Good Practice Guidelines for Learning Support Units
How to use these guidelines

The guidelines focus on good practice already happening throughout the country. Specific examples – of all aspects – appear on the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) website and can be customised for your own use. Examples are referenced under each good practice heading by a series of numbers. These numbers refer to a list of examples at the back of the document. They can be viewed and downloaded by visiting the Department for Education and Skills Learning Support Unit website www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/LSU
About this guide

This guidance is based on a series of visits to all Phase 1 Excellence in Cities (EiC) Partnerships, interviews with Heads, Local Education Authority (LEA) personnel, pupils, Learning Mentors and documentation submitted by schools.

Its purpose is to:

- Set out basic principles of good practice as a benchmark to help schools review their existing practice; and give examples of the variety of good practice across the country;
- Enable staff at all levels to access sample material that can be modified for use in their own schools;
- Encourage networking between EiC Partnerships, schools and Learning Support Unit Managers and staff;
- Encourage networking and exchange of good practice between EiC and non-EiC areas; and
- Incorporate both primary and secondary practice to help in networking and transition.

It should be especially useful for those interested in practical behaviour management strategies:

- School pastoral staff
- Learning Support Unit Managers
- Headteachers and senior leadership teams
- Learning Mentors
- External agencies such as Behaviour Support teams
- Local Education Authority (LEA) advisors and policy makers
- Excellence in Cities Partnership Boards
- Excellence in Cities Co-ordinators

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How the Guide was put together

The following research was undertaken with Phase 1 Partnerships and comprised:

- Targeted questionnaires designed and distributed:
  - 250, averaging 3-15 pages, were returned from EiC Partnerships and Learning Support Unit Managers.
  - 320, averaging 1-2 pages, were returned from pupils.
  - All questionnaires were analysed as well as being used as a basis for discussion during visits to Partnerships.

- Visits to 64 schools, both primary and secondary
Interviews/discussions held with:
- 420 Learning Mentors
- 100 Learning Support Unit Managers
- 100 Headteachers
- 200 pupils
- 24 EiC Co-ordinators/Link Learning Mentors/Strand Co-ordinators
- Learning Support Unit Strand Co-ordinators
- Range of LEA personnel
- Representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies

Documents such as case studies, referral forms and a wide variety of information were sent in with the questionnaire and collected from the visits to schools.

Good Idea

Copies of questionnaires are also included – which may be useful for schools and Partnerships in evaluation.
Learning Support Units and in-school centres have provided a unique base for pupils who have disengaged with education. With skilled staff input pupils have regained confidence in themselves and a belief in their achievements. Although Learning Support Units differ in each school, the main impact has been:

### On pupils:
- Remaining engaged with education through a variety of flexible packages
- Greater confidence and self-esteem
- Measurable improvement in basic skills and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results for some pupils
- Improved behaviour and social skills
- Improved attendance
- Reduction in exclusion and more time spent in school
- Improved organisational skills
- Transition from Year 6 – Year 7 for some pupils made easier
- Better understanding of the consequences of their behaviour – in school, with their peers and families

### On families:
- More positive attitude towards school and school staff
- Improved support and communication between school and home
- Greater involvement and understanding of their child’s education through meetings, visits and contact with staff
- Being able to deal with situations and conflict in a more positive way through support groups
- Greater access to a range of professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Behaviour Support team staff and other agencies
- More positive about their children due to new levels of success

### On school standards:
- Improved attendance
- Reduction in truancy
- Pupils better engaged so they continue education on or off-site in school provision – and gain qualifications
- Reduction in exclusions
- Improvement in behaviour around the school
- Greater support for teaching staff, which impacts on the school ‘climate’
- Pupils have access to a range of additional qualifications
- Improved staying on rates

### Impact on other areas:
- Improved information on pupils’ needs and their progress
- More effective involvement of outside agencies
- Greater confidence and knowledge of school staff in dealing with difficult behaviour
- More effective school policy on behaviour and on the range of alternative curriculum packages
Although Learning Support Units vary in their approaches from school to school, there are some common guiding principles. They need to be an integral part of the school’s approach to learning and behaviour support, providing separate short-term teaching and support programmes tailored to the needs of disengaged pupils with difficult or challenging behaviour.

The Learning Support Unit exists to keep disaffected pupils in school and working while they are addressing their behavioural problems, facilitating their re-integration into mainstream classes as quickly as possible.

Learning Support Units devise and support individual curriculum and behaviour packages so that pupils re-engage in the learning process, either in school or elsewhere. Ideally Learning Support Units should be part of the school’s Social Inclusion team or faculty.

It is crucial that the role and function of the Learning Support Unit are discussed with staff and are fully understood and embedded into school policies and practice. Many schools have avoided the term ‘Unit’ because of the connotations of the word but have used a range of terms such as ‘Headway’, ‘Zone’, ‘Base’, ‘Room 400’, ‘Net’ (Not Exclusion Teaching – although pupils think it has something to do with the Internet!) are just a few.

Learning Support Units are not:

- Long-term respite care
- A ‘sin bin’ or dumping ground
- A facility for challenging pupils who should be in a specialised environment
- An isolated ‘bolt-on’ provision
- A quick route to exclusion

Pupils who could benefit:

Learning Support Units perform a range of roles that will be expanded throughout the guidelines, but in essence they work with:

- Individual pupils
- Groups of pupils
- Teachers and Managers
- Parents, carers and families
- Other agencies and services

All kinds of pupils are supported by Learning Support Units, including those who:

- Have poor anger management skills
- Find it difficult to accept sanctions
- Are aggressive, insolent and belligerent
- Lack respect for authority
- Have poor social and communication skills
- Lack self-esteem or confidence
- Are shy, withdrawn or anxious students
- Find adjusting to new situations difficult – for instance asylum seekers and refugees, pupils moving from primary to secondary school and those unable to cope with large institutions
- Have difficult family or social circumstances or who are Looked After Children
- Are long-term absentees
- Are victims of bullying, robberies, domestic violence

Some partnerships and schools set clear guidelines about which Key Stage is to be targeted. For example, Learning Support Units have targeted Key Stage 3 as a priority in order to prevent more complex difficulties in Key Stage 4. This focus also allows more time and flexibility for Key Stage 2-3 transition and prevention work.
The following are key to the development of good practice:

School

- Learning Support Unit procedures which are in harmony with the school’s overall ethos for inclusion.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) endorses, supports and regularly reviews the initiative.
- Clear and effective line management, ideally within a social inclusion framework.
- Coherent whole school approaches to referrals, recording, action planning, communication and target setting.

- Suitably qualified and experienced full-time Learning Support Unit Manager and assistant staff.
- Access to training and network opportunities for Learning Support Unit staff.
- Time set aside for planning so that the Learning Support Unit can build on existing good practice.
- Whole-school understanding of the role and function of the Learning Support Unit and of the staff.
- Regular training for all school staff on behaviour management practices, policies and systems.

Case Studies

- Last academic year two Year 11 students were supported for two terms by the Unit. Both students achieved passes at GCSE, one achieving five grade A-C passes.
- Another Year 11 student, who was pregnant, was supported in getting emergency housing through a social services agency and subsequently placed in the Pupil Referral Unit for the remainder of her pregnancy. This student also achieved passes at GCSE.
- A Year 7 student from one of last year’s circle time groups came with a history of being virtually an elective mute; through circle time sessions he has developed confidence to participate in group discussions and parents report that he has become significantly more communicative within the family.
- A Year 10 student with a history of significant drug abuse remains included within the school networks through attending the Unit. This student has regular meetings with a drug counsellor, receiving counselling within the school system and is a member of one of the weekly circle time groups.
- A Somalian boy receives a certificate for the most improved behaviour in his class. The same child is happier and more relaxed around the school.

‘Learning Support Units have provided a “safe-haven” for some children and somewhere for others to gain self confidence.’

‘Individual pupils have a sense of belonging to something and feel important. Teachers have the chance to get on with their teaching and also have support on the return of a pupil. What’s more, exclusion figures have been reduced.’

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● A positive whole school ethos, knowledge and understanding towards pupils with behavioural difficulties and who are disengaged from school.

● Clear entry and exit criteria and procedures with an emphasis on re-integration.

● Re-integration policy and staffing to support its successful implementation.

● Flexibility of curriculum approach and a wide range of resources, including Information & Communications Technology (ICT) for pupils in the Learning Support Unit.

● A quality learning environment as a base, which has space for one-to-one, tutorial and counselling work, group work, a meeting area and office with access to ICT, administration and storage for confidential files and papers.

● Effective systems to develop good family and multi-disciplinary working, particularly with the LEA personnel, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty support services and other schools.

● A positive image of supporting pupil progress through a continuum of provision that fits into the school, LEA and, where applicable, EiC plans.

● Monitoring and evaluation systems with agreed measures of success.

LEA Partnership

● Clear strategic direction given to Learning Support Unit developments.

● Learning Support Unit provision included in the Behaviour Support Plan and explicit about how Learning Support Units fit into the continuum of support and referral for disengaged pupils

● Effective management and co-ordination of Learning Support Units.

● Access to training and networking for Learning Support Unit staff and their managers.

● Effective monitoring and evaluating strategies in place to ensure optimum distribution of resources and that the provision is meeting the targets in Behaviour Support plans and school plans.

● A high quality range of support for schools through Behaviour Support services, Education Psychologists, Pupil Referral Units, Psychiatric/Mental Health, special schools, Social Services – and effective access to these services.

Key Barriers

Through research a number of key barriers to the success of Learning Support Units have been identified:

● Isolation from the main school and a feeling of personal isolation for many Learning Support Unit Managers

● Returning pupils to teachers who are not trained in how to adapt their teaching and curriculum approach to accommodate these individual pupils’ needs

● Lack of clear criteria for entry and exit in the Learning Support Unit for pupils, resulting in unplanned referrals, which disturb planned work

● Insufficient alternative provision other than mainstream schooling for pupils who exhibit severely difficult behaviour, resulting in the Learning Support Units becoming full with pupils who cannot move out or back into class

● Difficulty in recruiting suitably trained and experienced teachers and managers

● Lack of resources and support for Learning Support Unit curriculum development
- Lack of support for re-integration into mainstream classes
- An insufficient school approach in dealing with behavioural difficulties

**What do the Learning Support Unit Managers and parents say?**

**Learning Support Unit Managers**
- For most individuals, time in the Learning Support Unit is seen as a cooling off period avoiding a constant flow of classroom confrontations.
- We are very much part of the school and not a ‘bolt-on’. Because our programmes meet the individual needs of pupils, the Learning Support Unit is perceived in a very positive manner by staff, parents and pupils.
- Students feel supported rather than constantly chastised.
- Having the Learning Support Unit in the school has for many students meant the difference between failure and passing their examinations.
- The Learning Support Unit has supported 91 students since September 2000 and it is expected that by the end of the year we will have supported 150 students on either part of full-time placement – approximately one quarter of Key Stage 3 in our school.

