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## INTRODUCTION

### A POSITION STATEMENT

- 1 A universal system of education must serve the needs of all who use it: it must seek to offer fair and equitable opportunities for learning for *all* young people. Improving the proportion of success at the cost of excluding the unsuccessful (both actual and potential) is not an option for a universal system. So inclusion is fundamental to standards.
- 2 Inclusion can be achieved only through cooperative action by schools<sup>1</sup> pursuing a common purpose shared with those who manage and regulate the service. *All* schools should recognize that they have a responsibility for inclusion which extends beyond their own pupils. Governments<sup>2</sup> should enact policies which positively promote inclusion, should test *all* their policies (including those for school admissions, funding and accountability) against the litmus of inclusion implications and should abandon those which promote exclusion.

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### A UNIVERSAL ISSUE

- 3 Our position statement leads us away from the preconception that inclusion is simply the antithesis of exclusion<sup>3</sup>, and that exclusion is a “problem” focussed on schools in areas of most widespread and social deprivation. Instead we begin from the principle that *“The fundamental responsibility for educational inclusion rests with the included”*.
- 4 Of course parents will rightly seek the very best education for their children, and in consequence their own children’s inclusion will almost certainly be a more significant issue for them than the exclusion of others. So policies must seek actively to mitigate this rather than to exacerbate it.
- 5 None of us can regard inclusion as a minority issue, and nor should we regard its pursuit in terms of the provision of compensatory initiatives for the “deprived minority”. Educational inclusion is an issue which touches us all and which should permeate all aspects of educational policy.

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## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### PUPILS AND THE COMMUNITY

#### *Admissions*

- 6 The state school system must provide for everyone who chooses to use it. So there is a fundamental problem in its embracing a competitive admissions process driven by parental preference. If schools are encouraged to seek a competitive edge, it is hardly surprising that they adopt admissions policies which seek to use the cachet of “exclusivity” as a selling point.
- 7 Our education service cannot promote inclusion if schools are driven to adopt admissions policies which are themselves exclusive. Many pupils are excluded even before they are allocated a school place. In some

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<sup>1</sup> Though much of what appears in this document may apply with equal force to primary schools, references to schools should be taken throughout as meaning secondary schools.

<sup>2</sup> The principles set out here are applicable throughout the UK, but detailed references are to the English system.

<sup>3</sup> It is symptomatic of the ambiguity which surrounds issues related to inclusion and exclusion that the words themselves have recently acquired new and restrictive meanings. “Inclusion” is sometimes used to mean the absorption of pupils currently educated in special schools into mainstream schooling: “exclusion” sometimes means the sanction formerly known as suspension or expulsion. Throughout this document the words are used to refer to the much wider issue of access for all pupils to high quality education

areas schools<sup>4</sup> have taken initiatives to work together to obviate this problem, through agreed admissions protocols and joint and complementary applications for specialist school status. **SHA recommends** that Government should support and extend these initiatives, and that incentives should be available to encourage schools to pursue them.

- 8 At present, national policies encourage and reward over-subscription: school listings are even required to show how many pupils each school has managed to turn away. **SHA recommends** that all such disincentives to inclusion should be urgently reviewed in the light of the rejection which they occasion.
- 9 SHA's view of schools of the future as Community Learning Centres is rooted in the idea of schools providing a base for education for their local community. To reconcile this with the operation of parental preference, **SHA recommends** that:
  - statistics should be maintained on the percentage of Secondary School pupils throughout the country being educated in their local school;
  - there should be national targets to increase this percentage;
  - incentives should be offered to schools to contribute to the achievement of these targets by providing places for all students from their local community.

