



# Improving Special Educational Needs Provision in Brent: **Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision in Brent**

## **Consultation Document**

Brent Council  
Education Arts & Libraries  
February 2005



# 1. Why is there a need for change?

The council is undertaking a review of special educational needs provision in Brent. An initial consultation document was published in May 2004. It set out the case for change in the way that SEN provision in Brent is currently organised. This is because there has been a change over the years in the numbers of children with different types of needs. In particular, there are more children with autism and with profound and multiple learning difficulties than there were previously. Also, most children with moderate learning difficulties are now placed in mainstream schools rather than special schools.

As a result of these changes, some of our special schools are now meeting a wider range of needs than they did previously. Some special schools have spare places whilst others are nearly always full. Approximately 200 children with special educational needs are placed outside of Brent, because there is no local provision available.

There is a variety of provision for SEN in mainstream schools as well as in special schools. Mainstream schools meet a wide range of SEN and need to be able to call on specialist advice and support when required. Although there is some good specialist support available, this needs to be improved.

# 2. What conclusions have been drawn so far?

The following broad conclusions have been drawn from the first stage of consultation.

- There is a case for change in the organisation of SEN provision in Brent.
- There is a strong and continuing role for special schools in Brent in providing for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Taking into account the rising population in Brent, sufficient special school places must be retained in the long-term.
- We should aim to reduce out-borough special school placements and use Brent's own provision more effectively.
- There should be no closures of special schools and the five special schools in Brent should be retained on their current sites. However, consideration will need to be given to changing the designation of special schools where required to match the changing profile of special educational needs.
- Alongside developments in special schools, provision for SEN in mainstream schools should be strengthened to support the inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream wherever possible.
- There should be greater collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools for the benefit of all pupils.

### 3. What is being suggested for Brent special schools?

#### ***Manor School***

It is proposed that Manor school remains as a primary aged special school for pupils with learning difficulties on its current site. It is proposed that Manor is re-designated as a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, including pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This designation would more closely reflect the current range of children's needs being met by the school.

#### ***Woodfield School***

It is proposed that Woodfield School remains as a secondary aged special school for pupils with learning difficulties on its current site. In addition to 100 places for pupils aged 11-16, 20 places will be established for pupils aged 16-19. It is proposed that, over time, Woodfield will admit pupils with more complex learning difficulties and expand its existing provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

#### ***Vernon House***

It is proposed that Vernon House remains as a primary aged special school for pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties on its current site. It is proposed that more flexible admission arrangements are considered to enable part-time and/or temporary placements whilst pupils remain on the roll of their mainstream school. There would still be, however, a core of full-time permanent placements.

#### ***Hay Lane***

It is proposed that Hay Lane remains as an all age special school for pupils with learning difficulties. It will continue to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties, including pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Accommodation at the school needs to be improved and capital funding will be made available in the 2005-2008 capital programme

#### ***Grove Park***

It is proposed that Grove Park remains as an all age special school for pupils with physical disabilities who have a broad range of learning and communication needs. It is proposed that, over time, Grove Park will admit pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in addition to the range of needs that it currently meets.

The possibility of re-organising Hay Lane and Grove Park schools into a separate primary school and secondary school was considered closely. However, this is not being put forward as a preferred option. This would have involved each of the schools meeting a wide range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities. There were concerns about this expressed through the first stage consultation. Also, it was concluded that the accommodation at Hay Lane, even with the planned improvements, would not be suitable in the long term to meet these range of needs. It is therefore proposed, as described above, that Hay Lane and Grove Park remain all-age although each will have distinct primary and secondary departments. The possibility of shared 16-19 provision on the Grove Park and Hay Lane site will also be considered.

## 4. What new provision is being suggested?

### *Secondary provision for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.*

It is proposed that an additional Pupil Referral Unit is established. This would cater for secondary aged pupils with complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties whose needs cannot currently be met at existing Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 PRU provision. The new provision would meet the needs of pupils both with and without statements of special educational needs. The provision would need to be carefully structured to provide a high level of support, supervision and access to therapy services.

The additional PRU provision would enable more pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties to be educated in the Borough. This would reduce the need for out-Borough placements although it is acknowledged that a small number of pupils with the most complex needs may continue to require a specialist out-Borough placement.

It is envisaged that a 40 place provision would be required. A suitable site has yet to be identified.

### *Mainstream provision for physical disability*

It is proposed that resourced mainstream provision for pupils with physical disabilities is developed to ensure that needs can be met in mainstream schools wherever possible and in accordance with parental preference.

