

**OxSpec: Occasional Papers**  
**Oxfordshire Special Needs Research Project**

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**"Survey of Special Needs  
Delegated Funds 1991-1992"**

**"Part B"**

**INTRODUCTION**

In June 1990, the Education Committee of Oxfordshire County Council requested that "... the special needs provision in schools be monitored each year across the County as a whole." The results of the pilot survey for 1990/91 were published in the FEEDBACK series in December 1991. The results of the 1991/92 questionnaire, completed between December 1991 and September 1992 were published similarly in December 1992.

In Part B of the survey, schools were asked to expand on the answers given in Part A and it was agreed that as part of the follow-up of the findings, OxSpec would carry out "... further detailed research on aspects of the data collected..."

Of the 256 Nursery, First and Primary schools circulated, 233 returned a Part B - (91.01%). Of the 45 Middle, Upper and Secondary Schools, there were 43 returned - (95.55%) Table 1.

Table 1

	Cherwell	City	South	Vale	West	Total
Primary	42	30	56	56	49	233
Secondary	6	15	9	6	7	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>276</b>

**FINDINGS**

It is intended that this paper should be read in conjunction with and as a commentary on the 1991/92 FEEDBACK document. It demonstrates a commitment to supporting pupils with special needs and a wide spectrum of provision both in practice and funding.

## General Comments

There was a widely held belief that pupils should be supported in class and that it was every teachers' responsibility to identify those with special needs "... every teacher is a teacher of special needs ...", "... we consider every child to be a candidate for special attention ...", "... all pupils are mainstream pupils ...". Where withdrawal of pupils was used, it was for short periods for specific purposes.

20 primary schools - with the exception of one in Oxford, the rest being rural - were using their funding "... keeping class numbers smaller and therefore better all round provision for SEN children."

## Governors

Governors' responsibility for overseeing special needs (SEN) matters was interpreted in a variety of ways. From the "... supportive but not active ..." and one primary school where the learning support assistant (LSA) responsible for SEN, attended governors meetings and gave reports: to the fully committed and involved in school on a regular basis.

Of those schools which responded, the number which had a designated governor for SEN is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

	Cherwell	City	South	Vale	West	Total
Primary*	$\frac{16}{28}$ 57%	$\frac{2}{19}$ 11%	$\frac{10}{31}$ 32%	$\frac{20}{43}$ 47%	$\frac{10}{29}$ 35%	$\frac{47}{150}$ 31%
Secondary**	$\frac{5}{5}$ 100%	$\frac{6}{10}$ 60%	$\frac{3}{5}$ 60%	$\frac{2}{6}$ 33%	$\frac{4}{6}$ 67%	$\frac{20}{32}$ 63%

\* includes nursery, first and primary

\*\* includes middle, upper and secondary

Many designated governors were parents or teachers. They spent time in the school, liaising with the Head or SEN coordinator, attending meetings and case conferences and in some instances worked with pupils on a voluntary basis. They wrote termly reports for sub-committees or full governors' meetings.

Reference was made to a variety of sub-committees which received reports and discussed SEN issues. These included curriculum, staffing and finance, and SEN sub-committees. The work of the committees variously involved admissions, individual pupil behaviour and discipline, curriculum and finance but predominantly working with Heads and staff on SEN, Behaviour and Equal Opportunities policies.

## Record Keeping

The period January to September 1992, when the questionnaires were being completed and returned, coincided with the introduction in September 1991 of the LEA's "Special Assessment of Pupils" forms A1 to A4 - the "Rainbow Forms".

This was strongly reflected in responses. The percentage of schools responding, which indicated that they had adopted the new assessment system, including a very small number which were in a consultation phase, is given in Table 3.

**Table 3**

	Cherwell	City	South	Vale	West	Total
Primary	$\frac{12}{15}$ 80%	$\frac{9}{12}$ 75%	$\frac{12}{19}$ 63%	$\frac{14}{22}$ 64%	$\frac{16}{21}$ 76%	$\frac{63}{89}$ 71%
Secondary	---	$\frac{8}{9}$ 89%	$\frac{2}{4}$ 50%	$\frac{2}{3}$ 67%	$\frac{3}{3}$ 100%	$\frac{15}{19}$ 79%

The Primary Pupils Profile was still being used and supplemented by the new forms. Even where the new system had been adopted, there remained individual school records, daily diaries, reports of visits by SNASts, Educational Psychologists and other professionals. Pre-school social and language experiences were recorded, as were meetings with parents and results of standardised tests.

Of the 276 Part Bs returned, 108 appeared to be keeping "... thorough and individual ..." records.

#### Staff Responsibility

In the Secondary phase, Learning Support is a phrase which has superseded Special Needs. 40 out of 43 secondary schools which responded, either had a Head of Department or Coordinator. Recognition ranged from 0.5 fte on main professional grade to an "E" allowance, according to size of school and degree of responsibility.

The situation amongst the 159 primary schools which responded, is analysed in Table 4.

**Table 4**

	Cherwell	City	South	Vale	West
Headteacher responsible	13	9	20	14	14
SEN Teacher/ Coordinator (allowance)	15 0.4-1.0 A/B	11 0.4-1.0 A/B	13 0.3-1.0 A/B	24 0.2-1.0 A/B	16 0.2-1.0 A
All Staff responsible	2	--	1	--	--
Other	1 (Add. Teach)				2 (LSA + Volunt)

The coordinating or overseeing role and responsibility for special needs or learning support, was seen in a very wide context. Working with and alongside teachers in the classroom, devising programmes and materials, supporting individual pupils and small groups both in class and by structured withdrawal.