**Other Staff**
- Helps me personally to give confidence to Year 6 teachers who have a concern about transfer/progression for some of their pupils. As a Year 7 teacher I am aware of the positive effects on individuals who are keen to meet targets. (Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator)
- Eases overall work load. Work with disaffected children in a way that I cannot afford to – time wise. (Head of Year)
- Eases my workload. The Learning Support Unit has taught me to develop strategies when dealing with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, by building relations and understanding the pupils better. (Tutor)

**Parents**
- My mum thinks it’s a good idea because it helps me concentrate.
- My parents think its better for me because I’ve stopped bunking.
- My dad likes to visit and takes us fishing sometimes.
- My mum thinks it’s brilliant because it has really helped with my school work.
Planning and Preparation

Planning and preparation are of paramount importance if the Learning Support Unit is to succeed. So it is crucial to take time to get it right.

The Role of the LEA

LEA principles and good practice should be established at the outset, detailing the core principles, targets and timescales and how they fit in with the Behaviour Support Plan. Policy statements should be made clear and guidance given on appointments, contracts and training. There also needs to be a clear structure for decision making and communication.

Responsibility for behaviour improvement should sit within a clear LEA structure for inclusion, with an explicit role to share good practice, monitor, evaluate and challenge.

The LEA will need to ensure that there is a continuum of support and co-ordination for Learning Support Units in line with the LEA Behaviour Support Plan. Specialist help from LEA support services may be required to lead the Learning Support Unit development. There should be training provision for Learning Support Unit staff, facilitated by the LEA.

For EiC areas – Role of the Partnership – Good Practice

- Establish clear lines of accountability through:
  - a Partnership Board (not too unwieldy)
  - implementation groups – representing managers and practitioners
  - a clear role for the EiC Strand Co-ordinators/Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator to report to the various groups on practice and advise on policy
  - schools having clear systems in place

- Establish the frequency and timing of meetings so that they don’t clash but can, where possible and applicable, inform each other.

- Ensure that regular updated reports come from Co-ordinators, LEA staff and finance teams.

- Outline a clear monitoring strategy with timescales so that schools are aware of what information is required.

- The role of the EiC Co-ordinator becomes less effective when they take on the role of Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator, Link Learning Mentor or Education Action Zone Director – and therefore being pulled too much into day to day practice. It is important that the role is strategic and links clearly with Connexions, external agencies and the multitude of other funding routes to ensure consistency of management across the EiC area.

- Inter-agency protocols are useful to help ensure a consistent approach with schools.

- Newsletters and reports are an effective way to share practice with schools.

- Partnership Headteachers have found it useful to have conferences and training events to evaluate and share practice.

- EiC extension has to be seen as part of the whole school development plan.
Good Idea

- Send out a summary of targets and core principles from the EiC plan to all key personnel in schools including the Learning Support Manager. This will ensure common understanding.
- Nottingham City EiC have produced a comprehensive monitoring framework for the Partnership and schools.
- Sheffield EiC have produced informative newsletters and reports.

The Role of the Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator

It is not a requirement in Department for Education and Skills planning guidance, but some LEAs have set up a specific Learning Support Co-ordination role. In many areas a member of the Behavioural Support Team has taken on this role.

Co-ordinators have a part to play in ensuring that Learning Support Units are seen as integral to work with difficult and challenging pupils. This also helps tackle the sense of isolation or lack of support that some Learning Support Unit Managers have felt.

The Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator should play a key role in monitoring, evaluating and sharing good practice. They will need credibility and status in the eyes of Headteachers and support services – setting the role within a clear management structure and reporting framework can help with this. Access to the LEA’s Social Inclusion team is also essential, along with appropriate training and support.

Joint Learning Support Units

There are specific issues affecting Learning Support Units serving more than one school:

- Schools using Learning Support Units need to have a common behaviour policy, systems and referrals in order to ensure consistency of approach.
- Close liaison/communication is essential between the Learning Support Unit Managers and staff from other schools. Protocol/policy on this should be agreed.
- Resources will need to be allocated for travel, liaison time, joint in-service training and materials.

Learning Support Unit Co-ordinators – Good Practice

Many Co-ordinators have established excellent practice through:

- Visits to schools and Senior Leadership Teams in order to monitor and evaluate practice
- Arranging cluster and area meetings of Learning Support Unit Managers and their line managers
- Half termly meetings involving the Learning Support Unit Manager, and other behaviour support staff to share and standardise good practice
- Information packs – sharing worksheets and practical ideas
- Newsletters – supporting and sharing good practice
- Devising local training packages
- Establishing websites to share practice
- Transition meetings between primary and secondary Learning Support Units
The network meetings for Learning Support Unit Co-ordinators are sparse at the moment and could usefully be developed. However, some have established good practice through:

- Strong links established with Behaviour Support Service, LEA personnel and specialist establishments such as Pupil Referral Units and special schools.
- Work with Educational Psychologists, Community Mental Health Teams, Youth Offending Team and Social Services.
- Establishing Learning Support links with Connexions Personal Advisers, drug support groups and Educational Welfare Officers (EWO).
- Links with early years forums, Sure Start programmes and family community groups.

Sheffield has established a Learning Support Unit forum which provides co-ordination and support, develops monitoring and evaluation processes and resources, shares good practice and as a dynamic group promotes solution-focused thinking, both to adopt new ideas and as a tool for action research.

Sheffield STEPS (Support, Teaching and Educational Psychology service) website is useful for a range of information on behaviour and mentoring.

Rotherham has developed a Learning Support Unit Managers’ forum led by the Behavioural Support Service. The Educational Psychologists play a key part in shaping the strategic vision for the Units and in training, monitoring and evaluating practice.

London Borough of Newham and Knowsley have developed good network and training programmes.

London Borough of Southwark have developed a 14-week course for Learning Support Unit Managers validated by the University of London. This course has been organised in association with the South London and Maudsley Trust.

A particularly successful and useful group has been established across the London Boroughs. SENJIT (Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training) Institute of Education, University of London, has just established a support network which is currently looking at practical suggestions on setting up Learning Support Units, resourcing, management and curriculum initiatives.
One key to the success of the Learning Support Unit is the quality of management systems and practice within schools. The current school structure, roles and responsibilities, referral systems, communication networks and pastoral systems need to be audited to form a basis for Learning Support Unit design. A range of data can be used to analyse reasons for exclusions, poor attendance, behavioural difficulties disengagement and trends. This can be used to identify criteria for selection for support.

EiC, LEA Behaviour Support Plans and School Development Plan (SDP) targets can be combined and key policy documents reviewed – such as the Behaviour Policy, Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy, rewards and sanctions, Social Inclusion Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy – to incorporate the Learning Support Unit initiative and re-integration expectations.

If more than one school is using the provision, detailed discussions and a framework need to be established for referrals, transport, re-integration and curriculum continuity.

**School Management – Good Practice**

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team leading the initiative is key to its success.
- Delivery/implementation plans have been a useful guide in planning and establishing Learning Support Units in schools.
- Analyse data on SATs (Standard Assessment Tests), CATs (Cognitive Ability Tests), SEN (Special Education Needs), GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) results and trends, baseline assessment on entry, National Curriculum levels, language and communication profiles, pupil mobility, gender, ethnic mix, number of Looked After Children, exclusions, attendance.
- Analyse behaviour data, identifying types and incidence of behaviour, time of day, location in the school, members of staff/departments involved, use of duty team/duty room, patterns of fixed term exclusions.
- Review existing structures for communication, referral routes and the range of support, rewards and sanctions within the school.
- Look at staff roles and responsibilities and how they will complement each other, such as Head of Year, Learning Support Unit Manager, Form Tutor, Learning Mentor, Education Welfare Officer, Pastoral Management Team.
- Some schools have restructured their support for social inclusion into new departments or faculties.
- Whole staff training is essential. In particular Learning Support Unit Managers require access to specialised training.

**Good Idea**

- Many schools are using behaviour databases to refine the varying types of behaviour, consequences and action. Toll Bar School in Grimsby has worked with databases for the past four years and uses them for a range of management information.
Integrating the Learning Support Unit with other staff inside and outside school

It is very important to look at how Learning Support Units are going to be integrated into school and how they link with other provision. A Social Inclusion framework (department/faculty) within school is helpful in drawing together individual support. This also focuses outside agency support, attendance at meetings and family work.

There needs to be a policy that incorporates all the elements of support, behaviour and curriculum implications, looking at the responsibilities of curriculum departments in providing work or support to the Learning Support Unit.

A clear policy on re-integration of pupils from the Learning Support Unit back into class will need to be drawn up, indicating the various responsibilities of the classroom teacher, support worker and Learning Support Unit Manager.

It is helpful to have a referral forum or broker team which allocates, monitors, evaluates and then terminates support for pupils. Protocols for working, admission and re-integration between the main school, Learning Support Unit, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), special schools and support services must also be established.

Learning Support Unit integration – Good Practice

- Some schools are developing a Social Inclusion team of staff.
- Many Learning Support Units have teaching input from mainstream staff and heads of department. This needs careful timetabling if the ‘correct match’ is to be made.
- Joint pupils registers are very useful in bringing together and retrieving information on pupils who need additional support across the school.
- Inter-agency/referral meetings require planning and time allocation for key staff.
- There needs to be close liaison with the PRU and the Behavioural Support Team.
- It aids communication if the Learning Support Unit is sited near to the senior staff or other support facilities.
- Learning Support Units who have pupils from other schools and/or support other schools through advice and guidance need to have time for liaison and re-integration.
- In many schools there are close links with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Education Welfare Service (EWS), home/school link worker, Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMTAG) and Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator.

In schools with learning mentors:

- There needs to be close liaison/management links with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the Learning Mentor Manager.
- Clear roles should be established to differentiate between the Learning Mentors and Learning Support Unit staff. Many schools have used Learning Mentors as pre-referral to the Learning Support Unit and to facilitate the exit back into mainstream classes.

Specific primary issues

- Curriculum planning with the pupils’ class teacher is important, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy, to ensure a consistent approach.
- Access to information on pupils, travelling time, liaison with staff and families all have to be negotiated particularly at primary level with all the schools and staff involved. These issues are addressed later in this guidance.
Many primary Learning Support Units have provided all pupils with access to lunch clubs, cross-curricular projects and drop-in support. This has helped prevent isolation from mainstream classes and integrated the programme into the school.

Schools may be able to draw on a range of funding initiatives – it can be a challenge to pull all threads together and optimise resources.

There is a key role for the Senior Leadership Team here in identifying different funding routes, both inside and outside of school. They need to build a comprehensive database of options and share this information with key members of staff including Learning Support Unit Managers – who often have a good knowledge of funding routes themselves.

Funding needs to support and complement the school development plan, wherever possible joining funding streams together so that greater resources can be targeted at key areas of need.

Learning Support Unit Managers should have access to a budget for resources, training and links with other providers such as colleges and training providers.

**Resources – Good Practice**

- **Beacon School Fund** – used by Thomas Tallis School in Greenwich to deliver training courses to another Greenwich school on setting up Learning Support Units

**Resources – internal and external**

- North Haringey Junior School in Haringey has supported classroom teachers through supply in order that they can meet Learning Support Unit Managers during the school day to discuss curriculum and pupils.

**Good Idea continued**

- Good examples of a Social Inclusion team are in Rushcroft School in Waltham Forest, Holloway School in Islington, Genesis Social Inclusion Project at The Children’s Society in Lewisham and Southwark, and in Deptford Green School in Lewisham.

- Good examples in primary include Brunswick Park School in Southwark, Eastwood School in Bradford and Guardhouse School in Bradford, who successfully link SEN, Learning Support Unit and Learning Mentors.

