith, Principal Educational Psychologist, Lincolnshire County Council – June 2007*)
17. Section 52 Statement Summary Information for Lincolnshire 2006/07 (*Audit Commission 2007*)
18. Best Value Performance Indicator Benchmarking Information 2007 (*Lincolnshire County Council 2007*)
19. Report School Improvement Advisor . Trevor Howe . Training, Development and Support for Teachers
20. Comparative Budgetary Information for Special Schools . 2007-08 (*Lincolnshire County Council*)
21. Budget Share Calculations for Special Schools . 1 April 2008
22. Best Value Performance Indicator Reports . BV 043 and BV 043b - 9 April 2008
23. National Statistics . Special Educational Needs in England January 2007 (*Department for Education and Skills - 26 June 2007*)
24. Serving the Interest of Vulnerable Children in Lincolnshire Report to Lincolnshire School Admissions Forum by the Choice Advice Service (*December 2007*)
25. Inclusion: Does it Matter Where Pupils are Taught? (*Ofsted – July 2006*)
26. Ambergate School Prospectus and Leaflet on Ambergate Additions (*Ambergate School*)
27. Lincolnshire Parent Partnership Service Annual Report September 2007
28. Solutions 4 Inspection Report . (*Ofsted, Inspection Dates 21-22 March 2007*)

SURVEY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY HEAD TEACHERS

Background

1. In the week beginning 29 October 2007, a questionnaire was sent to head teachers of all primary and secondary schools in Lincolnshire. Schools were invited in the questionnaire to ~~strongly agree~~, ~~agree~~, ~~disagree~~ or ~~strongly disagree~~ with eleven statements. The eleven statements were: -
 - (1) I am able to obtain a statement for every pupil who I believe needs one.
 - (2) I believe that the SEN procedures prior to the statementing process could be improved.
 - (3) I have children in my school, either with or without statements, who would be better served in a special school.
 - (4) I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Educational Psychology Service.
 - (5) I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service.
 - (6) I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Autism Outreach Service.
 - (7) I am satisfied that newly qualified teachers have received sufficient information on SEN issues as part of their teacher training course.
 - (8) I believe that there is a role for boarding placements for some SEN pupils.
 - (9) I believe that there is sufficient support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for pupils who require the service.
 - (10) I believe that there is enough flexibility in the curriculum to enable all pupils with special educational needs to reach their potential.
 - (11) I receive sufficient information on the SEN needs of pupils joining my school from their previous educational setting.
2. In each case above the questionnaire contained an additional comments box, with a follow up question. There was also a twelfth question inviting schools to make any additional comments on any of the issues above or on any other issues relating to special educational needs.

Questionnaire Response Rate

3. Questionnaire responses were received from 118 primary schools, representing a response rate of 41%. A total of 31 responses were received from the 63 secondary schools in the county, which represents a response rate of 49%.

Primary School Responses

4. The following primary schools responded to the survey:
 1. Alford Primary
 2. Ancaster CE Primary
 3. Barkston and Syston CE Primary
 4. Baumber Primary
 5. Binbrook CE Primary

6. Blyton cum Laughton CE Primary
7. Boston St Mary's RC Primary
8. Boston St Thomas CE Primary
9. Bourne Abbey Primary
10. Branston Junior
11. Brant Broughton CE / Methodist Primary
12. Bucknall Primary
13. Burgh Le Marsh St Peter and St Paul CE Primary
14. Bythams Primary
15. Caythorpe Primary
16. Claypole CE Primary
17. Coleby CE Primary
18. Colsterworth CE Primary
19. Coningsby St Michael's CE Primary
20. Corby Glen Community Primary
21. Cowbit St Mary's CE Primary
22. Cranwell Primary
23. Crowland South View Community Primary
24. Digby The Tedder Primary
25. Dunholme St Chad's CE Primary
26. Eagle Community Primary
27. Edenham CE Primary
28. Faldingworth Community Primary
29. Fleet Wood Lane Primary
30. Friskney All Saints CE Primary
31. Gainsborough Charles Baines Community Primary
32. Gainsborough White's Wood Lane Community Junior
33. Grainthorpe
34. Grantham Cliffedale Primary
35. Grantham St Mary's Catholic Primary
36. Grantham The Earl of Dysart Primary
37. Great Gonerby St Sebastian's CE Primary
38. Grimoldby Primary
39. Hackthorn CE Primary
40. Heckington St Andrew's CE Primary
41. Helpringham
42. Hemswell Cliff Primary
43. Hillcrest Infant
44. Holbeach Bank Primary
45. Holbeach St Mark's CE and Gedney Drove End
46. Holton le Clay Junior
47. Horncastle Community Primary
48. Huttoft Primary
49. Ingham Primary
50. Ingoldsby Primary
51. Kirkby on Bain CE Primary
52. Kirton Primary
53. Langtoft Primary
54. Leasingham St Andrews CE Primary
55. Legbourne East Wold CE Primary
56. Lincoln Birchwood Junior
57. Lincoln Leslie Manser Primary
58. Lincoln Manor Leas Infant

