

Warwickshire SEND & Inclusion Strategy

2019-2023

Version 1.0
February 2019

Introduction

The Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2019- 2023 builds upon the Vulnerable Learners Strategy 2015 - 2018, which has delivered over 250 more specialist places locally (with more on the way) for high needs learners with complex needs including the development of three new special school academies.

This strategy is informed by the work of an external SEND Demand Management Strategic Review. It has been produced following public consultation in 2018. Throughout the strategy, we have included responses from that consultation demonstrating the views and experiences of young people, parents and carers, and professionals. The strategy has been further developed by key strategic partners across education, health, social care, schools and the Parent Carer Forum. The SEND and Inclusion Board will monitor progress against the identified priorities.

This strategy also supports the overarching priorities of the Warwickshire Education Strategy (see <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/educationstrategy>).

Our Aims and Principles

The aim of this strategy is to turn high aspirations for all of our learners with SEND into a reality.

We will:

- work in a spirit of co-production and partnership with parents and their children and young people with SEND, involving them in all key decisions
- work in partnership with partner agencies and schools to deliver an effective SEND system that ensures effective early identification of need followed by robust assess-plan-do-review processes and clear pathways
- have the highest expectations for children and young people with SEND, ensure that they are fully included in all educational settings and that their needs are met by high performing local schools
- maintain a commitment to Warwickshire's schools and academies (state-funded), promoting and championing strong leadership and inclusive practice for children and young people with SEND across all phases, mainstream and special
- ensure a rigorous focus on the preparation for adulthood outcomes and life after school
- ensure that resources are fairly and consistently allocated according to needs

Our Vision for Learners with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

In Warwickshire, all children and young people have the right to lead a fulfilling life and be part of their community.

Every child and young person has a right to have their health, social care and education needs met within their local community.

Every child has the right to attend a good local school that is appropriate for their level of need or disability, usually a mainstream school.

The views and wishes of children and young people with SEND, as well as their parents will be heard, and we will work with them to ensure they have confidence in local providers to meet their children's needs.

Every early years setting, state-funded school, further educational college and training provider will make good provision (as determined by Ofsted) for children and young people with SEND; to ensure that they make good progress in their education and development; that they transition smoothly into the next stage of their education and; as appropriate, they are helped to secure independent living and opportunities for employment.

We recognise that specialist provision is an essential and valued component of our county's education system. We will continue to work in partnership with our specialist education providers to ensure they provide excellent services for learners attending specialist provision.

The case for inclusion

"Most parents would only want their child to have a good education in a supportive, structured, positive environment." [Parent, online focus group]

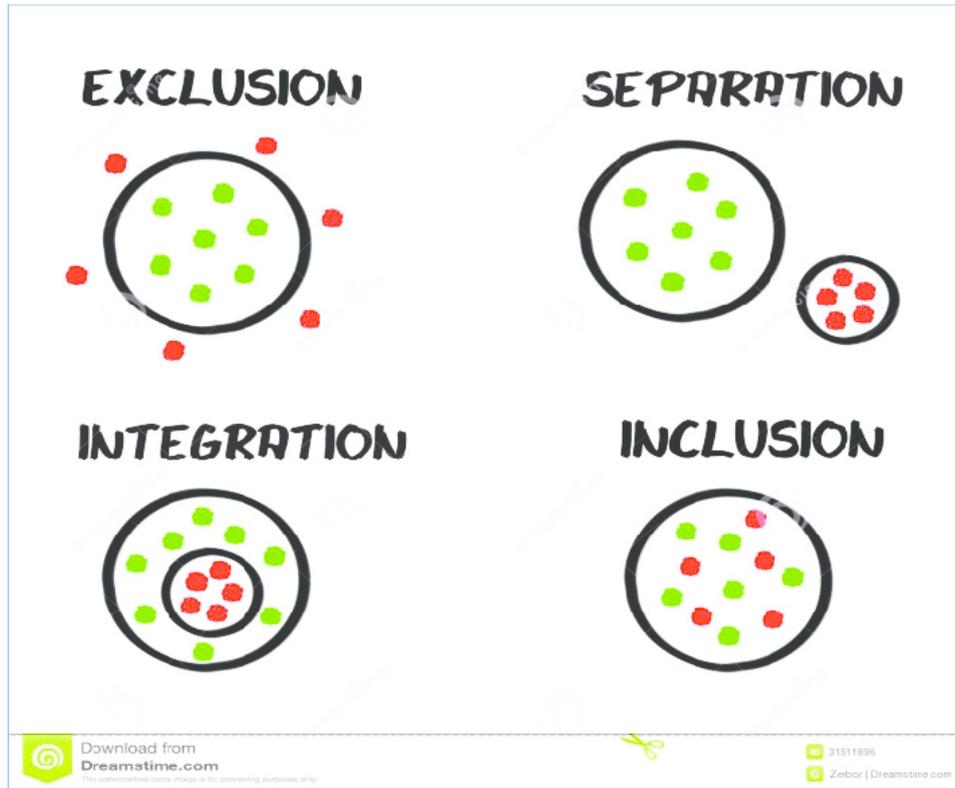
"Each learner requires something bespoke and tailored to their own needs at the point of transition." [Head teachers Partnership]

