

**Sub-Committee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of  
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment  
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Education of children with special educational needs in schools  
Information Note**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the education of children with special educational needs (SEN) in schools in response to the requests from members of the Sub-committee at its meeting on 22 February 2005.

**Students with SEN**

2. SEN describes the special educational needs of students. Students with SEN may include those who have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other students or those with a disability which hinders them from making use of the educational facilities provided for the majority of other students.

3. To address their educational needs effectively, their disabilities/difficulties in the areas of visual and hearing impairments, physical and intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, specific learning difficulties as well as speech impairment will be managed in school settings where there are education programmes and resources to enhance their skills in communication and interaction, cognition and learning, behaviour, emotional and social development as well as sensory and/or physical demands.

**Existing policy**

4. The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) is committed to implementing integrated education and providing opportunities for students with diverse learning needs to help them develop their potentials. However, for students with severe, profound or multiple disabilities who cannot benefit from schooling in the mainstream sector, they will be considered for placement

to special schools.

### **Identification, assessment and placement of students with SEN**

5. Under the Child Assessment Service of the Department of Health (DH), children from birth to 12 years old with developmental problems may receive assessment for diagnosis, functional evaluation, therapy, training and referral for educational service among others. Parents may receive developmental guidance, counselling and support. EMB also conducts psychological and speech and language assessments as well as educational audiological review. Parents will be briefed on their children's SEN to facilitate their informed decision on school placement.

6. Upon parents' decision and written consent, the children assessed may be arranged for placement to mainstream or special schools. With parents' consent, the assessment results will be made known to the schools concerned. Parents are also encouraged to inform schools of their children's SEN.

### **Students with SEN in mainstream schools**

7. As at 15.9.2004, there are 15 213 and 11 911 students with SEN in primary schools and secondary schools respectively. More details are at Appendix 1.

8. To facilitate early identification of students with SEN, EMB has developed teachers' observation checklists for mainstream schools to identify students with learning difficulties and speech problems. Schools may also refer students to EMB for psychological, audiological, and speech assessments to ascertain their SEN and educational support required. Through their Student Health Service, DH also refers students identified with hearing problems to EMB for educational services.

9. Mainstream schools are encouraged to adopt a whole-school approach to cater for students' SEN. Under this approach, schools are encouraged to develop an SEN policy covering early identification and intervention of learning difficulties, monitoring of progress, assessment adaptation, curriculum differentiation, staff development and parental

involvement. EMB has provided a variety of provisions and support for schools.

### **Provisions in mainstream schools**

10. Under the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme, 12 280 students with severe learning difficulties in 426 primary schools are provided with intensive remedial teaching in one or more of the three basic subjects in the 2004/05 school year. These schools are provided with a total of 708 additional resource teachers and a recurrent grant for the programme.

11. To facilitate the whole school approach to integrated education of students with hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, autistic spectrum disorders and mild grade mental handicap, a total of 85 additional teachers and 50 learning support assistants and a grant are provided in 117 primary and secondary schools in the 2004/05 school year.

12. Under a pilot project on new funding mode for students with SEN, 170 primary schools are provided with an Intensive Learning Support Grant in 2004/05 school year for provision of remedial services under the whole school approach. The Grant is at \$10,000 or \$20,000 per student per annum depending on the degree of support required, with a ceiling provision of \$550000 per school per annum. The total provision of grants for the 2004/05 school year amounts to around \$35M.

13. Under the School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme, 104 secondary schools with an intake of two classes or more of territory-wide bottom 20% students at S1 are provided with an additional teacher in the 2004/05 school year. This Scheme aims at creating space for teachers to develop their school-based curriculum which suits the needs of their students and to strengthen guidance for the needy students.

14. Under the School-based Remedial Support Programme, 138 secondary schools with high intake of bottom 10% of junior secondary students are provided with a total of 219 additional teachers together with a recurrent grant in the 2004/05 school year. Through intensive remedial teaching and support learning in the three basic subjects, the students are expected to develop good study habits, improve study skills and gain confidence in

mastering the basic subjects so as to minimize the gap of attainment with other students.

15. Under the student guidance system, student guidance officer/teacher/personnel in primary schools work in close partnership with all the staff and parents, conduct developmental and preventive guidance activities as well as provide case-work and group-work service to help individual students overcome their personal and social problems. With effect from year 2002/03, the manning ratio has been improved from 1 to 1680 to 1 for each primary school with 24 classes (about 900 pupils). In the 2004/05 school year, a total of 585 of these staff are provided for 716 primary schools.