- Ruffwood School in Knowsley, Higherside Community School in Knowsley and The Children’s Society are developing effective pupil registers.

- Oaklands School in Tower Hamlets has regular weekly meetings of senior managers to discuss referrals, supported by supply cover.

- Parrs Wood School in Manchester has a Social Inclusion ‘Suite’. Cockburn High School in Leeds has a ‘Support Corridor’. Hinde House School in Sheffield integrates Learning Support Unit and Learning Mentor bases. This close location aids integrated working.

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- **Pupil Retention Fund** – used in Knowsley to help finance reward-based activities
- **NET Centre at Prince Henry’s Grammar School Leeds** was jointly funded through EiC and other funding routes.
- **Education Action Zone Fund** – used by Chaucer School Sheffield to increase time for a behavioural support teacher to work with families in school
- **Standards Fund** – used for a three year EBD inclusion pilot project in 1999 in Wandsworth
- **Single Regeneration Budget Fund** used in Knowsley on an additional 15 places on alternative programmes
- **Teenage Pregnancy Fund** used by Dinnington Comprehensive in Rotherham for their Baby Doll project
- **Out of Hours Fund/New Opportunities Fund** – funding a wide range of activities in local communities
- **Pupil Retention Grant** and **Pupil Support Allowance** – used for increased staffing in Learning Support Units, a school based Education Welfare Officer and additional Learning Mentors to meet the needs of Key Stage 4 pupils
- **Charitable funds**, e.g. Gulbenkian Foundation, used for specific projects within Learning Support Units.

### Location

Both pupils and Learning Support Unit Managers feel that the location and quality of the Learning Support Unit is fundamental in creating the right environment for support and learning.

The location needs to be carefully considered and money set aside for refurbishment and resources. Ideally, Learning Support Units should be central on the school site and near other important facilities such as the Senior Staff Offices, Pastoral Centre, Special Needs Department and Learning Mentor bases. For child protection reasons the work base should be accessible for other staff.

The Learning Support Unit needs to be well-resourced with Information Technology equipment including an Internet link, curriculum materials, training and career information and details of other agencies. It is also helpful to have access to a telephone, video recorder and television, and proximity to toilets, a sink with running water and external access (for reluctant pupils). If possible, there also needs to be (in the Learning Support Unit or nearby) a private/confidential/tutorial space, office space with admin computers facility linked to the pupil database and an area for sharing information and resources. Ideally, furnishings will be good quality and there should be space to display pupils’ work.

### Location – Good Practice

- A meeting place for visitors and a social area for the pupils at break and lunchtimes are useful.
- Usually the decoration has been carefully selected either by staff or pupils.
- Some Learning Support Units have furniture that is collapsible for easy storage – which also enables rooms to be used more flexibly.
- Some Learning Support Units have access to kitchen facilities, which are very useful for life skills and quick snacks.

The following is an extract from a report written by four students at Maltby Comprehensive School, Rotherham, who had complained to the Headteacher that the disruptive students were being rewarded. The report was published for staff and students in school notices and the school’s weekly bulletin.
The ‘Pink Room’

Some people may think that the Learning Support Unit or ‘Pink Room’ is a place where disruptive pupils can go and mess around and get rewarded for it. However this is not true. We went to the ‘Pink Room’ to find out what really goes on.

We expected to walk into a chaotic room full of rowdy students not doing any work. To our surprise the room was calm and collected, the walls were covered in posters made by the students. Even though the posters are about desirable subjects, you could tell a lot of hard work and research had gone into producing them. The Mentors are called by their first names, which makes the atmosphere more relaxed and sociable. The Mentors John and Mark are calm towards the students in there and they are also their friends.

The award system is called ASDAN and students can achieve bronze, silver or gold awards by completing challenges in their project work. The work is curriculum based and deals with Information handling, the Community, Sport and Leisure, Home Management, the Environment, Number Handling, Health and Survival, World of Work, Technology, Wider World, Expressive Arts, Beliefs and Values. Guidance issues are also discussed such as stereotypes, social roles and moral issues.

After the hard work the students put in throughout the week they get rewarded – for example with a games lesson, videos, magazines, computers or music. They can only choose one of the above on a Friday afternoon.

Recent conversation between Ofsted Inspector and student in the Learning Support Unit:

Inspector: “What is the Learning Support Unit?” Student: “It’s a place you can go to get your head sorted out.”

Maltby Comprehensive, Rotherham.

Good Idea

- Charles Edward Brooke School in Lambeth has a wonderful large room, kitchen area, offices, small tutorial area and bathroom, which is highly valued by the pupils and staff.

- Rushcroft School in Waltham Forest has a two-storey house as its Learning Support Unit, centrally located at the front of the school.

- In Leytonstone School in Waltham Forest and Parrs Wood School in Manchester, Learning Support Units are part of a suite of rooms shared with Learning Mentors and other support staff.
For the initiative to run smoothly, the Senior Leadership Team needs to be proactive in their involvement with the running of the Learning Support Unit and clear about line management responsibility. There should be explicit policies agreed with all staff for behaviour, alternative curriculum approaches, support for re-integration, teaching and learning and whole-school referral processes. Learning Support Units need to be integrated into whole-school curriculum planning and assessment strategies.

Meeting time needs to be allocated for line managers and for Learning Support Unit Managers to carry out their role effectively. Very clear communication channels both within and outside school – including the involvement of parents and strong transition links with primary schools, other referring schools, college placements and alternative provision – help ensure the smooth running of the process. Pupils could be involved in their own monitoring and evaluation of their progress, giving them ‘ownership’ and responsibility.

Management in Schools – Good Practice

Many schools have developed comprehensive policies incorporating Learning Support Units into whole school approaches to behaviour. Effective policies define the following:

- The aims and objectives of the Learning Support Unit
- Staffing structure, roles and responsibilities of the key members of staff – Learning Support Unit Manager, Learning Mentor, support staff, Head of Year, Form Tutors, Curriculum Managers – and the roles of parents and other agencies
- Communication and line management of systems
- Operational procedures such as criteria for referral, the referral process, action planning, target setting and exit procedures
- Re-integration expectations and procedures
- Whole-school behaviour policy and links with other plans in the school
- Rewards and sanctions
- Assessment, monitoring and evaluation strategies
- Curriculum, including the balance between withdrawal and in-class support. Responsibilities of curriculum managers for work delivered in the unit
- Whole-school responsibilities of class teachers with regard to teaching and learning styles and of management in terms of systems to support staff with challenging pupils
- An outline of training available to staff and access routes for support
- Resources available for pupils and staff
- Targets for the school, links with school development plans and EiC targets
‘Inclusion’ handbooks and policy documents which incorporate the Learning Support Unit, SENCO, Learning Mentors or Teaching Assistants, EWS, EMAG and all the individual support for pupils both inside and outside the school.

Research has shown that it can be difficult for schools to attract experienced and qualified staff to the position of Learning Support Unit Manager, which has led to the late start of some Units. With that in mind, Partnerships and schools need to give attention to staff support, retention and access to the training they require.

Good time management is necessary for the manager to carry out their role effectively: line managing the Learning Support Unit team, liaising with parents, agencies, schools and other provision, with teaching support staff and the inclusion team. Not only will they be retrieving information on pupils from staff and other agencies; they will also need to attend referral and other school meetings, observe pupils before they enter the Learning Support Unit, set up and support the re-integration process, monitor and evaluate the programme and individual pupils. In addition, they will need time to support staff through training and whole school In Service Training (INSET), attend training courses and network/cluster meetings and visit other centres to share good practice.

There are certain principles that are useful to bear in mind:

- Learning Support Unit Managers need to have a full-time commitment to the post.
- They need to be experienced and effective managers of pupils’ behaviour and learning.
- It is helpful to have at least one Teaching Assistant – as well as the Learning Support Unit Manager – to allow for re-integration support, training and general liaison. In addition, it is helpful if mainstream teaching staff are allocated to deliver certain aspects of the curriculum.
- Teaching Assistants allocated to the Learning Support Unit require induction and clear line management.

**Recruitment and training – Good Practice**

- A wide variety of training has been delivered with the Partnerships and Learning Support Units covering the following:
  - Working with bullies and victims
  - Circle time and self-esteem
  - Child protection
  - Writing and implementing personal support plan programmes

**Good Idea**

- The following schools have effective plans in place for Learning Support Units: Chaucer School in Sheffield, Deptford Green School in Lewisham, Thomas Tallis in Greenwich, Swinton High School in Salford, Rushcroft School in Waltham Forest, Joseph Eastham School in Salford, Foxhill Primary School in Sheffield, Eastwood Primary School in Bradford, Langdon School in Newham and Parrs Wood in Manchester have detailed Inclusion Policy documents.
- Liverpool EiC Partnership has a detailed Development Plan for secondary and primary centres.
Setting up Learning Support Units

Reducing truancy and exclusion through positive parent power

Specifically:

- Teaching and learning styles (Moorside School in Salford)
- Understanding AD/HD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) (Swinton Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- Anger management (Swinton Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- Learning Support Unit staff and school counsellor designing an INSET programme for Y7 tutorial team on delivering circle time sessions (Thomas Tallis in Greenwich)
- Literacy and Numeracy (Headway Centre, Havistock School in Camden)
- Co-operative learning, motivational literacy, motivational interviewing, monitoring and evaluating Learning Support Units, Richter scale training (Knowsley)
- Careers counselling and drug awareness (Brookfield School in Knowsley)
- Framework for intervention (Birmingham LEA)

Outside agencies can be useful because they have more specialised expertise, provide a different perspective and broaden the range of activities and services on offer to pupils. But they do require effective co-ordination, which has an impact on time and organisation.

Involving other agencies – Good Practice

There are a large number of agencies involved with pupils who have challenging or difficult behaviour. The following are just a few that have been mentioned by Learning Support Unit staff:

- PRU – staff coming into school for observation and counselling pupils
- MIND – ‘young minds’ are very active in supporting pupils with personal issues
- Youth Start – counselling for young people
- Variety of Social Services support networks
- Family CRISIS response team
- Youth Offending Team
- Youth Service/Connexions
- Child guidance teams
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- School Nurse and local Health Centre
- Education Otherwise
- Behaviour Support Services
- Early Years Team/Sure Start

Many Partnerships and Councils have access to a directory of agencies which schools and organisations can use.

Involving other agencies

Alongside members of the Social Inclusion Team within a school, effective links with other agencies and institutions is essential so that the Learning Support Unit Manager, understanding the limitations of their role, can refer pupils on to another agency/provision when appropriate.
Learning Support Units need to be involved in the transition process of pupils between and within schools and other establishments.

**Links – Good Practice**

- A variety of visits between staff and pupils in primary and secondary schools
- Pupils have used Learning Support Units as a half-way house after transferring from other schools
- Learning Support Unit staff attending open evening in Year 6
- Peer mentors from Year 8 work with Year 6 pupils coming through
- In liaison with the Learning Mentors, organising a range of induction groups for Year 7
- Joint staff training on behaviour policies and strategies between primary/secondary/PRU
- Use of Connexions Personal Advisers to link with college placements and training providers
- Staff from PRUs involved in delivery of some curriculum and support for pupils

Where there is a LEA Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator they facilitate the sharing of information and good practice across schools. In some cases the Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator is on the referral panel of Learning Support Units who have pupils from other schools. Some also track pupils who are out of school and put packages of support together to ease re-integration.

