

Practice guide

SEND & Alternative Provision

Inclusive mainstream provision- Enhanced Reception Offer, Blackpool

Background, purpose and rationale

The Blackpool SEND Strategy 2024-2027 seeks to resolve some of the challenges and inequalities facing some of our youngest and most vulnerable children with SEND. Providing the right help at the right time enables children to make the best possible progress in their education and in everyday life. We want parents/carers to be confident that they will receive the support they need from education, health and care services. We believe that children and young people should feel included and supported and we will work together with all educational settings to enable all children and young people to learn and reach their potential. We want every child's needs to be met, as far as possible, in their local community

What we did to improve children's outcomes and experiences

Blackpool Council, in partnership with local schools, sought to create a specialist offer of provision for reception children with EHCPs that can be delivered within mainstream schools. This was intended to ensure mainstream schools were skilled and confident to meet the needs of children with special needs. We considered the need for mainstream school buildings that can meet the needs of complex children. Overarching considerations included securing improved parental confidence in mainstream schools to meet needs, alongside improved financial efficiency.

Over a two-year period, we have worked with local schools to develop specialist provision that can be delivered within a mainstream setting. It is a 'pop-up' approach which means it reflects areas of the town with the most need at a specific point in time.

It avoids bottle necks of inclusive schools becoming overwhelmed and sets the expectations that children with special educational needs have more choice in how their needs can be met in education.

What was the impact?

We have received positive responses from schools that this approach works for them and their cohort and secured positive and robust place planning - this year we may have more places than children. We have also observed a reduction in complaints and tribunals, alongside a trend of reducing placement breakdowns and children in reception accessing part-time timetables.

Parental feedback indicates the improved experiences of children and their families:

"The Blossoms unit at school has enabled my daughter to attend mainstream school but also caters for her needs with the support of the staff allowing The Blossoms to be her 'safe space' should the classroom get too overwhelming for her. Since starting at school, my daughter has come on leaps and bounds developmentally and academically with the amazing support both she and I receive."*

"I am really pleased with the progress my child has made. I feel the class has been excellent for her and she has made some really good progress. I'm pleased she has been able to access, and cope well, with some mainstream provision." Parent of pupil who is moving into the mainstream Year 1 class after spending one year in the enhanced classroom.

"What I like is that no matter what, the staff always put the children first and make it their all to help them improve. My child has improved massively on everything all thanks to them. I have nothing bad to say about any of them. They don't just support my child they also support me, and it means everything when you are on your own."

"I like this school a lot because my child is always happy when he is in school. He loves his teachers, and he has learnt a lot since being here. He is progressing every day and always impressing us when he comes home from school."

Find out more

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