### *Excluded pupils*

- 10 Pupils may be excluded from education in school by a range of circumstances. These include:
  - those who absent themselves from school (for whom being absent necessarily means being excluded from education, but being present doesn't necessarily mean being included);
  - those who are "excluded" from school on behavioural grounds, usually because by their behaviour they exclude others from education;
  - those who in effect exclude themselves through low levels of motivation (recognising that poor motivation can arise from "school factors" including the quality of teaching and from "pupil factors" – social, economic, cultural, physical, medical and emotional);
  - those whose personal and social circumstances are inimical to educational progress;
  - those who are adversely affected by their peers, through bullying or anti-achievement peer pressure.
- 11 Such pupils are much less likely than others to achieve high attainment scores, even when a value-added measurement is used. So there is at present a strong disincentive for schools to include them. Moreover, since schools may themselves contribute to the disaffection which underlies some of these problems, it is tempting to judge schools' effectiveness by the extent of their incidence, thus providing an even stronger disincentive.
- 12 And since effective provision for these pupils can be costly, it can often be difficult even to agree the criteria which identify these pupils. (In this respect, **SHA welcomes** the recent changes made to guidelines for exclusion for disciplinary reasons.)
- 13 **SHA recommends** that all possible steps be taken to encourage schools to provide for pupils in these categories, including:
  - agreeing appropriate and consistent criteria for identifying them;
  - adequate resources to schools to provide for them;
  - provision of incentives to schools to demonstrate good practice in providing for them;
  - agreeing appropriate criteria to determine when the interests of educational inclusion are best served by provision outside mainstream schools;
  - not using headcounts of such pupils as a basis for judging any school's effectiveness;
  - giving due weight to the extent of incidence of such pupils when using value-added outcomes as a determinant of school effectiveness.
- 14 Because they usually have more vacant places than other schools, schools in challenging circumstances often have to take a high proportion of these pupils, including those permanently excluded from elsewhere. **SHA therefore recommends** a limit on the number of permanently excluded pupils that a school should be obliged to take into any single year group.

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<sup>4</sup> The "Inclusive Schools Network" can provide exemplars.

## EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

- 15 A number of schools have already made significant progress in this area, and it is important that their achievements are recognised and publicly celebrated and their good practice shared. A significant feature of their success lies in their creative liaison with outside agencies, including:
- the youth service, social and health services, police, EWS, EPS, voluntary services, etc;
  - the Connexions service, which may subsume some of the above, and which **SHA welcomes** in its aim of providing both a universal service promoting educational inclusion and a compensatory service for the disaffected.
- 16 However, rationing of resources can often result in these partnerships being frustrating and time-consuming. **SHA** therefore **recommends** that sufficient resources are provided to make these partnerships effective for all pupils in need, and that such resources are allocated so that they follow the pupil.

### *The community dimension*

- 17 Central to SHA's vision of the school of the future is the link between each school and its local community. Every school can contribute to educational inclusion by:
- providing places for all its local young people;
  - linking curriculum to community<sup>5</sup>;
  - strengthening cross-phase links;
  - making effective links with parents in the community
  - fostering the role and responsibilities of parents;
  - extending educational opportunities beyond age 18;
  - building the capacity for community learning;
  - supporting "family learning";
  - encouraging community use of the school premises;
  - involving the local community in the celebration of success.
- 18 **SHA recommends** that incentives should be made available to encourage schools to demonstrate good practice in these areas
- 19 **SHA** further **recommends** in the context of a national policy which seeks to increase the number of specialist secondary schools,
- the creation of a category of specialist community schools, for whom recognition of the importance of the community dimension should be a key criterion;
  - the allocation of large numbers of schools to this category (assuming a sufficiency of high quality applications).

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## STANDARDS AND INSPECTION

### *The standards agenda*

- 20 The standards agenda and the inclusion agenda should be complementary and inseparable. But at present they are in tension. It has been suggested that inclusion has been used as an excuse for low standards: it would be as valid to claim that standards are being used as an excuse for exclusion. The aim of the standards agenda is to improve the attainment of *all* young people. It is urgent therefore that steps are taken to resolve this tension.
- 21 Raw score league tables (and targets which are based on raw-score outturns) are probably the most potent instruments of educational exclusion. Many of these tables are literally exclusive: they refer to a percentage of the population which excludes the least able. More insidiously, they provide the strongest possible perverse incentive to schools to recruit the most able pupils.
- 22 Guidance in the new Code of Practice which restricts the scope of schools to refuse admission to pupils on the grounds of their special educational needs may prove to be a positive step in this respect (though it

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<sup>5</sup> the Schools Curriculum Award provides a template for this

## EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

may also serve to illustrate a view of exclusion as an issue which relates only to a small minority of pupils).

- 23 So that the standards agenda and the inclusion agenda can support each other most effectively, **SHA recommends** that:
- all national attainment targets are expressed in terms of average points scores rather than exclusive percentages;
  - raw score targets should not be disaggregated to local or school level without proper account being taken of prior attainment of pupils;
  - the publication and use of raw score outcomes as proxies for school effectiveness be discontinued;
  - a valid system of value-added analysis be used in all situations where school effectiveness is measured and reported.