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, Learning Support Unit Manager and Social Inclusion Team are also vital cogs in the communication network. This is an ongoing exercise, which needs to become part of general practice in school and outside. Formal as well as informal routes need to be established, with sufficient time allocated to ensure that communication channels are established and work well.

**Communication and Awareness – Good Practice**

Schools are using a variety of communication methods to reinforce their messages, including:

- Printed reports and advice distributed to staff
- Staff briefings
- School bulletin
- Handbooks
- Pupil and parent information
- Learning Support Unit newsletter
- Monthly meetings with Educational Psychologist
- Regular meetings between Social Inclusion Team members
- Use of case studies
- Home visits
- Reports written by pupils on the Learning Support Unit for newsletters

To manage the resource efficiently there must be effective communication channels both within the school and outside with parents and other agencies. There is a danger of too many people becoming involved with the same pupils and messages becoming distorted.
Network meetings
Visits to other schools
National conferences/Department for Education and Skills dissemination meetings

Specifically:
- Staff are invited to lunches at the Learning Support Unit to share information and advice (Moorside High School in Salford)
- Presentations to and visits from Governors. Link Governor for Social Inclusion visits Learning Support Unit for updates and to meet students (Swinton Comprehensive – Rotherham)

The Learning Support Unit should act as a resource for pupils with information on the range of support and activities that are available both inside school and in the local community. This is particularly important during break, lunch and holiday times when problems can occur.

The information should be easily accessible and ideally pupils should be involved in the process. Notice boards in classrooms and along corridors can be used effectively, as well as space in the Learning Support Unit.

**Information for students – Good Practice**

- MIND (Charity) visit once a week informally to meet pupils who can then book appointments if they wish. (Wath Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- There’s a Health Advice Notice Board in the Learning Support Unit with leaflets freely available. (Dinnington Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- A personal planner for all pupils lists all support facilities. There are leaflets about mentoring, talks from Connexions Personal Advisers and information from Heads of Year. (Swinton Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- Newham have a Learning Mentor data bank that is accessible for pupils.
- Information on work in the advisory centre for youth in Leeds. (Prince Henry’s Grammar School in Leeds)

**Case studies can be a useful tool and can provide a basis for disseminating good practice. Typically they need to include:**

1. Brief biographical details – date of birth, gender, ethnicity, school, Looked After child
2. Reason for referral
3. Outline of programme of intervention
4. What was achieved
5. Commentary
6. Any supporting information e.g. photographs, drawings, comments by relevant others

**Information for students about available support**

Local directories of services booklets for students have been produced by Barking and Dagenham.
The Connexions service began in 15 areas of England in 2001 and the rest of the country is due to be covered by Connexions Partnerships by the end of 2003. Although it is still early days, there are some key principles and some good practice worth noting.

There needs to be good communication and a common understanding between schools and the Connexions Partnership, as well as agreement on the line management of the Personal Adviser. Clear and common systems for selecting pupils, action planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating the process help streamline and unify the service.

**Connexions – Good Practice**

- Works more effectively if Connexions Personal Advisers have a role within a Social Inclusion Team.
- Recent evidence shows best practice is when Personal Advisers:
  - Give more intensive support to ‘long-term’ pupils who require a greater level of support
  - Are involved in transition issues, 16+ and pupils moving in during Key Stage 4
  - Have more time to liaise with outside agencies such as college and training providers
  - Utilise their skills through alternative curriculum packages

**Good Idea**

Oldham EiC Partnership and the Connexions service have run successful joint training events between schools and colleges, Senior Leadership Teams and Connexions staff to look at various roles including Learning Mentors and how they complement each other.

**Preparation for Ofsted**

The provision and support that Learning Support Units give to pupils is of great importance and needs to be understood by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) team. Consequently, it is advisable to prepare carefully so that the team can see in the limited time available how the unit functions. Note that unless there is a specific inspection of Learning Support Unit provision, a Section 10 short or long inspection will only inspect the Learning Support Unit as part of a wider inspection of support for pupils.

Documentation should be clear, to the point and identify what has been achieved. For the purposes of managing the Learning Support Unit extensive documentation will be available. Inspectors may ask to see everything or selective documentation. It would assist inspectors, to have a prepared document of not more than two sides of A4 paper that gives a synopsis of the role, organisation, function and outcomes of the Learning Support Unit. Brevity is essential because of the time constraints on inspectors.
Some reporting inspectors are likely to use the prepared paper as the basis for discussion. It is unlikely any will ask for a formal presentation. Length of discussions with staff vary; bear in mind that there may only be a 20 to 30 minute time slot if it is felt necessary by the inspector. That being the case, the briefing paper and access to more detailed documentation will assist inspectors in gaining an understanding about the work so that they can make judgements about the quality of provision, teaching and pupil progress.

Good practice is an example of a briefing paper, the structure of which may assist in preparation. The structure may have to be adapted to meet the individual Learning Support Unit’s requirements but that the length should not exceed two sides of A4 paper.
Learning Support Units can build on whole-school good practice in supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties and be flexible about the range of strategies and curriculum packages they use to meet individual needs, providing a balance between individual, group work and support in the classroom.

Pupils should be involved in their own learning and behaviour plans and their parents should be encouraged to actively participate in their children’s learning. Behaviour plans should detail expectations, rewards and sanctions in line with school policy.

Mainstream staff can be engaged to deliver aspects of the curriculum and strategies employed to encourage a diversity of pupils to use the Unit so that it is seen as part of the school and not a ‘sin bin’. Access to a variety of support staff such as Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors and outside agencies can help pupils who attend the Learning Support Unit achieve their best.

Many schools have additional support or intervention for specific groups of pupils, such as time out areas or an isolation room for pupils who have an immediate difficulty in a classroom. These facilities do not mix with Learning Support Units and should be organised separately.

Alternative curriculum packages have been devised for those who are not returning to class but who need links with colleges, training providers and other agencies. Pupils who have complex and significant behavioural problems, perhaps with a statement of SEN, may require external placement in specialist provision.

Clear systems of referral and exit, together with supporting documentation to communicate progress to all parties, are an essential part of the Learning Support Unit framework.

Learning Support Unit Managers should be able to track individual pupil progress and generate data that will allow the success of the Learning Support Unit to be demonstrated. For this there needs to be a well designed record keeping system for each pupil, which can be easily aggregated to produce overall performance data for the Learning Support Unit.

Many schools have revisited and redefined their structures, systems and documentation to accommodate the wealth of inclusion strategies now emerging and formulate effective monitoring and evaluation strategies.

It is important that referral systems and the exchange of information between staff, agencies and pupils are clearly understood and documented. The induction programme for new staff should include this information. Regular staff training and updates on the success and management of the programme, perhaps as part of a staff handbook, will help keep all parties informed.

Access to Information

Learning Support Unit staff need access to a wide range of data. Schools with a Social Inclusion Development Team will find it easier
to access and share information because of
the nature of the department and its
management structure. Many schools have
commented that as a result of having a
Learning Support Unit the quality of
information on pupils and their progress
has improved considerably.

A significant number of schools are now
developing their own databases incorporating
pupils who have SEN, Emotional Behavioural
Difficulty (EBD) or Learning Mentor support or
who are Looked After – and a wide range of
pupils who have ‘additional support of some
kind’. As the Learning Support Unit and staff
become established in school, routines of
sharing and accessing information will
become easier.

It is useful to gather some or all of the
following information:

- EiC plan targets and if appropriate revised
targets for attainment, exclusion, attendance
and any other contextual factors such as
ethnicity, gender and pupil mobility
- Data from the School
Development/Improvement Plan and
subsequent trends
- Primary school information on attainment,
exclusions, attendance, attitude, behaviour
- Baseline assessments on entry and early
years assessment
- SATs, CATs and any other assessments
such as SEN, National Curriculum data,
attitude surveys and pupil, staff and family
perceptions
- Behaviour data on trends, incidents
and different types of behaviour
- Family information
- Progress reports
- Record of achievement
- Information from other agencies
- Lesson observation information

**Referrals**

A robust and transparent referral system for
entry into the Learning Support Unit, published
with other relevant documentation in the
schools’ handbook and policy statements, is
key to its success. The Learning Support Unit
Manager should have the authority to challenge
inappropriate referrals or those made more
difficult by the pupil’s personality or conflict
issues. A referral panel is ideal to get agencies
and staff together on a regular basis to look at
referrals and exit from the programme.

The panel should clarify the problem and
prepare an Action Plan for implementation
in the Learning Support Unit.

**Referrals – Good Practice**

There are numerous examples of referral
processes. In the main they either go through
Heads of Year, referral panel meetings, or in
the case of primary schools, members of the
Senior Leadership Team.

The referral form should include:

- Skills and strengths
- Areas of concern (a checklist is usually
helpful)
- Reasons for referral
  - Focus of intervention requested
- Information about relationships and
  attitude
- Other support received such as SEN
  or language
- Strategies previously employed
- Contact details/pupil’s current status
- Other agencies involved
- Statutory care issues
- Family/carer involvement in school
- Dates, referring member of staff and
  addresses
- An Action Plan for Learning Support Unit
  staff to implement
Specific examples of good practice include:

- Referrals via Form Tutors, Heads of Subject and House Tutors; a grid is completed which highlights problems in work ethic, verbal/non-verbal skills and any problem subjects; parents are invited in and a commitment document signed by the Learning Support Unit Manager, the parent and pupil as an agreement to work together to improve social skills.

- A designated support panel, which meets every three weeks; all concerns are passed to the panel via the Head of Year; an emergency referral structure goes direct to the Head of the Learning Support Unit, which can avoid many short term exclusions. (Eaglesfield School in Greenwich)

- The Head of Year completes the referral form, there is a round robin of teaching staff to assess behaviour and attitude, a meeting with the pupil, one with the pupil and parents/carers, then a programme is devised and initiated. (Wath Comprehensive in Rotherham)

Criteria for entry and exit to the Learning Support Unit

Some schools have targeted Key Stage 3 in order to have the greatest chance of successful re-integration.

By analysing data, trends can be identified – in behaviour, academic performance, gender, ethnicity and Looked After Children for instance. There needs to be whole-school understanding of the criteria set and the procedures to be followed, along with clear referral systems for entry and exit. A Social Inclusion/multi-disciplinary Team meeting is essential.

Time limits or review milestones are useful in assessing progress being made against targets set in an Action Plan. Support needs to be geared to the individual – some need short, others long-term intervention.

Learning Support Units are sometimes used to allow designated pupils time out if need be. However, the Learning Support Unit must not be used as an excuse for pupils to leave classrooms inappropriately.