This strategy has inclusion at its heart and sets out how Warwickshire plans to address imbalances and effect change across the SEND system.

As part of its commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education

of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education.

The diagram below shows how inclusion differs from integration, separation and exclusion.



In Warwickshire, as elsewhere, we have seen a drift away from inclusive education provision in mainstream settings, with a growing proportion of learners placed in specialist provision. In January 2019, less than half of school age children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans attended mainstream settings (43%).

The vast majority of children benefit academically, socially, in confidence and self-esteem from education in community mainstream schools rather than further away from home or in what are often described as more “specialist” settings. This will not be true for all children or in all circumstances but research strongly supports Warwickshire’s policy of mainstream schooling as the presumption, as it aspires for high outcomes for all^{i & ii}.

Children and young people rate their social relationships as the most important aspect of their educationⁱⁱⁱ. Mainstream schooling increases the friendship groups of young people, increasing opportunities to experience and practise diverse social interaction and development.^{iv} Long term benefits of this are increased social integration and emotional wellbeing. Additionally, increased access to mainstream social interactions correlates positively with sustained participation in the labour market in adult life^v.

Those learners with SEND who are able to achieve within the average range of their peers are more likely to take GCSEs and develop higher aspirations for academic and vocational achievements and consequently independent living within mainstream schools. Cultural and social isolation and limited awareness of opportunities can result in lower aspirations.

Students with physical disabilities identify the benefits of spending time and making friends with non-disabled peers. Despite encountering problems and difficulties in mainstream schools, such students can see it as essential preparation for the 'real world'. They feel isolated from the 'real world' in a specialist setting and report feeling overprotected both on site and in the local town in terms of attitudes, facilities and access^{vi}.

Away from the school day, although bullying is an unfortunate feature of any type of community life there is evidence that young people who attend a specialist school experience far more bullying by children from other mainstream schools and from peers and outsiders in their neighbourhood^{vii}.

Additional but not inconsiderable benefits of mainstream education for all are the positive changes in the attitudes and skills of teaching staff in mainstream settings when children with significant difficulties are recognised as full members of their community^{viii} and the reduction in negative attitudes in the rest of the community^{ix}.

The inconsistent inclusive practice that was identified back in mainstream settings in 2015 in the Vulnerable Learners Strategy has persisted and, in some schools, continues to be an issue. We believe that all children should be educated as close to their home as possible, which not only reduces the time they spend travelling, but also enables them to be an integral part of their local community, where they are able to feel welcomed, included and valued as equal members of society. We want to support children, young people and their families by encouraging and challenging schools to cater for as wide a range of needs and abilities as is possible. We want mainstream settings to nurture positive attitudes to children and young people with SEND, both in their own school and in their wider community.

Personalisation

Inclusion in our schools requires a bespoke, tailored and personalised approach.

“Each need is so unique and there is a big difference between a SEN child being able to cope in a mainstream school and them being given the education to be the best they can be - this is where tailoring their education is key.”

[Parent, online focus group]

Personalisation means a change to way services are assessed, planned, delivered, and reviewed, for children and young people aged 0-25 years. The aim of Personalisation is to develop the service around the individual, rather than to slot the individual into the service.

