

Every Child Matters

Children Leeds

Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy 2007-2010

A discussion document

Children, schools and families at the
heart of our learning communities

Education Leeds 

Foreword

Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy 2007-2010

Leeds is a successful, dynamic, multi-cultural city and deserves a world class, inclusive education system. Children Leeds and Education Leeds will be the champions for learning for all across an inclusive system that puts children and families at its very heart.

We have achieved so much over the last six years and have seen considerable achievements in relation to improved outcomes for all children.

Significant improvements have been made in relation to attendance, behaviour, admissions, special educational needs and equalities. Special schools across the city have transformed into specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCs). The 'No Child Left Behind' agenda is starting to make a real difference for those children and young people most at risk of achieving low outcomes. Slowly we are narrowing the gap. Yet we know we still have much more to do.

Leeds is an inclusive authority and this is clearly demonstrated through the shared commitment that we and our key stakeholders demonstrate together. We have made sustained investment in support of inclusion and to increase the range of innovative practice. We are also increasing the opportunities for children and young people with severe and complex special educational needs (SEN) to attend their local mainstream school. We could not achieve this without the shared commitment of headteachers who take great pride in the inclusivity of their schools.

While we have secured significant improvements over the last six years that have seen an increase in inclusive opportunities and increasingly effective strategies, too many of our most vulnerable children and young people still fail to reach their full potential at school. Our challenge now is to ensure we work in partnership with all our colleagues with a focus on improved levels of achievement and attainment for all children.

We know that it is only through increasingly effective partnership work and strong collaborative models that we will make a real difference for all children, young people and families across Leeds. Our strategy builds upon our work to date, promoting existing good practice established through the SILC Strategy; No Child Left Behind and our vulnerable children strategy. It brings together, and builds upon, the principles we have previously agreed.

Through the single, refreshed strategy for inclusive learning we will continue to achieve our aim for all children in Leeds to enjoy a world class inclusive education system that focuses on brilliant learning in brilliant learning places. By providing a personalised approach to learning, all children will have increased opportunities to achieve.



Rosemary Archer
Director of children's services



Chris Edwards
Chief executive, Education Leeds

Introduction

The director of children's services has asked Education Leeds to refresh and develop the Leeds Inclusion Strategy 2004 – 2010. The refreshed strategy – the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy – focuses on high achievement and attainment within the context of Every Child Matters and the five outcomes.

We believe that through focusing on personalised approaches, all children, young people and families in Leeds will have access to high quality learning that enables them to be fully included, achieve, and be happy, healthy, safe and successful.

The Leeds Inclusion Strategy 2004 – 2010 was developed with key partners in response to the government's strategy for special educational needs, Removing Barriers to Achievement. The strategy incorporated objectives from the government's strategy from a local perspective. It was developed in the spirit of the Children Bill and responses outlined in Every Child Matters. It continues to make a significant contribution to the aims and aspirations identified in the Vision for Leeds 2004 – 2020, contributing directly to the three strategic areas of developing harmonious communities, health, wellbeing and learning. It represents a commitment to promote equality and inclusion that is consistent with Leeds City Council's policy, providing a basis for partnership working and corporate action.

Children and families are at the heart of our refreshed strategy. The Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy aims to escalate the progress we have already made through focusing on:

- high quality inclusive learning outcomes across our universal offer;
- increased opportunities through our specialist provision; and
- improved integrated service delivery at a local level that is responsive to the needs of the child and family.

We will achieve our refreshed strategy for inclusive learning and deliver the five outcomes of Every Child Matters by:

- ensuring that all our educational provision in schools and education support services is inclusive, providing a wide range of personalised pathways to meet the needs of all children and young people; and
- building partnerships to meet the wider needs of children and young people with other agencies and services with Children Leeds.

This document focuses on how the strategy will be developed by:

- outlining the inclusive learning policy and strategy;
- explaining how the strategy is to be developed and implemented within the specified timeframes; and
- providing an outline of the main issues to be considered in the formulation of more detailed proposals.

Central to these developments is the concept of partnership. We will engage all stakeholders in a range of discussions to develop shared understanding and ownership and a sustainable commitment to transforming outcomes for all children and young people.