Entry and exit criteria – Good Practice

- Entry criteria include:
  - High incidence of times sent to isolation room
  - Pupils are on EBD register
- Poor attitude to discipline
- Consistent under achievement of Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets
- Persistent failure to modify behaviour

● Exit criteria:
- More positive self-image
- Attitude to school and attendance improved
- Confidence, willingness to move on
- Better motivation and attitude to learning
- Gradual re-integration through ‘best subjects’; with report book monitored by Learning Support Unit staff

Specifically:
- Pupils must achieve 85% on their target card over at least half a term and without constant support, then monitored by Learning Mentors using similar card and part of ‘Premier League’ (Joseph Eastham School in Salford)
- Through discipline for learning programme, pupils who do not respond to red cards are referred to Learning Support Unit (St Edmund Arrowsmith in Knowsley)

- Sheffield Learning Support Unit Forum have made the following list of criteria for entry and exit:

Learning
- Low attainment in relation to ability
- Falling motivation
- Poor concentration and attention difficulties
- Behaviour affecting learning of individual pupil and/or class group

Emotional social development
- Difficult relationships with adults/peers
- Low self-esteem
- Social skills deficits
- Communication skill deficits
- Behaviour management – pupil or staff issue
- Risk of exclusion
- Vulnerable pupils

Attendance
- Patterns of poor attendance
- Internal truancy
- Integration of pupils on exit plans
- Integration of transitional pupils

Specific pupil categories
- Looked After Children
- Traveller/refugee
- Ethnic Minority Groups (EMAG)

Exit Criteria
- Completion of plan
- Targets/objectives met (including Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)
- Referral to alternative agency/provision
- Pupil evaluation
- Parent evaluation

Exit strategies
To include:
- Monitoring interviews (pupil/staff/parent)
- Planned reduction in sessions
- Offer of drop in or start/end day attachment
Learning Support Unit staff in conjunction with members of the Senior Leadership Team, including the SENCO, should undertake an assessment of need before the pupil enters the Learning Support Unit. Appropriate resources and personnel can then be identified and a detailed Action Plan drawn up.

Action plans are essential to the process of improving behaviour and attitude and should include Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Pastoral Support Plans (PSPs) and Looked After Children Plans. They set out the targets agreed by pupils and Learning Support staff, with review dates, and highlight where progress has been made. Targets need to be few and focused to avoid pupil overload and should be simple, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific (S.M.A.R.T.) wherever possible. They may be written by the pupil and should be fully understood by pupils, staff and family/carers. There needs to be some flexibility as the situation may change following review or specific incidents – regular reviews should be held, with written accounts made of each session.

An important part of the action planning process is monitoring and evaluating pupils’ progress. Learning Support Unit staff are likely to handle sensitive information from staff, the pupil, home and other agencies, so it is important to address the issue of confidentiality right from the start with a clear policy in place with the school and with outside agencies. Everyone within the process needs to know what kind of information has to be passed on and what information can remain with a particular member of staff. Effective regular line management and supervision of staff will support them through any difficulties or conflicts of interests that they may encounter.

Best practice shows that sessional and part-time placements have a greater degree of success in terms of pupil re-integration. Some Units have a short period of assessment before a re-integration plan is implemented. Schools have found that setting a maximum stay of 2 terms prevents Learning Support Units filling up with long-term pupils who would probably prefer to stay there indefinitely. The emphasis needs to be on re-integration, moving on and making progress. Flexible part-time arrangements are preferable so that pupils maintain contact with tutor groups, staff, classmates and the curriculum.

Time in the Unit – Good Practice

- Half a term in most cases (Moorside High School in Sheffield and Eaglesfield School in Greenwich)
- A two tier system: two areas in the Learning Support Unit, one for more biddable pupils with a positive re-integration programme for each pupil, another where pupils earn the right to transfer elsewhere. (Eaglesfield School in Greenwich)
- Flexible part-time arrangements: contact can be intensive (each day) or ‘light touch’. The Learning Support Unit maintains an open door policy. (Wath Comprehensive in Rotherham)
Two to three weeks maximum full-time, then part-time (Brookfield School in Knowsley)

With more able students, approximately five weeks’ structured re-integration; with less able pupils a longer period with more literacy, PHSE (Personal, Health and Social Education) and confidence boosting activity (Leeds)

A three tier system: three, four or five weeks or half-termly. The most vulnerable are full-time. (Fir Vale School in Sheffield)

If for one term, the optimum is half a term full-time, half being slowly re-integrated into mainstream. However, the average is one to two weeks. (Chaucer School in Sheffield)

The fundamental goal of any Learning Support Unit is the re-integration of the pupil either back into mainstream classes, back into their mainstream school or moving on to another provision if that proves impossible.

Close co-operation and support from the class teacher, pupils and the school help ensure re-integration success. Help from teaching assistants can be invaluable in easing transition. They act as the link between the Learning Support Unit and the school’s teachers and pastoral staff.

A structured re-integration plan needs to be agreed by the pupil and staff and then implemented. This could form part of a PSP with information gained from their time in the Unit and ideas on approaches and strategies.

Levels of re-integration should be identified according to need:

- **Completely unsupported** – may be used where a placement has been an alternative to exclusion, or a response to an acute and perhaps isolated incident which is not expected to recur, such as a pupil’s response to exceptional provocation

- **Completely supported** – pupils have access to a Learning Mentor or Learning Support Unit Assistant for a variety of lessons. In addition, they may return to the Unit for some of their curriculum time and use drop-in support.

- **Gradual support** – pupils may be in classes at times unsupported and at others, supported. This can be part of a flexible arrangement where pupils might reduce the number of curriculum areas attended and concentrate on those in which they are achieving well.

Flexibility is the key, aided by regular monitoring and tracking of pupils’ progress. There needs to be full involvement of the pupil, teacher, parent or carer and agencies at regular review meetings, together with guidance and support to all staff in the school through individual support and advice, observations, training and written reports. Peer mentoring and Buddy systems help support the re-integration process.

If the re-integration breaks down, a review must be undertaken right away. Some pupils may benefit from signing contracts or targets, which can be monitored during the day. There needs to be constant praise and reward as each step is taken, reinforced with high expectations of improving work and good behaviour.

Pupils need time to review their targets in their Individual Educational Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and daily targets on a regular basis.

For some pupils only part re-integration may be achievable and access to group work, drop-in, and other agency support may be an ongoing element of a package. There needs to be, however, a realisation by all staff that no pupil returns from a Learning Re-integration 30

Good Practice Guidelines for Learning Support Units
Support Unit ‘cured’ but may still need ongoing support and understanding.

Schools may use Learning Support Units as a half-way house. All the above points apply to this process for pupils re-integrating from PRUs. Some pupils may have an extended package between the PRU, the Learning Support Unit and access to mainstream classrooms.

**Re-integration – Good Practice**

- Holte School Learning Support Centre in Birmingham has a clear ‘Advice to classroom teachers’ document on the Learning Support Unit and re-integration process.
- The Phoenix Centre in Manchester has a very useful staff handbook with examples of re-integration contracts.
- Liverpool has written good primary and secondary guidance for their primary and secondary support centres which highlights re-integration.
- Deptford Green School in Lewisham, Chaucer School in Sheffield and Leytonstone School in Waltham Forest have good policies and handbooks for staff.
- The Access Project based in Eastlea Community School in Newham has a detailed Re-integration Policy.

**Curriculum Activities in Learning Support Units**

Research findings indicate that a well taught, appropriately challenging curriculum does promote positive behaviour and high achievement amongst pupils with behavioural difficulties. The curriculum in Learning Support Units needs to be broad, balanced and flexible enough to be customised. Pupils need access to the National Curriculum, although, because of their specific circumstances, some may have to be disapplied for a period of time. Curriculum and achievement should be the focus. Equally important is for the curriculum to reflect strategies to improve behaviour, self-esteem, social skills, peer, family and school relationships.

The referral panel should have specified the aims and objectives of the placement. Pupils themselves should be guided through self-assessment techniques to establish their views and needs.

The curriculum should be tailored to individuals with an appropriate balance of personal and social education, circle time, anger management, behaviour strategies such as solution-focused brief therapy, handling conflict and counselling through one-to-one and group work sessions. Access to and use of Information Communication Technology is important.

A range of accreditation for pupils encourages achievement and supports transition within a structured framework, which should include timings and expectations of work and behaviour. Learning Support Units may have other staff delivering sessions, such as Learning Mentors, Counsellors, Personal Advisers, the Education Welfare Officer, Educational Psychologists, the Behaviour Support Team and training providers. Many Units concentrate on key skills, Literacy, Numeracy, Information Communication Technology and personal and social education and deliver technology through food technology.

Close links with Heads of Department and subject leaders help ensure consistency of approach and content and ease re-integration. If mainstream staff have access to teaching in the Learning Support Unit this helps extend understanding of the Learning Support Unit’s work.
Drop-in facilities at break, lunch-time and after school are useful opportunities for pupils to have access to Learning Mentors, Personal Advisers, Homework Clubs and other activities to maintain contact and discuss issues informally.

An essential part of the extended curriculum of the Unit is professional development for staff, offered through resources, advice and in-service training on behaviour management. Areas covered could include management of pupil behaviour, classroom management skills, violence in the classroom, bullying and harassment.

Curriculum Activities – Good Practice

The following are just a few of the curriculum activities being used in Learning Support Units:

- Subject departments providing packages of worksheets/curriculum materials, all of which pupils can study over a number of lessons
- A range of group work on self-esteem, mutual respect and co-operation, problem solving using contracts/boundaries about how they will function as a group
- Variety of additional accredited awards and programmes
- Preparation for work and training programmes
- Range of coursework support through group work and one-to-one activities

Specifically:

- Learning Mentors delivering a social skills programme and individual counselling while the Learning Support Unit delivers academic work (Joseph Eastham School in Salford)
- Sessions for ‘Welcome back to school refusers’ on self-esteem and anger management (Eltham Hill School in Greenwich)
- Weekly circle time sessions in collaboration with the school counsellor for Year 7s (Thomas Tallis School in Greenwich)
- Life and social skills group work project (St Edmond Arrowsmith School in Knowsley)
- Bullying workshop (Hind House School in Sheffield)
- Strong emphasis on delivering the curriculum through ICT learning and thinking opportunities (Eastlea School in Newham)
- Use of peer mentors from Year 12/13 giving them time to work in Learning Support Unit (Wath Comprehensive in Rotherham)
- Pupils interviewed by the Learning Support Unit Manager on arrival, setting their own targets, which are displayed in the centre and shared with other students. This helps focus both staff and pupils. (Prince Henry Grammar School in Leeds)
- Yoga and relaxation activities (Charles Edward Brooke in Lambeth)
- GCSE Key Stage 4 materials available in packs produced by curriculum faculty (Fir Vale School in Sheffield)
- In addition to core subjects plus Literacy and Numeracy, a Behaviour and Emotional Support Scheme, run daily and tailor-made for each group (Chaucer School in Sheffield)
- Emphasis on role-play, drama and creative art work alongside a range of behaviour strategies (Headway Centre, Havistock School in Camden)
- Re-tracking materials adapted and used extensively on self-assessment and
problem solving issues (Learning Mentors in Childwall School in Liverpool)

- Adaptation of National Curriculum areas to meet pupils’ educational and emotional needs – and a good example of a Year 8 science topic (South Camden Community School in Camden)

- Alternative curriculum package involving the ASDAN Youth Awards for pupils unable to handle eight GCSEs (Myrtle Springs in Sheffield)

- A package of materials to support anger management and conflict resolution skills (Sedgehill School in Lewisham)

- A personal development programme – pupils participate in individual and group sessions on personal awareness and specific situations (Behaviour Support Centre, Deptford Green School in Lewisham)

- The Little Ilford School Alternative (LISA) project – a personal development programme offering understanding around personal and social issues that may affect young people in everyday life, with topics ranging from sex education to relationships. The programme is delivered through workshops, group discussions, role-play, ICT projects, mentoring and outdoor activities (Newham)

- A successful Year 8 self-esteem group to enable pupils to develop and improve social skills and enhance self-esteem – also a ‘factfile’ which pupils complete on computer, asking them about themselves, their interests and thoughts (Fulham Cross School Learning Support Service in Hammersmith and Fulham)

- Pupils devising a Learning Support Unit monopoly game, widely used in the Centre (Maltby Comprehensive, Rotherham)

Outreach Support

Some Learning Support Units offer outreach support to other schools, although it is often limited because of pressures in the Learning Support Unit and the inflexibility of staffing.

