



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

# Factsheet

## Special educational needs policy and provision in Nottinghamshire

### **This factsheet explains:**

- Nottinghamshire County Council's policy and provision for children and young people with special educational needs
- how and why Nottinghamshire differs from other local authorities
- how special educational needs in Nottinghamshire are funded
- where you can get further advice

## Some facts

- The percentage of Nottinghamshire children and young people who are issued with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) is amongst the lowest in the country - 0.7% of the total Nottinghamshire school pupil population. Nationally, the average is 2%.
- Because our level of statementing is comparatively low there is a widely held misconception that Nottinghamshire does not issue any statements. This is not correct. The most recent figures for Nottinghamshire show that:
  - 1347 pupils have a statement of special educational needs, similar to the previous year's position
  - 134 new statements were issued during 2006, again very similar to the previous year
  - the amount spent on administration of the statementing process is 27% below the national average. The money saved on administration has been directed to schools to spend on educational support for children and young people with SEN
  - 824 children and young people attend Nottinghamshire special schools. This represents an increase of between 4 and 5% over the last four years
  - we currently maintain 11 special schools and have no plans to reduce the number
  - 57 children and young people from Nottinghamshire with SEN are funded by the County Council at non-maintained special schools – this is more than double the position four years ago
  - there is not a significant level of parental dissatisfaction with our arrangements - our rate of appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal is only 1.76 per 10,000 pupils. Nationally the rate is between two and three times higher. We had only 21 appeals in 2005/06.
- We have managed to keep our statementing rate low because, unlike many other councils, it is not necessary in Nottinghamshire for a child with special educational needs to have a statement to access additional support. In Nottinghamshire additional support for children – whether or not they have statements – is available through our family of schools and high level needs funding arrangements. Together, these funding mechanisms allocate over £10 million each year to Nottinghamshire maintained schools. This is on top of the money already in the schools' budgets.
- Statements in Nottinghamshire are generally only issued for –
  - children and young people who need to be admitted to special schools
  - children and young people who have individual needs that are especially complex and require systematic monitoring.

## The law

- Nottinghamshire's SEN and inclusion strategy is entirely consistent with central government policy and the law -
  - the Education Act 1996 requires that pupils with special educational needs must be educated in mainstream schools unless certain exceptions apply
  - consistent with this, the government's statutory SEN Code of Practice – to which all local authorities and schools must have regard - says that in principle the special educational needs of children will normally be met in mainstream schools or settings
  - the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the recent Disability Equality Duty not only require the County Council and schools not to discriminate against disabled pupils, but impose a positive duty to promote disability equality. Local authorities and schools are required by this legislation to make reasonable adjustments to enable SEN and disabled pupils to attend mainstream schools, where practicable.

## Funding arrangements

- Nottinghamshire is the 11th largest local authority in England with 354 schools and 118,000 children and young people in the schools we maintain.
- Over 37% of the county's population live in the most deprived 25% of electoral wards nationally.
- Schools and other specialist services for pupils are now funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocated by central government. Nottinghamshire's share of this grant places us 113th out of 148 local authorities nationally or 13th out of 38 shire counties. For example, the DSG in 2005/06 for Nottinghamshire was £3,682 per pupil compared to £4,321 for the City of Nottingham.
- In order to redress this inequality, Nottinghamshire County Council over time has added £10.5 million to the funding it would otherwise have received from the government. It also made cuts to centrally provided services so that it could increase the delegation of funding to schools.
- Despite this, Nottinghamshire was placed 137th out of 148 local authorities in 2005/06 for targeted expenditure on SEN in mainstream schools<sup>1</sup>. That is because in Nottinghamshire a higher proportion of the overall education budget is allocated to schools through their Age Weighted Pupil Unit than in other parts of the country. Other councils target more of their funding in school budgets on SEN and allocate less to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit.
- Nottinghamshire's approach has been designed to give schools the greatest possible flexibility over their funding. However, increasing budget pressures in mainstream schools can have a negative impact on the ability and willingness of schools to meet the additional needs of pupils, particularly those with complex needs. Schools often look to the County Council to provide additional funding. But this is not possible as schools and most services for children and young people with special educational needs are now funded by government grant. As previously explained, in the past Nottinghamshire provided well over £10 million of funding in addition to that which the government's funding formula would have provided.

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<sup>1</sup>CIPFA estimates

If, after reading this factsheet, you have further questions, please contact us and we'll try to help.



#### Contacting us

email	<a href="mailto:rob.skelton@nottscs.gov.uk">rob.skelton@nottscs.gov.uk</a>
phone	<b>0115 977 3842</b>
fax	<b>0115 977 3114</b>
post	SEN Strategic Services, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP
internet	<a href="http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk">www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk</a>
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