### *Inspections*

- 24 **SHA welcomes** the change in emphasis in the schools inspection framework which recognises the importance of inclusion and of schools' attitudes and procedures which encourage inclusion. Current training programmes for inspectors should enhance their consistency in the application of the new guidance. Judgements will need to reflect the community which each school serves and the pattern of educational provision within the community.
- 25 **SHA recommends** that criteria for success in inclusion be agreed so that a school's success in this area can be publicly celebrated and rewarded and good practice effectively shared<sup>6</sup>.
- 26 **SHA further welcomes** the abandonment of the discredited policy of "naming and shaming", which claimed to benefit the pupils in the named and shamed schools, but in practice often condemned them to the ultimate exclusion of being identified with schools which no-one wanted to go to (and few wished to teach in).
- 27 However, there is still a pressing problem with school inspection judgements, which are made against national raw-score norms, taking no account of the prior attainment of the pupils in the school. These are not valid measures of school effectiveness. The publication of these data as part of the "headline information" in school inspection reports, and their use in making overall judgements on a school provide the strongest possible incentive for admissions policies which exclude less able pupils.
- 28 **SHA recommends** that the publication of such data within school inspection reports be discontinued and replaced by valid value-added data which takes account of pupils' prior performance.
- 29 **SHA further recommends** a programme of independent research which interrogates Ofsted's database (and any other relevant or necessary data) to test whether there is any correlation between:
- the scores awarded to lessons and the ability level of the pupils in those lessons;
  - the overall "headline" judgements made on individual schools and the ability level of their intakes (In particular it would be helpful to discover
  - what proportion of secondary schools classified as "very good" or "outstanding" have low ability intakes;
  - what proportion of lessons graded "less than satisfactory" are delivered to high ability pupils.)
- 30 **SHA recommends** that the outcomes of this research be incorporated into the framework for inspection.

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## FUNDING AND ITS DISTRIBUTION

### *Compensatory policies*

- 31 **SHA welcomes** the government's recognition that social deprivation is a significant factor in educational exclusion, and its initiatives to address this issue. It is using the strategy of targeted projects – Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities and now the new City Academies.

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<sup>6</sup> The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education's *Index for Inclusion* might provide a useful starting point for this.

- 32 **SHA recommends** that government continues to monitor these compensatory projects objectively through the eyes of both insiders and outsiders with particular attention to:
- the criteria by which they will be judged, and in particular the effects of specifying targets in terms of raw-score examination and test results;
  - the immediate effect on neighbouring schools whose pupils may suffer the same disadvantages, but who do not benefit from the additional funding;
  - the validity of a perception of them a “quick fix”, with less than adequate planning time and a political imperative to meet short term targets.
- 33 **SHA further recommends** that the government should act on its findings from this monitoring with the same expediency which it has invested in creating the schemes.
- 34 The Government has sought in these initiatives (as in the case of specialist and beacon schools) to encourage schools which receive generous additional funding to share good practice with other schools. To encourage the development of such good practice **SHA recommends** that a criterion for designation for all specialist and beacon schools should be a demonstrably high level of commitment to inclusion. (30% of beacon schools are already involved in such work.)

### *Geographical proxies*

- 35 A universal commitment to educational inclusion aims to provide for all pupils in danger of various forms of exclusion and to encourage all schools to contribute to inclusion. The use of geographical proxy measures for social deprivation excludes a large number of schools and their pupils from the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the policies which support this aim.
- 36 **SHA therefore recommends** a reconsideration of the distribution of inclusion funding to ensure that:
- all schools and their pupils should receive and feel a benefit from the funding which is currently being distributed to a minority;
  - the plight of disadvantaged pupils in schools which do not currently fall within the geographical boundaries which circumscribe the additional funding is given particular consideration

### *Funding formulae*

- 37 SHA’s proposals in *Fairer Funding* provide for a “disadvantage factor” in the funding of all schools. This would have the effect both of recognising additional need and acting as an incentive to schools to admit disadvantaged pupils. Since the disadvantage we wish to measure is *educational* disadvantage, **SHA recommends** that proxy measures of disadvantage should be abandoned and that the fundamental basis of differentiated funding should be disadvantage based on pupils’ prior attainment.