Primary Learning Support Units should build outreach support into their programme along with time for meetings and travelling to other schools’ premises. They also need considerable curriculum liaison time with class teachers of referring schools.

Pupils attending college or being educated off site also require time from Learning Support Unit staff and/or the Social Inclusion Team for monitoring, support and guidance. The Connexions Personal Adviser will be particularly useful in supporting these developments.

Outreach staff need to ensure that:

- their role is clearly understood within the school they are working in
- unrealistic expectations are not placed on them
- time is set aside for discussions between the outreach worker and school staff
- resources are allocated for materials, In Service Training and travelling
Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can be a challenge, especially if pupils have a range of complex difficulties and the significant support that they receive may not have an immediate effect on measurable standards. So it is important to look at a range of qualitative and quantitative data to measure impact and progress.

Monitoring and evaluation should be undertaken at all levels from the Partnership Board and LEA through to schools and individual pupils and the data gathered shared and understood. School and pupil level data needs to be available to all and there should be clearly identified groups for which data needs to be collected.

A variety of monitoring and evaluation techniques may be used – a key role for the Senior Management Team and Learning Support Unit Manager. It is important that monitoring and evaluation are seen as part of the LEA monitoring programme – to avoid duplication and prevent it becoming burdensome on schools.

Department for Education and Skills Support

A national evaluation consortium has been developing a co-ordinated framework for local evaluation. Key targets are around attainment, attendance and exclusion.

In EiC areas, the local plan sets out the key objectives and targets agreed by the Partnership. The plan also sets out details of the data schools are to provide to the Partnership on performance. The Department for Education and Skills will be using this evidence to monitor and evaluate each Partnership.

HMI Monitoring

In ‘New Developments in the Secondary Curriculum’ published by Ofsted, Section 1.2 is devoted to the evaluation of Learning Support Units. The key points are:

- Teaching must meet the identified needs of the pupils.
- Staff must provide pupils with strategies that work in practice.
- Target setting must be realistic and clear to pupils.
- There must be good quality links with parents, other agencies and education providers.
- The Learning Support Unit’s assessment and record keeping must be effective.
- The school’s assessment of the impact of the Learning Support Unit will be considered.
- The re-integration process and support that pupils receive must be sound.
- The behaviour, attitudes and progress of pupils who have returned to ordinary lessons from the Learning Support Unit will be taken into account.
Ofsted’s work focused on EiC is part of a major inspection exercise called Inspection of Special National Programmes. This has been the major source of a publication and provision for gifted and talented children. A publication from the same exercise with findings about Learning Support Units is imminent.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is undertaking a study of Learning Support Units in selected Partnerships between Autumn 2001 and Summer 2003, in partnership with the London School of Economics and the Institute for Fiscal Studies. This is part of its evaluation of EiC, sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills (Department for Education and Skills).

The study will focus on the impact of Learning Support Units in terms of improvements in behaviour, attendance, attainment and achievement and attitudes to learning. As well as outcomes and effects, the study will include evaluation of the processes and components of Learning Support Units in order to identify key factors in their success. The in-depth study will include detailed case studies in a range of Partnerships with different models of provision.

**Good Practice at Partnership Level**

Schools have found the following useful:

- Termly reports by the Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator or Behavioural Support Team member on their visits to schools and activities undertaken, including:
  - Leadership and management
  - Outreach support – networking/forums/links with other agencies/training
  - Policy and strategy
  - People management
  - Resources
  - Process
  - Student satisfaction
  - Impact on targets e.g. attainment, attendance, exclusions, reducing the number of behaviour incidents
  - Areas for development and priorities
  - Re-integration of pupils into other schools

- Many EiC Partnerships have worked closely with advisory and Link Inspectors in the monitoring and evaluation process. Examples range from routine termly visits to a full evaluation of individual strands.

- Some EiC Partnerships have established a data/evaluation group specifically to look at data coming from schools and identifying trends.

- EiC Partnership meetings show evidence of reports submitted and the progress made. Many have presentations by Learning Support Unit Strand Leaders and Learning Support Unit Managers so the Board can look first-hand at what the issues are.

- Some EiC Partnerships (Manchester for example), have a lead Headteacher for the Strand who accompanies the EiC Co-ordinator on annual visits to schools as part of the monitoring process.

- Delivery/implementation plans that schools have produced are an excellent monitoring tool for the EiC Partnership Board and the Learning Support Unit Co-ordinator.

- EiC Strand Co-ordinators have developed a range of documentation requesting both quantitative and qualitative information from schools.

- Some EiC Partnerships have commissioned outside consultants to undertake reviews and evaluations.

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/LSU](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/LSU)
Good Practice at School level

At the beginning of the programme schools need to specify the data that will be needed and the criteria used for monitoring and evaluation so that this information can be used to form the recording framework. A clear referral process, criteria for selection and a common understanding of the role of the Learning Support Unit are good starting points for evaluation. Those Learning Support Units that serve more than one school will need to ensure that the referring schools have a consistent approach to gathering information on pupils’ progress.

Data that could be used for evaluation includes:

- Number of pupils supported
- Attendance patterns (either of individuals or groups)
- Punctuality (either of individuals or groups)
- Behaviour in class and around the school. It is important to identify specific behaviour as this will be easier to monitor and show progress. This could also include data on the number of pupils in the ‘time-out room’ or who have been referred to the Senior Management Duty Team.
- Changes in motivation and self-esteem
- Changes in attitude
- Attainment of individuals and groups of pupils
- Access to a range of additional qualifications and links with other providers such as colleges
- Relationships with peers and others
- Work rate and completion of work
- Progress against individual targets set in action plan
- Level of re-integration back into class and other schools
- Level of engagement with the Learning Support Unit
- Attendance at extra curricular activities, clubs, drop-in groups
- Pupil, parent and staff perceptions
- Case studies
- Numbers and trends of permanent and fixed-term exclusions

Evidence of progress, success and innovation needs to be communicated both inside and outside school. All staff need to be aware of individual pupils’ achievements and the range of activities offered to ensure that the Learning Support Unit is not isolated or seen as a ‘sin bin’ but a positive influence on behaviour.

Good Idea

- Leeds EiC have developed an EiC electronic database for the collection of information on Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units and Gifted and Talented pupils. The questionnaire used in this survey might be helpful in establishing a framework for monitoring both at partnership and school level.

- Nottingham City has produced a monitoring and evaluation strategy document covering Learning Mentors, Learning Support Units and Gifted and Talented Strands for schools.

- South Camden Community School have developed a good range of data in graph form about pupils and ethnicity in the Learning Support Unit.
Working with Families and Carers

Staff in Learning Support Units should be in regular contact with families and carers. Parents may perceive the Learning Support Unit as being far more approachable and easier to access than mainstream school; and in many cases they report being given more positive feedback about their child than if they were in mainstream classes.

Learning Support Units and the Learning Mentor team often work closely together with the Head of Year, Form Tutors and the Education Welfare Officer on home visiting and links with families, actively involving parents in a variety of ways.

There needs to be a school policy relating to families, carers and home visits, which incorporates the work of the Learning Support Unit and communication within school and outside with agencies, support staff and families. Parents and carers need to understand the role of the Learning Support Unit, to be involved with the initial placement and to recognise their part in their child’s programme, agreeing rewards and sanctions for their child. Access to support and guidance is crucial for them, particularly if their child has recently transferred or is moving on to another provision.

Guidance on home visits is useful in order to ensure consistency of approach when working with families.

- Parents visiting the Learning Support Unit to work with their child.
- At the beginning of the programme, signing a contract/commitment highlighting everyone’s responsibilities
- Parents requesting that their children be placed in the Learning Support Unit as an intervention strategy to deal with problems
- Parent and carer support groups and links with family resource centres, along with courses for parents
- Termly newsletters sent to parents
- Units supporting parents in choosing a new school

Specifically:

- Parents who hitherto felt alienated by school and were hostile have been won over by the involvement of Learning Support Unit staff and Learning Mentors. (Eltham Hill School in Greenwich)
- Parents are invited to help with their children or a group of children, particularly on computers and drama. (Chaucer School in Sheffield)
- Taking parents to see their child in their alternative placements. (Knowsley)

Working with Families and Carers – Good Practice

- Parents are involved in all stages of support and invited to help plan Individual Educational Plans/Personal Support Plans. Each day that a pupil attains a target a letter of congratulations is sent home.
- Daily communication between staff and parents through log books, with parents commenting in the log book.
What do pupils think? (replies to the questionnaire)

1. Do you feel that Learning Support Units have been useful for you?
   - Yes, I have got higher levels in some subjects.
   - Yes, very much, it has helped a lot with my behaviour and work.
   - Helped me to get back into school and like the work.
   - Yes, it is stopping me from bunking lessons.
   - Yes because you don’t have to do everything they do in school.
   - Yes, because I don’t get chucked out of my classes.
   - Yes, because my attitude has got better.
   - Yes it makes me feel better – I look forward to it.
   - Yes, my coursework is all up to date.
     I also gained help and understanding, which I wasn’t getting in my lessons.
   - It keeps me away from trouble.
   - The work is explained in more depth.
     The teachers understand us more than the school teachers.
   - They are helping us by giving facts about truanting and drugs.
   - I have improved in all my subjects.
   - Made me concentrate – there’s not a lot of kids in the class.
   - I go there when I have trouble in school.
   - I also had people who typed my work as I wrote it with my hand.
   - Dropping certain subjects.
   - I am better behaved in class. I feel that my focus on work has improved – I am being good.

2. What do you feel has worked well?
   - I got help.
   - It makes me feel important because I was chosen. I think people notice me more now.
   - It’s fun – they help you and make you laugh.
   - place to calm down and express my feelings freely without being shy.
   - I have increased my levels because I am getting more attention.
   - Talking to the Mentors – and the group work.
   - Youth awards, organising games, art work and computers.
   - One-to-one sessions – I work better in the calm atmosphere of the Learning Support Unit.
   - It keeps me away from trouble.
   - The work is explained in more depth.
     The teachers understand us more than the school teachers.
   - They are helping us by giving facts about truanting and drugs.
   - I have improved in all my subjects.
   - Made me concentrate – there’s not a lot of kids in the class.
   - I go there when I have trouble in school.
   - I also had people who typed my work as I wrote it with my hand.
   - Dropping certain subjects.
   - I am better behaved in class. I feel that my focus on work has improved – I am being good.