It requires early identification and a clear understanding of individual need. It is essential to consider the individual's life from their viewpoint, discovering with them what their needs are rather than assessing them from the outside. Getting this process right will reveal their strengths, vulnerabilities, skills, aspirations, and preferences including what resources the individual can contribute, as well as the contribution available from informal support such as their family, friendship and community network.

It is also essential to identify who can act as advocates for the individual early on in the process. This might be family, friends, an advocacy service or any person who is recognised by the individual as being able to help them understand others and express themselves.

Personalisation recognises individuals as the experts. This is why it is so important to listen to the voice of the child or young person.

Warwickshire's Strategic Priorities – What we want to achieve

Complementing the strategic priorities outlined in the Warwickshire Education (WE) strategy, we will work under a framework of six priorities, as set out below. Our consultation showed strong support for these priorities, as well as identifying challenges and opportunities that face us.

1. Promoting Inclusion

Our expectation

Mainstream schools and other education settings will use their best endeavours to deliver a graduated response to the needs of each child in their school.

Challenges and opportunities

“It is essential that you work to improve provision at SEN support and EHCP level in mainstream schools.” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“.....for children with SEND; for many going mainstream is surviving not thriving”
[Parent, guardian or carer]

“Mainstream can often meet needs, but not in as effective a way as schools that are more set for children with specialist needs. This doesn't mean necessarily special schools, but more that we seem to have two models only - special school and mainstream - there needs to be a better choice than this” [Primary Head Teacher]

Key activities

- To ensure we are identifying need and promoting inclusion from an early age, by working with our early years settings to achieve best practice
- To review and update the SEND Provision Matrix making it clear to schools and parent and carers what is expected as a graduated response to individual needs
- To establish more resourced provisions and/or specialist partnerships in mainstream settings, providing a bridge between mainstream and specialist provision

2. Getting it right for learners with high needs (school age)

Our expectation

Learners with high needs will receive multi-agency support, coordinated through the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process. Where appropriate, specialist education provision will provide for their needs.

Challenges and opportunities

It is a good day at school when...“I get support when I am struggling, before becoming anxious.” [Pupil/Student]

*“Applying for an EHCP is a prohibitive process that means that staff can be put off from applying and that these children do not receive the support that they need”
[Primary education staff]*

“... currently getting specialist provision is a lottery and many children miss out. Because there are so few spaces, not every child who needs a place gets one, there are always far more applications than allocations. The specialist education is fantastic, we just need more of it.” [Parent, online focus group]

Key activities

- To improve the timeliness of issuing EHC plans (within 20 week statutory timeframe)
- To expand state-funded specialist provision where possible (including specialist partnerships)

3. Improving health and social care for learners with SEND

Our expectation

We will work with statutory partners and commissioned services to focus on the holistic needs of the child and improve the local offer of services.

Challenges and opportunities

“A child who is successful at school is well supported in terms of health, home, community and school. When a child is struggling in one of these areas it can have an effect on the others.” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“Help needs to be early and coordinated, and parents shouldn't have to battle to get support for their children, my child has only been able to access CAMHS support following a complaint. It's often too little, too late, and is a false economy. My child could have, with appropriate support, stayed in mainstream school, at least until end of primary age. They is now so badly traumatised and has been out of school for so long, that they are likely to only be able to cope in specialist provision, I have been unable to continue working, and so have lost my salary (and therefore stopped paying taxes) and am reliant on benefits now. So the lack of early support has meant that my child will require a more expensive school place, I am unable to contribute financially to society, and we are relying on state benefits. And that doesn't even take into account the 'human cost'.” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“This is a major priority but has to be with a focus on multi-agency working” [Primary Head Teacher]

“Sadly, it seems we are a long way off achieving ‘tell your story once’ and the joint commissioning of services in Warks.” [Parent Carer Forum]

Key activities

- To agree a Warwickshire joint commissioning plan for learners with SEND, setting out how local needs are to be met through the local offer services
- To develop further the joint processes for the delivery of support, particularly for those requiring support at Early Help
- To deliver improved support for social, emotional and mental health through in-school support and the delivery of commissioned mental health services (eg. Rise)

4. Preparation for Adulthood

Our expectation

Learners are supported to fulfil their potential as they transition to adulthood. We believe that the overwhelming majority of learners with SEND are capable of sustainable paid employment, with the right preparation and support. With our partners, we want to embed this ‘presumption of employability’, by ensuring there are significantly increased opportunities for our learners with SEND as they enter adulthood.

