1d) Evaluating SEN Provision using the OFSTED Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools (HMI 1360)

There is much excellent material in this Handbook which will assist secondary schools to evaluate how well they meet the learning needs of SEN pupils. It can also be used as a basis to develop self-evaluative questions which schools can use to improve SEN provision and prepare for inspection.

It is not intended here to reproduce the Handbook however the following are the key elements which need to be considered by secondary schools when judging pupil achievement, the effectiveness of the curriculum and SEN provision.

a) The inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of learning support units and learning mentors (see page 30). When doing this inspectors will consider how well teaching curriculum behaviour management programmes and learning mentors help “disaffected” or “unruly” pupils to be successful learners.

b) If a school has a SERF (Special Educational Resource Facility) or becomes an ARMS (Additionally Resourced Mainstream School) it is important to consider all the references to SEN in Teaching, Curriculum and Assessment which are threaded through the Handbook. In addition it is vital that the reference to “resourced provision” on pages 32-3 is used to evaluate the school provision.

c) There are references to SEN throughout the sections on Teaching, Curriculum and Assessment. These should be shared with all staff and it would be helpful for schools to use these references in the staff handbook, departmental policies and the school’s induction of new staff. For example page 48 asks how well the school analyses the attainment of SEN pupils and whether their achievement is high enough. Something which is relevant to all staff.

d) There are many references throughout the document to IEPs and IBPs. The most helpful of these are pages 33 and 95 (IEPs); and page 95 (IBP) These should be read alongside the references to what inspectors will do when considering pupil achievement on page 53.

e) If schools have high pupil mobility or large numbers of pupils who are from service families it would be helpful to read pp 48 – 50.

f) Evaluating the effectiveness of support given to pupils is very important. In addition to page 80 there is reference to the effectiveness of teaching assistants on page 105 which schools may find helpful.

The following are extracts from pages 95 –98 of the Handbook which schools can use to make judgements about their provision and develop self-evaluation questions

- How well does the curriculum provide for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities?

Evaluate what is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Inspectors should ensure that they see the full range of pupils with SEN and disabilities, and not just those with statements. Judge whether any aspects of the curriculum are not offered to these pupils and the effect this has. Consider whether sufficient attention is given to individual pupils and their targets. Are they achieving as well as they can?
Judge how well the curriculum is organised to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and disabilities, taking particular note of how teachers adjust their teaching of subjects and courses to meet their needs, and how additional support is determined from within the school (school action) or from outside (school action plus). Check that individual education plans (IEPs) are effective in ensuring that individual needs are met while enabling pupils to have full access to the curriculum. Plans should focus on a small number of individual targets and include information about:

- the short-term targets;
- the curriculum and teaching to be provided to help pupils to meet their targets;
- any particular teaching strategies to be used;
- the success criteria and arrangements for reviewing the plan.

There are likely to be specific arrangements to provide extra help for some pupils in mathematics, English literacy and language and other communication skills. Look at a representative sample of statements of special educational need and check that what is required is being provided.

**Inspection technique: note 4**

**Judging the quality of provision for pupils with SEN**

*During the inspection, inspectors should seek to answer the question 'Are pupils doing, as well as they can, given their starting-points, barriers to learning and taking into account the effectiveness of provision made?'

*Select a representative sample of pupils and their records. Check that the provision outlined in statements of SEN is made and evaluate and evaluate the adequacy of the progress that pupils have made, taking account of evidence provided by staff. Look for evidence of improvements in attainment and in personal skills or behaviour. The amount of progress depends on the nature of pupils’ individual needs and the barriers to their learning.*

*These judgements should take account of the quality of teaching and any modifications to the curriculum. Check that records scrutinised are used consistently by staff, show evidence of joint planning to promote access contain moderated assessments and are designed well to show small steps in progress, where this is needed. In some schools, the use of 'P' levels may be appropriate. Find out whether what is in records is backed up by what is seen.*