16. The School Social Work Service aims to identify and help students with academic, social and emotional problems, maximize their educational opportunities, develop their potential and prepare them for responsible adulthood. Effective August 2000, the manning ratio has been improved to one school social worker per school. In the 2004/05 school year, a total of 484 school social workers have been provided.

### **Support measures for mainstream schools**

17. EMB provides a wide range of support to schools, including:
- (a) Psychological assessment for students with learning and/or psycho-social adjustment difficulties and consultation service for schools and parents with regard to support measures;
  - (b) Professional support for schools to implement whole school approach catering for students with SEN, follow-up consultation after training and professional advice on curriculum tailoring and teaching strategies;
  - (c) Professional support and advice to teachers in school-based curriculum development through various modes, including regular on-site support, school-based staff development events, and network-based/territory-wide sharing sessions;
  - (d) School-based support and development to schools with hearing

impaired integrators, involving professional advice, counselling, guidance and training on the management, education and provisions for these students, and networking community resources for the support of education of hearing impaired integrators;

- (e) Speech and language assessment, and school-based support service which includes consultation visits, school-based speech and language programmes and teacher training to mainstream schools to help teachers support students with speech impairment;
- (f) Measures to support students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) include the development of teacher identification and specialist assessment tools to facilitate early identification and assessment of SpLD, educational resources to enhance teacher and parent awareness and promote effective teaching strategies and intervention, enhancing psycho-social support for these students and their parents, providing guidance to schools on homework and assessment accommodation for these students and maintaining close liaison with other agencies such as tertiary institutes, Department of Health and NGOs in developing assessment and support services for these students;
- (g) Centre-based support, including the Resource Teaching Centre Service for children with severe learning problems, Adjustment Programme for children with behavioural and adjustment problems, and out-reach service for children with visual impairment and physical disabilities under the Resource Help Service;
- (h) Special Education Resource Centre, which provides computer and multi-media equipment for teachers to search for reference for designing school-based teaching materials, and a virtual platform for sharing of information and resources on special education; and
- (i) Resource materials for schools, including resource kits, training packages and leaflets to support children with autistic spectrum disorders, mental handicap, physical disability, hearing and visual impairment, specific learning difficulties and speech problems, teaching guide on “Understanding and Helping Children with

Special Educational Needs”, and pamphlet and e-learning programme on equal opportunities. List of resource materials is shown at Appendix 2.

18. To support schools in catering for students’ diverse needs, EMB has introduced an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) to Primary Schools in the 2003/04 school year. EPS is outsourced to various service providers such as tertiary institution, school sponsors and NGOs. By phased implementation, a total of 200 public sector primary schools will be served by the 2007/08 school year.

19. EMB has set up the Quality Education Fund to fund schools’ projects in effective learning, all-round education, school-based management, educational research and information technology. Schools can make use of the Fund to launch projects or develop materials to support students with SEN.

20. Special schools have been organized to support mainstream schools in the delivery of integration education through the following programmes:

- (a) Resource Support Programme for Children with Visual Impairment (VI), in which the school for the visually impaired is staffed with resource teachers and braillists to advise mainstream school teachers on curriculum adaptation and teaching strategies to cater for the VI students’ needs, to support VI students on learning skills and use of special equipment to access information, and to prepare Braille learning materials for those who are totally blind;
- (b) Enhanced Support Service for Hearing Impaired Children, in which the four schools for the hearing impaired are furnished with resource teachers and a recurrent grant to provide comprehensive support services to the hearing impaired integrators, including academic remedial work, speech and communication training, and individual and parent counselling; and
- (c) Special schools cum resource centres, through which 19 special schools provide support in a myriad of services geared to the needs of mainstream school teachers to empower schools in handling students with SEN, foster cooperation and a sharing culture between

the mainstream and special schools, and promote cross fertilization of professional knowledge among teachers.

21. Mainstream schools delivering integrated education are encouraged to become resource schools.

22. In the 2002/03 and 2003/04 school years, a total of four mainstream and special schools have been invited to join the Schools' Professional Collaboration Project to become a resource school for other mainstream schools.

### ***Teacher Training***

23. To empower teachers in both mainstream and special schools with knowledge on SEN, EMB has commissioned two tertiary institutes to conduct three training courses of 10, 30 and 120 hours each in the 2004/05 school year. A total of 1891 teachers have attended the courses.

24. Throughout the year, EMB organizes a spectrum of other modes of training, including networking of teachers, territory-wide and school-based seminars, workshops and experience-sharing sessions on knowledge, practical skills and inclusion strategies. In the 2004/05 school year, EMB has conducted 6 theme-based training courses of 3 to 14 hours each, and a total of 5889 teachers have attended the courses. Details about the courses are at Appendix 3.