3. How has mentoring helped with your studies?
   - I can understand more because they explain it to me.
   - Having regular chats helps me to stay calm and understand what I’ve got to do to improve my work.
   - Gave me higher levels, more confidence on the computer, learned computer skills.
   - I concentrate better – it has got me doing more work and helped me to be in school more.
   - Mentoring has built my courage up to do more things and helped me because he listens to me.
   - Helped me to learn new things, improved my maths and confidence and helped me control my anger.
   - Has made me more motivated – it’s getting me to lessons more often.
I am doing much better in school in my lessons and sometimes I look forward to going to lessons.

The project motivates me to work harder in school, so I can come on Friday.

I’m learning to read and I read every day with Tracy.

It has made me gain better grades in my coursework and the standard of my writing has increased.

4. How has it helped you as a person?

I want to keep coming on Mondays. It makes me feel happy because I feel braver.

I don’t get in trouble when I go up and it gives me a chance to get out of class.

Become more brainier – I feel better with myself, calming my temper and controlling my anger.

I feel happier at school – it’s helped me understand my behaviour as a person and it allows me some time for myself.

I am learning more about life – it’s made me more patient.

It’s just a cool break from school.

It has helped my attitude towards teachers and the people around me.

It has helped me get higher self-esteem as a person and helped me realise that I can do everything if I try.

I think I’ve learned to become a bit more organised and efficient.

I am more motivated to work and I have more self– confidence as a person.

It has helped me mature – I’m not silly anymore. I don’t shout as much to the teachers – it’s helped me to stop cussing.

5. Is there anything that you feel has not worked well?

I think that the teacher in the classroom don’t know how much I tried and how much I’ve achieved my targets.

Not wearing my hat.

The teacher does not let me do what I want to.

I don’t get to go as much as I would like.

I can still do better with my behaviour.

6. What do your parents/family/carers think of Learning Mentors/Learning Support Units?

My mother agrees to me coming and is very proud with my levels.

It’s better than being off school – they think it is the best thing for me.

They think it’s right so that in the future I’ll attend more often and be aware of traps I could fall into.

They think it’s better for me because I’ve stopped bunking.

At first my parents did not want me go to the project, but they are OK now. My mum felt I needed help. She said it’s better for me than going to school.

My dad likes to visit and takes us fishing sometimes.

My mum thinks it’s brilliant because it has really helped with my schoolwork.

7. Would you recommend having a Learning Mentor/Learning Support Unit to other students?

Yes I would, it is brilliant. I am very pleased.

It depends on who it is.

People who are truanting lessons, need help on drugs.
- Yes, people in need or in trouble in school.
- I would recommend it to people who find it hard in lessons.
- If you don’t like school.
- Yes, you can earn more credits and rewards.

8. Would you find it useful to do a project, for example developing a video or an information pack, to explain what mentoring means to other people?
- Yes because I think that people think it is just for people who can’t read or write.
- No I think that they should come up here and find out for themselves.
- Yes I would find making an information pack useful, because there is so much to share with others about the Learning Support Unit. It is helpful in many ways.
Case Study – 1

David is the oldest (at 13) of a family of seven children. Both he and his sister (Y7) have a lot of responsibility in the home, and the whole family is on the central At Risk register. David has always attended well here – much better than his primary school. Currently, he is achieving 99% attendance. His problems are in relationships with his peers. He also has considerable learning difficulties and was admitted to the Learning Support Unit for long-term support, having been here for a three-day assessment in November.

Prior to David coming full-time to the Learning Support Unit, he was constantly being sent out, usually at the beginning of lessons. Many of his problems were caused by using abusive language to his peers, which also led to acts of aggression, either by David or directed at him. He received 12 Red Cards in six weeks and was seriously disrupting the rest of his class.

Since coming into the Learning Support Unit he has coped far better with his peers and has really benefited from the work done on anger management. David is now being re-integrated into approximately 40% of his lessons, supported by the Learning Mentor. His literacy and numeracy skills are improving – he has even had the confidence to volunteer to read out loud in a recent lesson.

Chaucer School, Sheffield
Silvia is a Year 10 student who recently joined the school. Previously she had attended a school where she had many problems. Her attendance had been very poor and her behaviour and attitude towards members of staff was totally unacceptable. She had been excluded from school on a number of occasions and was close to permanent exclusion.

Her mother contacted this school with a view to allowing Silvia to make a new start. An initial meeting was held involving Silvia, her mother, the Education Welfare Officer, Headteacher and Head Of Year. At a follow-up meeting an educational package was discussed and agreed.

Silvia commenced her education at our school following the agreed programme of work. In the first couple of days she was assessed by SENCO in order to highlight any learning difficulties that may be contributing to her problems. None were found. She followed the agreed programme for the first four weeks but her attendance was only 80% during this time. There was also some truancy from school during this period.

Silvia was slowly integrated into mainstream lessons and met the agreed target of full integration. She had not studied German before and would find it difficult to catch up missed work so it was decided that during the two lessons of German Silvia would continue to attend the Support Centre and complete extra work on Maths & Science.

Silvia has also been working with one of the Mentors since starting at the school and has built up good relationships both with the Mentor and with all other Support Centre staff. There have only been slight signs of Silvia’s previous poor behaviour. Classroom observation has shown no major problems but minor incidents have occurred with one or two members of staff. Silvia is making slow but sure progress – her punctuality in the mornings has been the main problem over the last few weeks.

A review meeting was held to discuss Silvia’s progress and decide whether a Pastoral Support Plan was appropriate. It was agreed that Silvia had made sufficient progress and therefore a PSP was not needed at this time. Silvia will continue to receive support in the future, having regular mentoring sessions. She will also continue working in the Support Centre for two periods each week. We believe that in her case having access to the Support Centre and Mentors and being integrated slowly into mainstream has allowed her to cope more easily. Her aggressive attitude to staff and poor behaviour have been moderated through a system of support.

Swinton Comprehensive School, Rotherham
**Case Study – 3**

In her primary report there were concerns regarding Tracy’s attitude to learning and education in general. She sometimes absconded and often became challenging if confronted with the consequences of her actions. During classroom observation the Mentors and Head of Year were often concerned by Tracy’s obvious disaffection. She returned from holidays with this intensified and didn’t respond well to teacher criticisms on the whole.

Tracy has improved considerably; she can now cope with criticism without a negative response. There has been a definite and more positive shift in friendships and groups in her class; we have witnessed her actually withdrawing from the central and difficult group of students in the class. There has been a significant difference in the way she copes on return from holidays; she is responsive now and sometimes enthusiastic about school.

Tracy has managed her learning in the Centre well and on the whole has responded to the independent study ethos, which provoked the realisation the she actually likes learning, primarily about history. There was a considerable amount of understanding and exploration of her childhood during the history project about Victorian childhood and toys. This has helped her in general reflection skills and abilities. Group work has benefited Tracy as she has been able to express her opinion constructively and understand others’ differing opinions. Overall this student has learned to be more positive about education and her school career.

*Charles Edward Brooke School, Lambeth*

**Case Study – 4**

Attendance in school for this pupil stopped after term one of Y10. She was a victim of sexual abuse when she was eight and lacked self-esteem and self-confidence, unable to cope with working in normal classes or deal with crowds. It was noticed that she was becoming increasingly detached from examination courses.

To counter this, a timetable in the Learning Support Unit was negotiated, which included regular tutorial sessions encouraging self-assessment and target setting. The time she spent in the Unit was gradually increased and a limited examination course negotiated. Gradually, time spent in some classes was introduced through the tutorials.

Outcomes are that she is more prepared to negotiate work on her own behalf with individual teachers and has agreed examination entry for six GCSE subjects. Mock examination results indicate the likely outcome from GCSE exams to be in the A-C range of passes. Her attendance rate has reached 98%, with no unauthorised absence – she is currently attending school for the full school day and intending to follow Advanced GNVQ and A level courses in sixth form.

*Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich*
Ideas to improve the initiative further

These are some of the many comments from the questionnaires and visits.

**School-based ideas**

- Training on a National basis for Learning Support Unit staff
- More accreditation with the Learning Support Unit
- Raising awareness of the role of the Learning Support Unit and its place in school
- Increase in arts, cookery, sport and community awareness projects
- Increase use of visitors and speakers
- Improved whole school competence through training of mainstream staff in dealing with challenging pupils in the classroom
- Disapplication from the National Curriculum and the use of a more multi-sensory approach using recording, video/audio tape and ICT support
- A starter pack for Learning Support Unit staff with practical ideas and record-keeping information
- Mental health surgery to take place in Learning Support Unit on a regular basis
- Induction programme for new staff on Learning Support Units
- Learning Support Unit Managers should have control over their own budgets
- Buddy system for Learning Support Unit pupils and mainstream pupils
- Change the name from 'Unit'. What student wants to be referred to a 'Unit'?
- More support (financial or otherwise) from local employers who offer work placements to students
- Improving the diet of Learning Support Unit pupils by providing food
- Development of handbooks on different curriculum ideas, source book of free curriculum materials
- Greater involvement of primary pupils in the transfer to secondary schools and using the Learning Support Unit as a base

**Ideas on management of the initiative**

- Better leadership and direction – a co-ordinator might help this
- Stronger links between Learning Support Unit and PRUs
- A national learning support unit network with access to contact details
- Regular dissemination meetings
- Improved liaison between all Learning Support Units to avoid re-inventing the wheel
- Train and nurture teachers/Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to consider working in Learning Support Units
- More seminars and conferences and training on a national basis
Useful publications
These have been recommended by Learning Support Unit managers and Learning Mentors

**Anger Management**
A Solution Focused Approach to Anger Management with Children – B Stringer & M Mall
Break it up – Arnold P Goldstein
Crucial Skills – Penny Johnson & Tina Rae – Lucky Duck Publishing
Holding Back – Bernard Allen
Exercising Self Control – Rob Long

**Attendance**
Tools for improving attendance – Sotiris Soteriades et al
If it makes me life easier….to write a policy on Attendance – Susan Hallam and Caroline Roaf – Lucky Duck Publishing

**Attention Deficit Disorder**
Attention Deficit Disorder: Practical Activities in Schools – Tony Attwood – Firs & Best
The ADD Hyperactivity Workbook for parents, teacher and kids – Harvey C Parker – Specialty Press Inc

**Behaviour**
Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – Peter Galvin, A Miller, J Nash
Behaviour Management – a whole school approach – Bill Rogers
Managing Behaviour – Positive Correction – Bill Rogers
Managing Behaviour – Repair and Rebuild – Bill Rogers
Managing Behaviour – Consequences – Bill Rogers
Managing Behaviour – Prevention – Bill Rogers
Behaviour Checklist for the Primary School – Dr E McNamara
Teaching Social Behaviour – David Warden and Donald Christ
What else can I do with you? – Fiona Wallace
If it makes my life easier….to write a policy on Behaviour – Bernard Allen
Effective learning through better classroom behaviour – Philip Freeman – The Chalkface Project
Raising Behaviour – a school view – Kay Kinder et al – NFER
Stop & Think – empowering students to manage behaviour – Robb Kerr
Pastoral Management Series nos 1-6 – Dr Eddie McNamara
Magic Moments – Rob Long & Dave Vizard
Motivational Interviewing – Dr Eddie McNamara – Incentive Plus
Improving behaviour in and out of the classroom – Anthony Grunwell and Sue Pur – The Chalkface Project
Infant Classroom Behaviour – Sue Roffey – NASEN
Peers Perspective on Behaviour: A Practical Guide to Effective Interventions for Teachers – Harry Ayers, Don Clarke and Anne Murray – David Fulton
The Right Direction – Geoff Moss
Label with Care – Teresa Bliss
Punishment the milder the better – Barbara Maines, George Robinson
Anti-Social Behaviour – Jo Douglas – NFER
Stop & Think – empowering students to manage behaviour – Robb Kerr