This would not be through separate 'unit' provision but through ensuring that designated mainstream schools have full disability access, therapy provision and access to specialist training, advice and support.

It is proposed that there would be 2 designated primary schools and 2 designated secondary schools located north and south of the Borough providing approximately 40 places in total.

## 5. How will special schools and mainstream schools work together?

We believe that greater collaboration between mainstream schools and special schools is crucial to ensuring the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs. We are proposing that special schools and mainstream schools work more closely together for the benefit of all pupils.

This collaboration can take a number of forms, including joint training programmes and movement of staff between special and mainstream schools. We will encourage both special schools and mainstream schools to develop their specialist expertise in aspects of SEN provision so that they can offer advice and support to other schools. We are proposing that specialist outreach services are developed further in the Borough covering the full range of complex special educational needs. It is intended that special schools and some additionally resourced mainstream schools will provide a co-ordinated specialist outreach service, available to all schools.

In the long-term, we believe that there could be benefits in co-locating special schools and mainstream schools on the same site. However, there are no plans for co-location at the present time.

## 6. Are any improvements to accommodation required?

There is a need to develop and improve special school accommodation. In particular, substantial work is required at Hay Lane School to ensure suitable accommodation for the diverse needs of pupils in the school. Some improvements are also required at Grove Park School. There needs to be new accommodation at Woodfield School to meet the need of 16-19 year old pupils. This has already been agreed and it is anticipated that it will be in place by September 2005. Accommodation at Vernon House School is good but additional accommodation may be required at the school to meet the needs of pupils on temporary placements. Accommodation at Manor School is good.

Further work will be carried out to review the number of places which can be provided at each school, taking into account DfES guidelines.

## 7. How will this be financed?

It is estimated that revenue costs of approximately £1.5 million will be required to establish the new Pupil Referral Unit, provision for physically disabled pupils in mainstream schools and a specialist outreach service. This funding will need to be met from that element of school funding that is retained centrally by the LEA, subject to approval from the Schools Forum.

Capital costs will need to be met from the education capital programme. It is anticipated that a significant level of capital funding will be made available in the capital programme for 2005-2008 to improve accommodation as described in Section 5.

## 8. What will this mean for my child?

### ***If your child is already in a Brent special school.***

There will be no special school closures and a special school place will continue to be provided for your child. Arising from these proposals, it is possible that some special schools will change in designation (the range of children's needs that it meets). If this is the case, this would be subject to a further statutory consultation and you will have full opportunity to give your views.

### ***If your child has special educational needs and attends a Brent mainstream school.***

There will be no immediate changes which will affect your child. However, under these proposals, there will be increased availability of specialist SEN advice and support provided to mainstream schools. There will also be improved provision for pupils with physical disabilities attending mainstream schools.

### ***If your child attends special provision outside Brent.***

Your child will be able to continue to attend their current school if this is your preference, subject to the normal annual review procedures. However, under these proposals, there will be improvements in Brent's provision and there may be opportunities for your child to benefit from local specialist provision rather than an out-Borough placement.

## 9. What are the proposed next steps and timetable for change?

Consultation on this document will take place from February-May 2005. The consultation document will be sent to:

- All Brent schools and governing bodies
- Teacher unions
- All parents of Brent pupils attending out-Borough special provision
- All parents of pupils attending a Brent special school
- Parents Forum
- Parent Partnership Service
- Brent Association of Voluntary Agencies ( BRAVA)
- Neighbouring local educational authorities and other LEA's who place pupils in Brent special schools
- Other agencies represented on the Children's Partnership Board and Children's Partnership Group

Following the consultation, the council will produce its final proposals. If there are recommendations for any significant change of character of a school, statutory consultation processes will be followed in line with DfES guidance. Subject to the outcome of consultation, there will be a phased implementation of proposals over a 3 year period, 2005-2008.



This leaflet is about improving special educational needs in Brent. If you would like a copy in another language please tick the appropriate box and complete your name and address below.

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# Give Us Your Views

We value your comments on the proposals outlined in this document. Your views will be taken into account in deciding on proposals for change. Names of consultees and details of individual responses will be used solely by the council and not given out to third parties.

Name: ..... Position: .....

Contact address: .....  
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Email: .....

## ***1. Do you agree with the conclusions set out in section 2 of this document?***

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## ***2. What do you think of the suggestions for Brent special schools set out in section 3?***

a) Manor School.....

b) Woodfield School.....

c) Vernon House.....

d) Hay Lane.....

e) Grove Park.....

## ***3. New SEN provision which is being suggested (section 4)***

Any comment on the following:

a) Secondary provision for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

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b) Mainstream provision for physical disability

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