



The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1 3BT

Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Fax: (01622) 694091

Direct Dial/Ext: (01622) 694118
Our ref:
Date: 6 January 2011

Dear *Michael* -

SEN Units and Mainstream Schools/Academies Floor Targets

Kent Local Authority continues to have concerns relating to the issue of Floor Targets for mainstream schools and Academies that have a specially resourced provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and/or disability (sometimes referred to as a 'SEN unit' or 'specialist facility' or 'designated special provision').

These schools make provision for pupils who come from a wider geographical area than their normal catchment area as they are a regional resource for the LA. The attainment on entry of the pupils in the SEN Unit is often low or very low, and although they make good progress both in relation to national expectations of progress and in comparison with other pupils in the school, they mostly do not reach the floor target benchmark in attainment - Level 4+ at KS2 or 5+A*-C including English and Maths at KS4.

Where the numbers of pupils in the SEN Unit is relatively large this can negatively affect the overall results of the school, often placing the school close to or below the floor targets leading to inclusion in the National Challenge programme. The school also shows low ranking in public league tables impacting adversely on the perception of the school in the locality. These 'penalties' are creating a real disincentive to inclusive schools to establish or continue with SEN Unit provision, to the detriment of the continuum of provision for SEN in the LA.

Our view is that the current system militates against the effective and appropriate provision for pupils with Statements of SEN in mainstream schools and Academies in localities and provides disincentives for the development of further required mainstream SEN provision. The disaggregation of results would overcome these issues.

Rosalind Turner
Managing Director

CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Kent Local Authority suggests that necessary changes are made as quickly as possible as these can only be beneficial to mainstream schools and academies together with parents and carers of children and young people with Statements of SEN. The Local Authority is also of the view that such changes would be beneficial prior to, or as part of, the publication of the forthcoming SEN Green Paper.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hohler', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Hohler
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education