Challenges and opportunities

“There is little consistency at present in the transfer from children's to adult services. The support seems to 'disappear' at adulthood and families are expected to function more independently. Unfortunately, a child doesn't wake up on their 18th birthday being able to independently take a bus or manage their own finances and with all the SEND issues gone” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“... transition to adulthood needs to take place with real planning from age 14 onwards. This is acknowledged but it doesn't happen often. What does it mean? It should be looking at life skills such as travel independently (not just for those in specialist provision but for all SEN who need it in mainstream), understanding and managing money, real supported work experience (not just lip service) for students and real supported placements in the workplace. Young people with additional needs in mainstream school are often left unsupported in this arena but in reality need a lot of support and guidance.” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“Developing resilience and independence is a fantastic skill-set for any young person and it confers a great deal of dignity and respect on a CYP with SEND to say that you believe they can achieve control over their own lives. With the right preparation and support much can be achieved in the workplace. ... The reality of supporting YP with SEND into work is that it is time consuming and costly. If WCC were to set up its own program it could lead the way and also gather important evidence of what works and how other employers might participate.” [Parent Carer Forum]

“I’ve worked at the café for a year and made friends at the café.” [Young person, community consultation]

Key activities

- Maximising the use of local specialist provision at post-16 and differentiating that provision
- To improve transition planning from year 9 onwards for learners with an EHCP
- To work with employers, schools and colleges to increase the offer of supported internships

5. Transport

Our expectation

That the quality and offer of specialist transport provision and removes transport issues as a barrier to success, within the policy and resources available.

Challenges and opportunities

It’s a good day at school when... “My taxi comes on time and it doesn’t make me anxious” [Pupil/Student]

“Wherever possible children should be included in the mainstream transport arrangements - this might require investment in trained bus escorts who support children with their travel...perhaps creating a confident and independent traveller for the future.” [Parent, guardian or carer]

“I am deeply disappointed with the services several children in class have received by transport this school year in particular. Their needs are misunderstood and their well-being is ignored.” [Special school staff]

Key activities

- To improve the quality of specialist transport by undertaking risk assessments for learners with high need and for learners with newly issued EHC plans (as per the Home to School Transport Policy) and ensuring timeliness of decision-making
- To increase independent travel training to give young people the life skills to travel independently.

6. Workforce Development

Our expectation

That professionals across the system are confident in delivering the 'assess, plan, do and review' approach to deliver a graduated response for learners with SEND.

Challenges and opportunities

"The current system relies on the compassion of a particular school/teacher rather than a good level of training of all staff" [Parent, online focus group]

Sometimes I worry about... "having certain teachers" [Pupil/Student]

"It's not happening because for some children in order to be able to learn, they need say a movement break or a sensory diet. This would take minimal resources to implement and give the child more access to learning. But if the SENCo, teacher, advocate doesn't understand this, they wouldn't think to implement it. By not implementing interventions such as these, we are effectively preventing children from learning." [Parent, online focus group]

"Flexible arrangements between mainstream and special schools should best serve to upskill staff and maintain placements." [Governor at special school]

Key activities

- To work with schools to develop a 'whole school' approach to supporting learners with SEND, so that the workforce is suitably trained and confident.

Resources to achieve our aims

Our ambition for learners with special educational needs and disability remains high. However, we are not ignorant of the financial landscape that schools and services are operating in. Feedback from our public consultation provided a consistent message that our ambitions are right, but without resources we could not deliver positive change.

“Inclusion without adequate funding and support is damaging for pupils and staff. Inclusion with good support enhances the experience of individuals and school community as a whole.” [Counsellor]

“As well as having a SEND child I work in SEN in a mainstream school. We can't meet the children's needs because we do not have enough money or the physical equipment/resources to do so. Due to lack of funding mainstream is increasingly unable to meet the needs of SEN children”. [Parent, guardian or carer]

“Funding is also low, so schools that do fight for the support for these children are having to cut costs in other areas to support these pupils. The school then attracts more of these pupils because they do a good job to support them but the funding just does not support the actual needs of these children” [Primary education staff]

Demand on schools and services has increased both in number and in complexity of need. Nationally, research by the Local Government Association in 2018 reports an average overspend of £3.5m across all local authorities. Locally, education and social care teams are undertaking transformation projects in order to work within allocated resources. NHS budgets remain under significant pressure, and Warwickshire schools are in the f40 group, representing the lowest funded schools in the country.