**Pupils supported in class**

*For pupils supported in class, find out whether teaching and support staff are aware of the implications of the particular needs and the nature of the barriers to learning which pupils have, as well as being clear about the learning objectives of the lesson. According to the particular needs, check whether attention is paid to:*

- how pupils are positioned so they can best learn;
- the effectiveness of intervention in support of individual pupils;
• who pupils with SEN are grouped with, to help them learn;
• how well resources are adapted, modified and used to boost learning;
• how well individual education plans relate to lesson objectives and promote effective learning;
• specific use of technology to aid learning;
• the quality of the partnership and dialogue between support staff and class teacher; reflected, for example, in consistent approaches, well-paced lessons appropriate relationships, including the use of humour

Effective schools ensure that:
• there is a good dialogue between support staff and pupils to promote independent learning and minimise dependence on adults;
• support staff find different ways of explaining tasks to pupils, whenever necessary using alternative communication systems;
• pupils sustain their attention and concentration on tasks in lessons which leads to successful learning;
• pupils can explain what they are doing and what they are learning: they are involved with their own individual education plans or targets:
• pupils are helped to work with other pupils as much as possible: and
• regular feedback is provided to pupils as necessary and is recorded accurately.

Pupils taught in special groups

Effective schools will ensure that:
• the purpose of the group work is clearly set out in plans;
• the work is specifically related to improving communication skills or personal, and behavioural skills;
• disruption to learning in normal classes is minimised;
• learning is designed to boost success in normal classes;
• the work is assessed and reviewed regularly and recorded consistently;
• for pupils who need to be taught in special groups for most of the week, attention is paid to promoting their social links with other; and
• there is no evidence of pupils being stigmatised.
Other features of provision

Effective schools are inclusive. Making adjustments to the curriculum, teaching and assessment procedures is a routine feature to accommodate, and not discriminate against, pupils with SEN and disabilities. Inspectors should evaluate how well the school has exploited its additional resources to improve provision for all pupils.

The presence of additionally resourced provision for pupils with SEN makes demands on the whole school, particularly senior managers, in ensuring that all pupils benefit as much as they can. Good headteachers know how effective the provision for SEN is by regular monitoring of the work of the SENCO and other staff. In effective schools, senior managers and governors actively support the SENCO and other specialist staff, for example by making sure all staff are aware of the SEN policy and that the values of the school are clear. This may be shown by how pupils' work is celebrated and how information on progress and other matters is shared with parents and others who need to know. Find out whether there is a good partnership with relevant agencies and regular contact with parents.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the SENCO and other specialist staff in of whether:

• roles are clear and there is good co-ordination of resourced provision and the school's own provision;

• the SENCO and specialist staff can easily influence the work of subject teachers;

• SEN staff are able to transfer skills to subject teachers;

• SEN staff show sensitivity to colleagues who may have difficulties or who are inexperienced;

• SEN staff show good awareness of the funding arrangements and specific elements of provision that need to be made for individual pupils;

• staff have clear and collectively agreed notions about what 'adequate progress' is;

• staff routinely work well in developing partnerships with parents.

Reporting

Judgements must be reported as relevant in relation to each of the sections in the Evaluation Schedule, rather than as a separate section. Use headings if they help to highlight particular features. Make sure that judgements about the resourced provision are clear and, where necessary, distinct from judgements about other SEN provision. Ensure that the implications of the additional resourcing are addressed when making corporate judgements and when agreeing what is to be reported for each inspection question. The key judgements, reported in the appropriate sections of the inspection report, are:

• the achievements of pupils, indicating why progress is as it is;
• the effectiveness of teaching and specific curriculum adaptations, or modifications made to promote access;

• the effect of the leadership of the headteacher and SENCO;

• the management and efficient deployment of resources allocated.

The above is not intended to replace in depth consideration of the Handbook but rather to be a starting point that assists schools to evaluate their SEN provision.