

# SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

## POLICY STATEMENT

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The Board's commitment to special educational needs has its starting point in the Christian Gospel which recognises the uniqueness and value of the individual and which touches every area of human need. Christ's ministry is characterised by His openness to and concern for each person, in particular those needing support. As Christians in education the Board accepts the Gospel imperative to identify with this commitment, which will have particular relevance to pupils with special educational needs in our schools and colleges. This will be displayed through the Board's opposition to prejudice and pre-conceived ideas and through co-operation with its schools and colleges in fostering a learning climate which is inclusive and which provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs.

As a Christian Body, the Board will seek particularly to engender in its schools a full and balanced view of education, promoting a broad definition of achievement which includes the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

The Board fully supports the principles set out in the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfES 2001). The Board supports the principle that whenever possible the special educational needs of children will be met in mainstream schools. It also however supports the right of parents to choose specialist provision where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the child. Although the Board does not share the role, statutory responsibilities and resources of a local education authority (LEA) in respect of special educational needs, it does occupy a unique position through its involvement in the schools of twelve different boroughs. It will therefore seek to consult with LEAs where appropriate and promote the dissemination of good practice in the area of special educational needs in its schools across these boroughs. Through its regular involvement with schools and colleges the Board will encourage them to value the contribution of all pupils, to provide for the needs of all pupils and to work in partnership with other agencies which support the best provision for those with special educational needs.

The Board will advise governing bodies of their statutory responsibilities to make appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs and to monitor the effectiveness of their policies. This will be done through training and the support offered to schools before and after inspection.

Through its role in school building development the Board will take account of special needs issues related to accommodation and work in partnership with LEAs to ensure that, wherever possible, its schools are accessible to people with special needs.

### The Role of the Diocesan Board

#### Governors:

- To provide training and advice in the exercise of their statutory responsibilities with respect to special educational needs.
- To facilitate the exchange of ideas and sharing of good practice.
- To encourage governors' awareness of the implications of their mission statement and aims in respect of special educational needs.
- To foster partnership between designated governors for special educational needs and the school's co-ordinator.
- To promote governors' awareness of special educational needs' issues relating to improvements in accommodation.

#### Headteachers and teachers:

- To provide an informal network for the exchange of ideas, the sharing of common difficulties and good practice.
- To encourage collaboration between schools over provision for special educational needs where the Board has relevant information over local practice.

#### Local Education Authorities:

- To raise concerns of Diocesan schools with LEAs related to special educational needs, including the basis for funding, through representation on education committees and consultation with LEA officers.

#### DfES:

- To participate fully in consultation in relation to new legislation on special educational needs.
- January 1996 (Schools Committee) Revised June 2004 (Schools Committee)