59. Lincoln Monks Abbey Primary
60. Lincoln Moorland Infant and Nursery
61. Lincoln Mount Street Infant and Nursery
62. Lincoln Myle Cross Junior
63. Lincoln St Faiths CE Infant
64. Lincoln St Hugh's Catholic Primary
65. Lincoln St Peter at Gowt's CE Primary
66. Lincoln St Peter in Eastgate CE Infants
67. Lincoln The Sir Francis Hill Community Primary
68. Long Bennington Primary
69. Long Sutton Primary
70. Louth Eastfields Infants and Nursery
71. Louth Lacey Gardens Junior
72. Mablethorpe Primary and Nursery
73. Mareham le Fen CE Primary
74. Market Rasen CE Primary
75. Marshchapel Primary
76. Martin Mrs Mary King's CE Primary
77. Metheringham Primary
78. Middle Rasen Primary
79. Morton CE Primary
80. New York Primary
81. North Hykeham Fosse Way Primary
82. North Scarle Primary
83. Osgodby Primary
84. Partney CE Primary
85. Pinchbeck East CE Primary
86. Pointon St Gilbert of Sempringham CE Primary
87. Rauceby CE
88. Ropsley CE Primary
89. Ruskington Winchelsea Primary
90. Saxilby CE Primary
91. Scothern Ellison Boulter's CE Primary
92. Shepeau Stow Primary
93. Skegness The Richmond
94. Sleaford St Botolph's CE
95. Sleaford The William Alvey CE Primary
96. Sleaford, Church Lane Primary and Nursery
97. Spilsby Primary School
98. Stamford St Augustine's Catholic Primary
99. Stamford St Gilbert's CE Primary
100. Stamford The Malcolm Sargent Primary
101. Sutterton Fourfields CE Primary
102. Swineshead St Mary's CE Primary
103. Tattershall Clinton Park Community Primary
104. Tetford The Edward Richardson Primary
105. Theddlethorpe Primary
106. Toynton All Saints Primary
107. Uffington CE Primary
108. Utterby Primary
109. Waddington All Saints Primary
110. Waddington Redwood Primary
111. Wainfleet Magdalen CE/ Methodist

112. Weston Hills CE Primary
113. Willoughby St Helena's CE Primary
114. Willoughton Primary
115. Woodlands Infant and Nursery
116. Wrangle Primary
117. Wyberton Primary
118. Unnamed Primary School

Secondary School Responses

5. The following secondary schools responded to the survey:

1.	Alford John Spendluffe Technology College
2.	Alford, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar
3.	Bourne Grammar
4.	Branston Community College
5.	Caistor Grammar
6.	Caistor Yarborough
7.	Corby Glen, The Charles Read High
8.	Deepings School
9.	Donington, The Thomas Cowley High
10.	Gainsborough Castle Hills Community Arts College
11.	Gainsborough, Queen Elizabeth's High
12.	Gainsborough, The Middlefield School of Technology
13.	Grantham Kesteven and Grantham Girls' Grammar
14.	Grantham, The Central Sports and Technology College
15.	Grantham, The King's School
16.	Grantham, the Walton Girls' High
17.	Horncastle, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar
18.	Lincoln City of Lincoln Community College
19.	Lincoln Priory LSST
20.	Lincoln St Peter and St Paul Catholic High
21.	Louth Cordeaux
22.	Mablethorpe Tennyson High
23.	Market Rasen De Aston
24.	North Hykeham North Kesteven School
25.	Skegness St Clement's College
26.	Sleaford, Kesteven and Sleaford High School
27.	Sleaford, St George's College of Technology
28.	Spalding Gleed Boys'
29.	Stickney William Lovell CE
30.	Welbourn Sir William Robertson High
31.	Unnamed Secondary School

Full Responses

6. There are two supporting documents (one for primary and one for secondary) which are available separately. These two documents include all the comments made by the schools.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Answer %
I am able to obtain a statement for every pupil I believe needs one.	4	31	44	21	1
I believe that the SEN procedures prior to the statementing process could be improved.	18	62	14	1	5
I have children in my school, either with or without statements, who would be better served in a special school.	17	43	29	6	5
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Educational Psychology Service	19	34	28	14	5
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service.	21	50	19	6	4
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Autism Outreach Service.	24	45	4	4	24
I am satisfied that newly qualified teachers have received sufficient information on SEN issues as part of their teacher training course.	4	19	39	15	23
I believe that there is a role for boarding placements for some SEN pupils.	8	47	7	4	33
I believe that there is sufficient support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for pupils who require the service.	4	18	36	17	26
I believe that there is enough flexibility in the curriculum to enable all pupils with special educational needs to reach their potential.	3	47	35	9	5
I receive sufficient information on the SEN needs of pupils joining my school from their previous educational setting.	3	36	36	18	8

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS – SECONDARY SCHOOLS

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	No Answer %
I am able to obtain a statement for every pupil I believe needs one	3	32	45	10	10
I believe that the SEN procedures prior to the statementing process could be improved.	13	52	13	0	23
I have children in my school, either with or without statements, who would be better served in a special school.	32	23	26	10	6
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Educational Psychology Service	26	45	16	13	0
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Emotional and Behavioural Support Service.	16	19	42	19	3
I am satisfied with the level of support received from the Autism Outreach Service.	16	45	16	6	16
I am satisfied that newly qualified teachers have received sufficient information on SEN issues as part of their teacher training course.	0	32	32	10	26
I believe that there is a role for boarding placements for some SEN pupils.	23	45	3	3	26
I believe that there is sufficient support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for pupils who require the service.	3	32	35	26	6
I believe that there is enough flexibility in the curriculum to enable all pupils with special educational needs to reach their potential.	6	32	45	6	13
I receive sufficient information on the SEN needs of pupils joining my school from their previous educational setting.	3	55	32	3	6