The context

1. A recent review of the Leeds Inclusion Strategy commended a passionate commitment to inclusion characterised by sustained investment, innovative practice and greater opportunity for children and young people to attend their local mainstream school. It highlighted the successes to date in creating a positive climate for inclusion by:
 - delegating more resources than most authorities to enhance schools' capacity to meet a wide range of need;
 - reducing dependency on statements of special educational need (SEN);
 - placing fewer children and young people in segregated specialist provision maintained by the local authority, other authorities or in the independent sector than most other authorities;
 - reducing the children and young people permanently excluded from school;
 - improving school attendance; and
 - encouraging schools to achieve local and national standards for inclusion such as Healthy Schools, the Inclusion Chartermark, Stephen Lawrence Education Standard.
2. Schools and other partners have welcomed the progress that we have made and are fully engaged to explore the benefits and implications of these developments. Schools and partners have undertaken a range of initiatives to develop capacity for inclusion and particularly to provide for the more vulnerable. Together these provide a firm foundation on which we can consolidate and accelerate our progress. The energy, hard work and commitment of everyone needs to be focused on our priorities to ensure a cohesive approach which achieves maximum impact.
3. Our strategy and progress towards locally managed, delivered provision has been widely accepted and welcomed. We now need to explore together the options that will lead to concrete proposals that we can implement speedily and effectively.

Our vision

4. Our vision builds upon principles and values we have previously agreed. We strongly believe that children have the best life chances if they are on the roll of their local community schools and that maximum resources are aligned to meet their needs more effectively at a local level.
5. Our vision for inclusive learning is that:
 - wherever possible children and young people will be able to attend their successful local neighbourhood school and be supported with their friends and peers;
 - through their school, children and young people will be able to access and benefit from additional (targeted) support when required, provided by or through the school or a service or centre in their area;
 - those children and young people with more complex needs will continue to benefit from specialist services and provision;
 - the voice of parents and parental preference will be strengthened and championed; and
 - there will be increased opportunities for the participation of children and young people.
6. The outcomes to be achieved through this strategy are embedded within the strategic plan for Education Leeds and the Children and Young People's Plan. Appendix 1 details the key performance indicators from the current strategic plan. The targets that relate specifically to the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy are highlighted in yellow. These are presented within the context of reviewing key performance indicators in response to new national indicators and the development of the Leeds Strategic Plan, Local Area Agreement and the consequent review of the Children and Young People's Plan. New indicators for schools and local authorities from 2009 from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are detailed in the appendix. As part of the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy we will review and agree a revised set of indicators and targets that reflect the impact and improved outcomes we are intending to achieve. These will be our local targets to reflect our ambitions to raise the achievement and attainment of all our children including those most vulnerable to low outcomes.
7. Much of what we achieve cannot be measured through raw targets alone. Our success will be making a real difference for all children, young people and families across Leeds. They will all achieve their personalised goals, be fully accepted in their local communities, valued and able to make a worthwhile contribution to their own futures and that of the city.

Principles and values

8. Our vision for inclusive education was agreed in 2004. This vision remains and specific values were agreed in 2005 as part of the development of the No Child Left Behind Strategy. These values remain the same and at the heart of our strategy for improvement (see Appendix 2).
9. The guiding principles for our refreshed strategy are consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan, the 14-19 Strategy, The Extended Services Plan and all other key policies across Education Leeds, Children Leeds and Leeds City Council. Our key principles are:
 - personalisation;
 - devolved governance;
 - collaborative and effective partnership working;
 - local service delivery, locally managed;
 - equality of opportunity, provision and access;
 - robust accountability and quality assurance frameworks;
 - choice and diversity for children, young people and families; and
 - continuum of responsive, high quality services whose staff champion the needs of children and families.
10. Through the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy we intend to provide clear, supported pathways for every child and young person, whatever the circumstances and barriers which affect their lives. We aim to ensure that multi-agency planning and integrated service delivery results in a rapid response to identified need and a continuum of supported provision with equity and ease of access for all.
11. We recognise the importance and size of the challenge to achieve and deliver a continuum of provision that is supportive and flexible for every child in every circumstance, in line with our principles. However we believe that we can achieve this through engaging positively with all partners.