25. Moreover, the support for SEN children in mainstream schools has been included in the curriculum of in-service and induction training programme on student guidance for regular teachers and student guidance personnel, including the Certificate Course on Student Guidance for Teachers of Primary School.

### ***Accommodation in public examinations***

26. The Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) makes special examination arrangements for students with SEN taking the HKCEE and HKALE to ensure that they will take these examinations on equal footing with other candidates. Schools are also encouraged to make similar

arrangements in the internal assessments and examinations. Special examination arrangements may include extra examination time, enlarged question and answer sheets and other physical accommodations.

### ***Exit paths***

27. On completion of junior secondary education, students with SEN may continue their studies through the Junior Secondary Education Assessment System. Other pathways for further studies include the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, industrial training centers or skills centers for people with disabilities. They may also opt for open employment or supported employment under the Social Welfare Department or Interactive Selective Placement Service under the Labour Department.

### **Students with SEN in special schools**

#### ***School category, capacity and enrolment***

28. There are 62 aided special schools in Hong Kong. As at 15.1.2005, these schools provide a total of 8367 places and 7645 students are on roll. Apart from schools for children with mental handicap which offer non-mainstream curriculum, all remaining special schools offer mainstream curriculum. The school category, capacity and enrolment as at 15.1.2005 are at Appendix 4.

#### ***Provisions in special schools***

29. In addition to 1.5 teachers per class, special schools are provided with additional teachers according to varying needs of students in different categories of schools. They include teacher librarian, resource teachers for autistic children, resource teachers for supportive educational programmes, mobility instructors, low-vision training teachers, teachers assisting in speech therapy, workshop teachers and native-speaking English teachers.

30. Depending on the school category, the schools are also provided with a wide range of non-teaching staff, including school social worker, speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, educational psychologist, braillists, school nurse, teacher assistants, laboratory technicians, occupational

therapy assistants, artisans, workshop attendants, clerical staff, school bus drivers and janitor staff.

31. EMB has set up boarding section in some special schools to cater for the long-term residential needs of the students. The boarding service is planned on a territory-wide basis. Around one-third of the special schools are provided with boarding section, which are staffed with warden, assistant warden, houseparents, programme workers and nurses as well as clerical staff, cooks, watchmen and janitor staff.

32. Special schools with registered school buses are provided with school bus drivers to facilitate the commuting of their students for educational purpose.

### ***Support measures for special schools***

33. EMB provides a wide range of support to special schools, including:

- (a) Professional support for special schools to implement various programmes such as the Extension of Years of Education Programme and Resource Teaching Programme for Autistic Children through collaborative projects, school visits, training events and follow-up consultation services after training;
- (b) Psycho-educational assessment and follow-up support for students with learning, emotional and/or behavioural problems, and consultation service to parents and teachers; and
- (c) School-based support and development to schools with hearing impaired students, including professional advice, counselling, guidance and training on the management, education and provisions for these students, and networking community resources for the support of education of hearing impaired students.

34. Like mainstream schools, special schools are encouraged to seek funding from the Quality Education Fund to launch projects or develop materials to support students with SEN.

### ***Teacher Training***

35. Apart from the training mentioned in Paragraphs 23 through 25 above, EMB provides professional development seminars and sharing sessions/workshops throughout the year for school heads, teachers and non-teaching specialist staff such as speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists of special schools.

### ***Accommodation in public examinations***

36. The HKEAA makes special examination arrangements for students of special schools taking the HKCEE and HKALE like that mentioned in Paragraph 26 above.

### ***Exit paths***

37. For special school students who read the mainstream curriculum, they may continue their senior secondary education in either special or mainstream schools upon completion of S3. Some may opt for vocational training or open employment. For S5 leavers, some may take the S6 course in mainstream schools and the majority of them will receive training in the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education or the training/skills centres. Some will seek employment.

38. For students with mental handicap, the current post-S3 placement includes training/skills centres for vocational training as well as sheltered workshops and day activity centres. Before the 2002/03 school year, these students left school after completion of S3 for post-school placement.

39. Effective the 2002/03 school year, the 2-year Extension of Years of Education Programme was implemented in schools for the mentally handicapped (MH) to facilitate the smooth transition of the S3 students from school to work, post-school placement and adult life in line with the curriculum reform. All MH schools have been participating in the Programme since the 2003/04 school year. The Programme has been extended to students with mental handicap or multiple disabilities in schools for the physically disabled in the 2004/05 school year.