It is clear that throughout the lifetime of this strategy, resources will be a major constraint to achieving change.

The commitment of this strategy is to work together to deliver the best system of education, health and social care for learners with SEND within our allocated resources.

How will we measure success?

We will demonstrate progress against this strategy through the following measures. This is not an exhaustive list, but will show whether we have delivered against the key activities identified above. The measures will be reported to the SEND & Inclusion Board.

Activity	Measure	Expected change	Rationale
To ensure we are identifying need and promoting inclusion from an early age, by working with our early years settings to achieve best practice	Number of early years settings awarded kitemark (WIncKS)	To increase	The more early settings meet best practice standards the better we will be at identifying support before school
To review and update the SEND Provision Matrix making it clear to schools and parent and carers what is expected as a graduated response to individual needs	SEND Provision Matrix reviewed and re-published	To complete	The SEND Provision Matrix provides clear guidance on how needs should be met locally
To establish more resourced provisions and/or specialist partnerships in mainstream settings, providing a bridge between mainstream and specialist provision	Number of places at Resourced Provisions or Partnerships	To increase	A broader spectrum of educational provision is required to meet local needs
To improve the timeliness of issuing EHC plans (within 20 week statutory timeframe)	% of new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks, including exceptions	To increase	Improve the timeliness of issuing EHC plans
To expand state-funded specialist provision where possible (including specialist partnerships)	Number and % of learners with EHC plans in mainstream, specialist and independent specialist settings	To increase the number in mainstream and state-funded specialist settings, reducing the number of learners in independent specialist settings	If the local offer is meeting demand, the percentage of learners in mainstream and specialist settings should increase. Whilst the number of state-funded specialist places will increase, the overall proportion of learners in specialist education should decrease, as a result of fewer learners in independent settings
To agree a Warwickshire joint commissioning plan for learners with SEND, setting out how local needs are to be met through the local offer services	Joint commissioning plan published	To complete	Joint working can only take place if the local offer of services meets local needs. A joint plan is needed to address current gaps in provision.
To develop further the joint processes for the delivery of support, particularly for those	Early Help Strategy delivery plan published and	To complete	Better support and joint working through early help should prevent children and

requiring support at Early Help	monitored		their families escalating to crisis support
To deliver improved support for social, emotional and mental health through in-school support and the delivery of commissioned mental health services (eg. Rise)	% of referrals to Rise with a first appointment within 18 weeks	To increase	This is one of a collection of measures for the Rise service
Maximising the use of local specialist provision at post-16 and differentiating that provision	Number and % of post-16 learners with EHC plans in local and independent specialist settings	To increase the percentage in local settings, reducing the percentage of learners in independent specialist settings	If the local offer is meeting demand, the percentage of learners in local post-16 provision should increase with a reduction of learners in independent specialist settings
To improve transition planning from year 9 onwards for learners with an EHCP	Number of EHC plans amended following the Year 9 review	To increase	The more EHC plans are reviewed in Year 9 and amended, the more likely it is that planning has taken place for life after school.
To work with employers, schools and colleges to increase the offer of supported internships	Number of supported internships offered	To increase	The more supported internships offered in the County, the better the opportunities for paid employment post-education for our learners with high needs
To improve the quality of specialist transport by undertaking risk assessments for learners with high need and for learners with newly issued EHC plans (as per the Home to School Transport Policy) and ensuring timeliness of decision-making	Number of transport risk assessments taken for learners with EHC plans	To increase	The use of risk assessment will improve the quality of transport for our learners with high needs and ensure the implementation of the local home to school transport policy
To increase independent travel training to give young people the life skills to travel independently.	Number of young people successfully completing independent travel training	To increase	Using transport is a life skill, preparing young people for adulthood and reducing dependence on transport assistance
To work with schools to develop a 'whole school' approach to supporting learners with SEND, so that the workforce is suitably trained and confident.	Approach to workforce development agreed with schools.	To complete	A more confident workforce will be better equipped to deliver a graduated response to needs

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