### *Standards funds*

- 38 It is likely that the introduction of a transparent and equitable national funding formula incorporating a disadvantage factor based on pupils’ prior attainment would obviate the need for many of the existing standards funds. However, this document contains numerous references to the need to provide incentives and adequate funding to encourage and facilitate schools’ commitment to inclusive policies and to overcome the manifold disincentives which currently obtain. **SHA recommends** that consideration be given to the creative refocusing of standards funds to support all schools in this area of pupils’ need.

### *Funding as a reward*

- 39 SHA believes as a fundamental principle that the purpose of educational funding is to support the processes of education, and that any factor which determines the distribution of funding should be related to pupil need.
- 40 A number of recent policies have sought to use funding as a reward to schools for the achievement of pupils for whom the need for funding has already passed. Examples of this are the Schools Achievement Award, the proposed outturn element in 16-18 funding and, most pertinently, the funding of government initiatives tied to raw-score targets.

- 41 Moreover, the current predilection for funding as a reward adds to existing incentives for schools to recruit the most able pupils and is therefore wholly inimical to the encouragement of inclusive policies.
- 42 **SHA** therefore **recommends** that policies which involve the use of funding as a reward be discontinued.

### *Special needs*

- 43 A national funding formula with a substantial disadvantage factor based on pupils' prior attainment would reduce the need for funding allocations which are currently made to schools to support pupils registered with special needs at those levels which in the new Code of Practice will be referred to as "School Action" and "School Action Plus". A sufficiently differentiated formula might also provide for some pupils who are currently statemented.
- 44 However, there are a number of forms of special need for which such a formula cannot directly provide, and for which individual funding of pupils will continue to be necessary. Moreover, some excellent work is being done collaboratively between secondary schools and special schools to promote the inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream schooling on a part-time or full-time basis<sup>7</sup>.
- 45 **SHA recommends** that incentives are made available to encourage and enable schools to engage in these links, while retaining their autonomy to determine the most effective provision to improve pupil attainment.

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## CURRICULAR ISSUES

- 46 An appropriate curriculum is demonstrably one of the most potent factors in engendering the inclusion or exclusion of individual pupils. All of SHA's policies acknowledge the need for curriculum to be inclusive for all pupils and it would be inappropriate to rehearse all the complex issues of curriculum construction in this document.
- 47 However, amongst these issues there are three which bear directly upon inclusion – content, status and level. We have a content-based national curriculum which even now shows comparatively little recognition of cultural diversity. And we have not yet resolved the issues of status which lead us to regard "academic" and "vocational" as antonyms. It is often difficult to convince our pupils of the relevance of many of the syllabuses which we teach, but we are reluctant to change because we do not wish to exclude them from access to higher status academic qualifications. **SHA welcomes** the recent advances in provision of matching qualification levels for courses with a vocational content and we look forward to further initiatives to redress the lack of esteem accorded to such courses.
- 48 Age-related assessments lead to "tiering" and can result in pupils studying at a level which is either insufficiently challenging (and will provide a "safe grade") or which sets unattainable targets (in response to the need to "aim high").
- 49 **SHA recommends** the development of a coherent 14-19 curriculum which provides sufficient autonomy and flexibility to serve the needs of each individual pupil, and simplified "just in time" assessment procedures which enable each pupil to progress at the fastest appropriate pace.

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## CONCLUSIONS

- 50 This is a challenging and wide-ranging agenda: we are proposing a gestalt which shapes the whole of educational policy. We are enjoined by the government to engage in radical thinking and this will surely be necessary if educational inclusion is to be significantly improved. Education is a universal service which must reach everyone, including the least able, the least motivated and those with the least ready access to educational opportunities outside school. Advances in inclusion could do more to improve pupil attainment than any strategy which the government has adopted to date. If the government is seeking a big idea to complement and reinforce the standards agenda, then it need look no further.