Our strategy

12. Four inter-related strategic objectives have been identified for the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy:
 1. the promotion and further development of inclusive practice and inclusive schools;
 2. the further development of specialist provision, including the role of the SILCs;
 3. the further development of the behaviour continuum and provision, including the role of the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs); and
 4. the further development of integrated locality working by central services and teams.
13. We have formed project teams to explore the four strategic objectives. They will also ensure that all the necessary preparation work is completed to inform discussion and debate, including using common criteria for evaluating options and proposals.
14. In addition, three project support teams will focus on cross cutting issues impacting on all of the strategic objectives:
 - resources (finance, estates, human resources, access and admissions);
 - accountability and monitoring (including service level agreements, contracts and monitoring frameworks); and
 - communication and engagement (models of governance and service delivery).
15. These are our key project activities which will be used to provide a framework for planning, implementation and delivery. The work of the project support teams will be cross referenced by the overarching programme management board to ensure we achieve coherence and consistency.
16. More details of the focus areas for each project are given in Appendix 3. To make sure that we can deliver our strategy each project strand has a project brief that provides:
 - a programme of activity for each objective;
 - roles and responsibilities for managing the implementation, monitoring and review;
 - targets and success criteria; and
 - clarity on resource implications.
17. Education Leeds will build the activities of the strategy into all team plans and align existing resources to deliver the shared outcomes. We will work with our partners across children's services to ensure it is also reflected in their key plans.

Programme implementation and accountability

18. Appendix 4 gives a summary diagram of the accountability framework for the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy.
19. Education Leeds' strategic manager for integrated children's services will have overall responsibility for the delivery and outcomes of the strategy. To encourage openness and transparency, a programme board will take specific oversight for the implementation and delivery of the strategy, including ensuring that:
 - all proposals are clearly agreed;
 - progress and evaluation reports are presented to accountability forums and consultative groups;
 - all recommendations are evidenced by sound criteria and best practice; and
 - all partners are consulted and engaged.

Timeframe for the delivery of the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy programme

20. The Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy will be implemented in a number of phases during 2007- 09. The following describes the phases and gives an indication of the main focus of activity in each phase.

Phase and time period	Main focus of activity
Phase 1 – Discussion of models of governance and service delivery September – December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy • Discussion begins with all main stakeholders in a range of forums on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – models for governance and delivery options; – key questions in relation to each strategic objective; and – implications for schools, central services and specialist provision for children and young people. • Recommendations contributing to modelling of preferred options are formulated.
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and report on outcomes of discussions • Options appraisal of models • Formulation of proposals • Define delivery timeframe for proposals
Phase 2 – Proposal of preferred options February 2008 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of proposals for consultation
March – April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on formal proposals • Detailed implementation planning for each programme strand
May/June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report outcomes of formal consultation • Decisions
Phase 3 – Implementation of confirmed proposals July 2008 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation based on detailed plans and timeframes for each project
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources realigned to deliver agreed proposals
September 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for evaluation agreed and first round of annual evaluation completed.

Next steps

21. The first phase will build upon and celebrate existing good practice with a focus on discussion that involves and engages all stakeholders:
 - to build a common understanding of the characteristics of inclusive schools and inclusive practice
 - to identify the models of governance and service delivery to follow the key principles and achieve our vision and improved outcomes
 - to agree the future model of delivery for centrally retained and area based specialist provision.
22. Governance and service delivery models are outlined in the accompanying discussion paper (Appendix 5). They summarise and clarify ideas that are being developed and discussed in different forums and help to inform a common debate. All three models currently exist in Leeds and their inter-relationship is central to the development of the strategy. They will require further development and embedding to achieve the intended outcomes. Through the use of these models, possible options will be considered, benefits and implications explored and preferred proposals identified for agreement across the city.
23. The models will be used to stimulate discussion at each event and in the different forums. We are also producing a number of information and fact sheets to inform the debate and help to clarify the issues through an increased use of data and information.
24. We will be engaging in extensive discussion with all stakeholders, including parents and carers, children and young people and partners from all public, private and voluntary sectors, during the next four months by using a range of means, including:
 - a number of specific events, focus groups and workshops across the year (see calendar of events) for all main stakeholder groups;
 - existing forums and meetings (e.g. parent forums; governing body meetings; headteachers and governors' forum, area management boards, family of schools meetings);
 - designated web-site on InfoBase and InfoBase Schools and regular newsletters; and
 - questionnaires and forms designed to invite responses on the main issues and questions.



Further information and contact details

To ensure we communicate effectively with all partners we will set up a dedicated area on InfoBase and InfoBase Schools with regular reports and up-dates.

For further information and details, including:

- copies of the information sheets
- a calendar of planned events and meetings
- case studies of how our vision will benefit children and young people
- characteristics of inclusive schools and practice
- a summary of the progress of consultations and discussions

You can visit our website at:

www.educationleeds.co.uk/inclusivelearning

E-mail: **educ.inclusivelearning@educationleeds.co.uk**

Or contact us: **Amrat Soor, Organisational change team, Education Leeds, 10th Floor East, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8DT**
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Or visit our dedicated area on InfoBase.