There were organisational activities which included, timetabling and deployment of LSAs and volunteers, reviewing and evaluating policy, attending meetings, case conferences, Annual Reviews, writing reports and attending or organising INSET.

There was also a liaison role, keeping everyone informed and involved - the Head and staff, governors, the SNAST and other professionals and agencies, and parents.

### Staff Qualifications

30 of the 42 secondary schools responded and in all but one school, the Head of Department or Coordinator had a specialist qualification. However, in the individual case, two other members of the same department had additional SEN qualifications. These ranged through Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas in SEN, Masters in SEN or Psychology, Certificates in SEN and for teaching Handicapped pupils, RSA and O.U. modules and units in Remedial Education and Dyslexia.

Far fewer primary schools responded (50). Staff were less well qualified in terms of additional Certificates or Diplomas, but some were at the time involved in part-time study through the O.U., and institutions of Higher Education. Many cited previous experience as a SNAST, Special School or Unit as equivalent to a qualification.

**Table 5**

	Cherwell	City	South	Vale	West	Total
Qualification	4	8	9	10	7	38
Studying	3	3	1	--	--	7
Experience	--	1	2	1	1	5

### **INSET**

101 primary and 30 secondary schools listed how INSET time and funding had been used. The experiences in both phases and for both teachers and LSAs, were comparable. Some examples included whole staffs for whole days, others identified individual staff joining those from other schools.

Many schools spent time on meetings; staff meetings on aspects of SEN, on individual pupils needs, and liaising with SNASTs, governors and other agencies. Other meetings time was used for working party discussions on Special Needs, Behaviour and Equal Opportunities policy development.

Some reported using INSET money to fund visits to other schools, to Special Schools and to SNAST resource bases. It also paid for staff to liaise with partnership schools before pupils transferred and in one case to allow a visiting teacher to work alongside staff in a demonstrative role.

General curriculum issues addressed included, the Children Act, child abuse and child protection, differentiation, sensory impairment, More Able pupils and the introduction of the County's new Assessment forms.

Specific curriculum subjects included SEN and English, Reading, Language, Modern Languages, Science, Humanities, PSE and I.T.

Learning Support Assistants were in receipt of a variety of training opportunities mounted especially for them, in addition to the whole staff INSET to which they were invited. Courses on general awareness, First Aid, sensory impairment and specific curriculum matters were arranged by SNASTs and Certified courses by colleges of FE.

### Resources

Schools were asked to provide details of how spending on SEN was broken down between different elements; teaching staff, LSAs and resources.

Although a high percentage of schools responded to the question and attempted an analysis (62% of primary schools and 72% of secondary schools), any generalisations were compounded by a list of factors.

- (a) Some schools found it difficult knowing what should be included and how much detail to give. "How do I work out the cost of a SNAST, school nurse, EP ...?" Others included the cost of additional teachers (5 teaching groups at a cost of £131,000).
- (b) Divisional money to support individual Statemented pupils was, with the exception of a very few schools, not distinguished from the school's delegated funds.
- (c) Apart from those schools which itemised their use of INSET funding for meetings, there was no mention of the cost of meetings, case conferences, liaison with the range of schools, professionals and agencies and parents, although the issue was raised.
- (d) Monies spent on materials and resources did not in the main, distinguish between departmental allowances, resources devolved for SEN pupils to individual class teachers and expenditure on one-off pieces of equipment such as computers or concept key boards.
- (e) Only 17 schools identified INSET as having a cost implication.
- (f) Only 10 schools quoted a figure for the cost of Home Tuition and provision at a Unit.

For very rough approximations, Table 6 gives the range and average cost of teaching staff, LSAs and Resources.

**Table 6**

	Cherwell in £s	City in £s	South in £s	Vale in £s	West in £s	Totals
<b>Teaching</b>						
<b>Primary</b>						
Range	1,000-29,400	7,790-15,000	200-12,000	1,500-7,360	200-12,000	
Average	8,077	11,513	3,371	4,682	5,297	6,586
<b>Secondary</b>						
Range	50,000-82,000	6,000-34,000	21,888-108,600	17,350-48,000	14,000-51,403	
Average	61,333	29,767	61,579	37,033	37,117	45,366
<b>LSAs</b>						
<b>Primary</b>						
Range	550-15,000	2,000-15,000	450-20,703	1,800-13,000	704-7,000	
Average	5,254	7,617	4,623	5,115	3,668	5,255
<b>Secondary</b>						
Range	20,000-21,842	6,000-10,300	6,709-65,607	8,500-26,000	7,400-26,600	
Average	20,614	7,671	22,925	18,167	16,096	17,095
<b>Resources</b>						
<b>Primary</b>						
Range	100-2,000	100-1,500	100-2,000	50-1,132	100-900	
Average	763	660	578	420	398	564
<b>Secondary</b>						
Range	1,000-3,750	100-2,500	400-1,200	360-2,000	100-2,825	
Average	2,638	877	638	1,112	1,171	1,287

## CONCLUSIONS

There is a need to disaggregate school's devolved funding from divisional funding for Statemented pupils. Indeed more detailed questions might be formulated to retrieve specific information on schools' spending on SEN.

Some issues were not directly questioned in the survey but were mentioned in the responses. These might be considered in future studies. They included, the training of governors, the role of SNASTs, the impact of TVEI, Section 11 funding, "Travellers", College links and Records of Achievement.

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*OxSpec* is a joint venture between Oxfordshire Education Authority and Oxford Brookes University School of Education.

It undertakes collaborative research into aspects of provision for pupils with special educational needs and students with disabilities & learning difficulties.

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