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<sup>7</sup> A video, a CD Rom and printed materials describing this work are available from the DfES under the generic project title "Connecting Schools for Inclusion"

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### ADMISSIONS – PUPILS AND THE COMMUNITY

#### ***SHA recommends***

that Government should support and extend initiatives to introduce agreed admissions protocols and joint and complementary applications for specialist school status, and that incentives should be available to encourage schools to pursue them.

that all policies which encourage and reward over-subscription should be urgently reviewed in the light of the rejection which they occasion

that:

- statistics should be maintained on the percentage of Secondary School pupils throughout the country being educated in their local school;
- there should be national targets to increase this percentage;
- incentives should be offered to schools to contribute to the achievement of these targets by providing places for all students from their local community;

that all possible steps be taken to encourage schools to provide for pupils who absent themselves from school, who are “excluded” from school on behavioural grounds (usually because by their behaviour they exclude others from education), who in effect exclude themselves through low levels of motivation, whose personal and social circumstances are inimical to educational progress and who are adversely affected by their peers, including:

- agreeing appropriate and consistent criteria for identifying them;
- adequate resources to schools to provide for them;
- provision of incentives to schools to demonstrate good practice in providing for them;
- agreeing appropriate criteria to determine when the interests of educational inclusion are best served by provision outside mainstream schools;
- not using headcounts of such pupils as a basis for judging any school’s effectiveness;
- giving due weight to the extent of incidence of such pupils when using value-added outcomes as a determinant of school effectiveness.

a limit on the number of permanently excluded pupils that a school should be obliged to take into any single year group.

that sufficient resources are provided to make partnerships between provider agencies effective for all pupils in need, and that resources are allocated in such a way that they follow the pupil..

that incentives should be made available to encourage each school to demonstrate good practice in linking with its local community

in the context of a national policy which seeks to increase the number of Specialist Secondary Schools,

- the creation of a category of Specialist Community Schools , for whom recognition of the importance of the community dimension should be a key criterion
- the allocation of large numbers of schools to this category (assuming a sufficiency of high quality applications)

### STANDARDS AND INSPECTION

#### ***SHA recommends***

that:

- all national attainment targets are expressed in terms of average points scores rather than exclusive percentages;
- raw score targets should not be disaggregated to local or school level without proper account being taken of prior attainment of pupils;

- the publication and use of raw score outcomes as proxies for school effectiveness be discontinued;
- a valid system of value-added analysis be used in all situations where school effectiveness is measured and reported.

that criteria for success in inclusion be agreed so that a school's success in this area can be publicly celebrated and rewarded and good practice effectively shared

that the publication within school inspection reports of judgments which are made against national raw-score norms, taking no account of the prior attainment of the pupils in the school such data be discontinued and replaced by valid value-added data which takes account of pupils' prior performance.

a programme of independent research to test whether there is any correlation between:

- the scores awarded to lessons and the ability level of the pupils in those lessons;
  - the overall "headline" judgments made on individual schools and the ability level of their intakes.
- and that the outcomes of this research be incorporated into the framework for inspection.

## FUNDING

### ***SHA recommends***

that Government continues to monitor projects such as Education Action Zones, Excellence in Cities and "City Academies" objectively through the eyes of both insiders and outsiders with particular attention to:

- the criteria by which they will be judged, and in particular the effects of specifying targets in terms of raw-score examination and test results;
- the immediate effect on neighbouring schools whose pupils may suffer the same disadvantages, but who do not benefit from the additional funding;
- the validity of a perception of them a "quick fix", with less than adequate planning time and a political imperative to meet short term targets;
- and that the Government should act on its findings from this monitoring with the same expediency which it has invested in creating the schemes.

that a criterion for designation for all Specialist and Beacon Schools should be a demonstrably high level of commitment to inclusion.

a reconsideration of the distribution of inclusion funding to ensure that:

- all schools and their pupils should receive and feel a benefit from the funding which is currently being distributed to a minority.
- the plight of disadvantaged pupils in schools which do not currently fall within the geographical boundaries which circumscribe the additional funding is given particular consideration

that proxy measures of disadvantage should be abandoned and that the fundamental basis of differentiated funding should be disadvantage based on pupils' prior attainment.

that consideration be given to the creative refocusing of standards funds to provide incentives and adequate funding to encourage and facilitate schools' commitment to inclusive policies.

that policies which involve the use of funding as a reward be discontinued.

that incentives are made available to encourage and enable Secondary Schools to link with Special Schools while retaining their autonomy to determine the most effective provision to improve pupil attainment.

## CURRICULUM

### ***SHA recommends***

the development of a coherent 14-19 curriculum which provides sufficient autonomy and flexibility to serve the needs of each individual pupil, and simplified "just in time" assessment procedures which enable each pupil to progress at the fastest appropriate pace.