**Advice sought**

40. Members are requested to note the contents of this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau  
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## Appendix 1

### Number of Students with SEN in Primary and Secondary Schools (as at 15.9.2004)

SEN Type	Primary	Secondary	Total
Speech impairment	1103	30	1133
Hearing impairment	466	436	902
Visual impairment	41	28	69
Physical impairment	141	73	214
Mental handicap	692	320	1012
Autistic spectrum disorders	490	111	601
Learning difficulties*	12280	10913	23193
<b>Total</b>	<b>15213</b>	<b>11911</b>	<b>27124</b>

Note: \* including students with specific learning difficulties

## **List of Resource Materials Provided by EMB**

### ***Teaching Guide and Checklist***

- Teaching guide on “Understanding and Helping Children with Special Educational Needs”
- A training manual for SGP to conduct school-based training for parents
- “Helping children with SpLD: Teaching Suggestions” (booklet on teaching suggestions accompanying the Behaviour Checklist for teachers)
- The Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties Behaviour Checklist (For Primary School Pupils)
- Observation Checklist for Teachers (for early identification and intervention of p.1 pupils with learning difficulties)

### ***Resource Package and Teaching Kits***

- Teaching Kit on Integrated Education
- “Fun with Reading and Writing” – A resource pack for Primary School Teachers
- Resources Package on “Helping Gifted Underachievers”
- Resource materials on “Suicide Risk Assessment” and ‘Crisis Management’ posted on the EMB Homepage
- A teaching kit named “輕鬆講故事，靈活說句子”
- A teaching kit on language and social skills named “社交技巧輕鬆學與人溝通無隔膜”
- Resource materials on “The Application of Music Therapy in Music Education for Hearing Impaired Students”

### ***CD-ROM***

- A multi-media CD-ROM with pdf files for SGO/SGP to conduct school-based training for teachers at school to promote awareness, early identification and teaching strategies
- A multi-media CD-ROM with an accompanying leaflet for SGO/SGP to conduct training for parents to enhance awareness, early identification and management of SpLD
- A CD-ROM on the use of the Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties

#### Behaviour Checklist

- A set of multi-media CD-ROM - The “Training in Chinese Word Reading Skills” (jointly developed by the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Education and Manpower Bureau.)
- A CD-ROM on voice care named “學童聲線護理”
- A CD-ROM on enhancement of articulation and language skills named “輕輕鬆鬆學語音”
- A CD-ROM on Integrated Education – Helping Students with Autistic Disorders
- A CD-ROM on Integrated Education – Helping Students with Hearing Impairment
- A CD-ROM on Integrated Education – Helping Students with Physical Disability

#### *e-learning Programme*

- An e-learning programme on “Equal Opportunities Begin At School”

#### *Pamphlet and Leaflet*

- Pamphlet on “Helping children to learn effectively”.
- A leaflet for parents on supporting children with Dyslexia
- A booklet on “Helping Gifted Underachievers”
- Pamphlet on “Helping children with Hyperactivity”
- Pamphlet on “Disability Discrimination Ordinance: Parent-school Co-ordination and Mediation Mechanism”
- A series of leaflets for Hearing Impairment

#### *Others*

Special Education Resource Centre: provides a virtual platform for sharing of information and resources on special education.

## SEN Teacher Training 2004/2005 school year

## (I) Courses commissioned to tertiary institutions

	Course Title	Responsible Institution	Target Participants	No of Participants	Course Hour
1	Introductory Course on Integrated Education	The University of Hong Kong	All schools	160	30
2	School-based training on Integrated Education	The Hong Kong Institute of Education		980	10
3	Professional development course for teachers (Catering for diverse learning needs)	The Hong Kong Institute of Education		751	120
Total				1891	160

## (II) Theme-based SEN training courses by EMB

	Type of SEN	No of Courses	Target Participants	No of Participants	Course hour
1	General/Learning Difficulties	11	Ordinary schools	3083	Each course ranges from 3-14 hours
2	Specific Learning Difficulties	9	Ordinary schools	959	
3	Autistic Spectrum Disorders	5	Ordinary & special schools	592	
4	Sensory Impairment	4	Ordinary schools	421	
5	Speech & Language Impairment	3	Ordinary schools	473	
6	Mental Handicap / Physical Disability	3	Special schools	361	
Total		35		5889	

## Appendix 4

### Capacity and Enrolment in 62 special schools as at 15.1.2005 (by category)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>
Schools for the visually impaired	200	163
Schools for the hearing impaired	380	331
Hospital school	425	429
Schools for the mildly and moderately mentally handicapped	1680	1578
Schools for the mildly mentally handicapped	1820	1659
Schools for the moderately mentally handicapped	1210	1082
Schools for the severely mentally handicapped	872	813
Schools for social development	960	815
Schools for the physically disabled	820	775
<b>Total</b>	<b>8367</b>	<b>7645</b>