**Bereavement**
Death & Bereavement in schools – Margaret Rogers et al
When someone Dies – Dwaine Steffes – Cruse
Contemporary Adolescence – Patrick C L Heaven – Cruse
My mother died – Susan Wallbank – Cruse
Giving Sorrow Words – Steven Killick & Stuart Lindern

**Bullying**
Bullying – A practical guide to coping for schools – Michele Elliott
Name-Calling – making a difference – Birmingham City Council Education
Hands on Bullying – Jeremy Hands – Incentive Plus
Zero tolerance to bullying – Chris Ball and Mary Hartley – The Chalkface Project Sticks and Stones
How to Stop Bullying – a training guide – Michele Elliot & Jane Kilpatrick
Preventing Bullying – a parent’s guide – Amanda Ross
If it makes my life easier….to write a policy on Bullying – Barbara Maines & George Robinson
Stop the Bully Now! – Keely Wilson
Bully Free Classroom – Allen L Bean – Free Spirit Publishing
Michael’s Being Bullied, The No Blame Approach – Lucky Duck Publishing
No Bullying Starts Today – George Robinson, Jane Sleight, Barbara Maines

**Child Protection**
It make my life easier….to write a policy on child protection – Gill Evans
Keep them safe! – Michele Elliott

**Circle Time**
Personal and social education for primary schools through circle time – Mollie Curry and Carolyn Bromfield – NASEN
Picture This – Guided Imagery For Circle Time – Murray White
Magic Circles – Murray White
Six Years of Circle Time – Lucky Duck Publishing
Personal and Social Education for Primary Schools through Circle Time – Mollie Curry and Carolyn Bromfield – NASEN
Circle Time Resources – Lucky Duck Publishing
Quality Circle Time – Jenny Moseley – LDA
Circle Time for the very young – Margaret Collins
Counselling
Facing Lions – Rob Long
Supporting Troubled Children – Rob Long

Drugs
Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco – Roger Morgan & Steph Yates – The Chalkface Project

Emotions
Emotional Release for Children – Mark Pearson & Patricia Nolan
From Surviving to Thriving – Andrew Fuller
Feelings are Facts – Terri Akin, David Cowan et al
Feelings about Friends – Linda Schwartz & Beverly Armstrong
Supporting Pupils with Emotional Difficulties – Rob Long & Jonathan Fogell
EQ in School Counselling – Carolyn Sheldon
Dealing with Feelings – Tina Rae
Draw On your Emotions – Margot Sutherland – Winslow
Beating the Blues – a handbook for Teenagers, Parents and Teachers – Rob Long
Understanding and supporting depressed children and young people – Rob Long – NASEN

Exclusion
An alternative to exclusion – Philip Freeman – The Chalkface Project
How to Manager Your Inclusive Classroom – Cynthia Holzschuher

Family/Parenting
Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families
Parenting Skills – Jenny Patrick & Angela Odwin – The Chalkface Project
Family Snapshot – Simon Firth
Even Better Parenting – Barbara Maines & George Robinson

Group Work
The Essential Groupworker – Mark Doel and Catherine Sawd – Jessica Kingsley

Learning
English Puzzles 2 – D Case – Heinemann
Managing Learning – Harry Owen & P Freeman – The Chalkface Project
Study Skills for Low Attainers at KS4 – Colin Muir – The Chalkface Project

Managing Homework
Managing Coursework – Kim Little & Mary Hartley
Managing Exam Techniques – Jan McCabe & Chris Lightfoot
Reversing Lower Attainment – Dian Montgomery – David Fulton Publishers
Presentation Skills for GCSE Coursework – Mark Turner, Susan Purkis
Thinking Skills – Rob Redfern, Steve Eddie

Mental Health
Young Minds – Jessica Kingsley
Managing Teacher Stress – William A Rogers
Learning to wave: everyday guidelines to stress management – Rob Long – NASEN
Fighting Invisible Tigers – Connie C Schmitz
Student Stress Management – David Horner & Steve Eddy

Mentoring
The Mentoring Manual – Mike Whittaker & Ann Cartwright – Gower
Good practice guidelines for Learning Mentors
Department for Education and Skills

Post 16
Honest Brokers – NFER
Staying On – Wendy Keys et al – NFER

Self-Esteem
Exploring Body Images and Issues – Julie Russell & Alison Rogers – The Chalkface Project
Developing Self-Esteem through Positive Entrapment – Rob Long – NASEN
Developing Health Self-Esteem in Adolescents – Mary Karsten
Stick up for yourself – G Kaufman & L Raphael
Positive People – Claire Moore, Tina Rae
Confidence, Assertiveness, Self-Esteem – Tina Rae
Enhancing Self-Esteem in the Classroom – D Lawrence – Paul Chapman Publishing
Positive People – Claire More, Tina Rae

Teenagers
Making Sense of Teenagers – Rob Long

Training
Robert Powell Training Videos
Troubleshooting for Trainers – Lucy Seifert and Mary Stacey – Gower
75 Ways to Liven up your Training – Martin Orridge – Gower
Constructive Tutor Time Activities – Phil Freeman – the Chalkface Project
INSET: Raising Achievement – Neil Denby & Steve Eddy
INSET: Positive Behaviour Management – Dale Robinson and Tim Bax

**Target Setting**
Setting targets and monitoring progress – Simon Thorpe et al – The Chalkface Project

**Transition**
Primary to Secondary Transition – Geraldine Johnson – The Chalkface Project
Bridging the Gap? – Sandi Schagen & David Kerr – NFER
The Big School – Moving on from Junior to Secondary School – Barbara Maines and George Robinson

**Others**
The do’s and don’ts of Parent involvement – Catherine McLaughlin – Incentive Plus
Challenges and Choices – Nancy Ullinskey – Incentive Plus
Assessment – Making a Difference – Dylan William – Birmingham City Council Education
Problem Solving – Mandy Chappell & Susan Purkis – The Chalkface Project
Peer tutoring skills for students – Phil Freeman & Rob Taylor – The Chalkface Project
Welcoming Newcomers – John Bradley et al – The Chalkface Project
Solution Talk – Ben Furman – BT Press
A Brief Guide to Therapy – Brian Cade – BT Press
Solution focused thinking in Schools – John Rhodes – BT Press
Problem to Solution – Evan George – BT Publishers
From thoughts to obsessions – Per Hove Thomsen – Jessica Kingsley
Asperger’s Syndrome – Tony Attwood – Jessica Kingsley
Challenging Confrontation: Information and Techniques for Schools – Rob Long – NASEN
Friendships – Rob Long – NASEN
Surviving your Adolescents – Thomas W Phetan – Login Publishers
Caring and Capable Kids – Linda K Williams, Dianne Schilling & Susanne Palomares – Innerchoice Publishing
The Laughing Classroom – Diane Loomans and Karen Kolber
Learning Support Unit’s: A practical guide to setting up and developing in-school provision – Dreyfus Training and development Company
Lost And Found: Effective Reintegration Programmes for Excluded Pupils – Donald Fisher – NFER

It make my life easier.to write a policy on special needs – Jean Gross
The Me I’m Learning To Be – Imogen Forte – Incentive Publications
I’m me and you are you – looking at the difference – ANC Black London
Brook Advisor Service – Being Friends, Being Angry, Being Sad
Young Citizen – Growing Up – Wayland Publisher
Talking is for kids – Betty K Rudd
Not me miss! The truth about children who lie – Rob Long
All about me – Susanna Palomares
Understanding Me – Dianne Schilling, Gary Dunn
Learning to Support – Moira Challen, Karen Majors
Welcoming Newcomers – John Bradley et al
Circles of Friends – Colin Newton, Derek Wilson
Talking Back – Pupils View on Disaffection – Kay Kinder, Alison Wakefield, Anne Wilkin – NFER
With All Respect – Reviewing Disaffection Strategies – Kay Kinder, Anne Wilkin – NFER
Three to Remember – strategies for disaffected pupils – Kay Kinder, John Harland, Anne Wilkin, Alison Wakefield – NFER
Playtimes and Playgrounds – Angela White, Jane Wilkinson – Lucky Duck
Lets Mediate – Hilary Stacey, Pat Robinson – Lucky Duck
Manners Please – Greta Barclay Lipson
Learning Support Unit’s: A practical guide to setting up and developing in-school provision – Dreyfus Training and development Company
Lost And Found: Effective Reintegration Programmes for Excluded Pupils – Donald Fisher – NFER

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## Schools Visited

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Examples
Details of the examples found throughout this document can be found on our website at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/LSU

Example 1 – copy of inter-agency protocol copies of research questionnaires.

Example 2 – has good examples of detailed Delivery Plans of Learning Support Units’ Social Inclusion Policy from Holland Park, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster, Leytonstone, Waltham Forest, Maltby Comprehensive – Rotherham, Quintin Kynaston in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster, Fulham Cross in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Example 3 – has diagrams showing routes of communication and referrals from Foxhill Primary School – Sheffield, Burnage High School – Manchester.

Example 4 – Shows 2 examples of social inclusion structures – Halloway Road School – Islington and the Islington Behaviour Support Service Whole School View by Carol Jones.

Example 5 – Maltby Comprehensive School Learning Support Unit – Rotherham has outlined the factors that have contributed to its success in a short summary which also includes a plan of the Learning Support Unit.

Example 6 – gives a succinct example of a case study – Thomas Tallis School – Greenwich.

Example 7 – has examples of letters home explaining to parents about the Learning Support Units.

Example 8 – Learning Support Unit OFSTED Guidance.


Example 10 – has an example of a useful Learning Support Unit Operations Statement from Oaklands School – Tower Hamlets.

Example 11 – has a selection of self-assessment forms used by Chaucer School – Sheffield and Rushcroft School – Waltham Forest.

Example 12 – goes through some strategies used in the Headway Learning Support Unit, Havistock School – Camden around brief therapy, anger management, focus and listening skills, challenging pupils, role play and drama. Creative art work and a range of behaviour problems.

Example 13 – has examples of contracts from Wentworth High School – Barnsley, Joseph Eastham High School – Salford and Deptford Green School – Lewisham.

Example 14 – outlines a social inclusion pupil support referral procedure from Ernest Bevin College – Wandsworth, Oaklands School – Tower Hamlets, Yewlands School – Sheffield and Fox Hill Primary School – Sheffield.

Example 15 – contains a social inclusion pupil support form – Knowsley, student support team/Connexions referral form – Yewlands School – Sheffield. Negotiated transfer form for pupils transferring schools who are experiencing difficulties and exclusion – Liverpool.

Example 16 – contains a behaviour profile form and recording sheets from Holte School – Birmingham, staff questionnaire – Rushcroft School – Waltham forest, secondary assessment profile and observation sheets – Sedgehill School – Lewisham, record of behaviour, teacher assessment form (Key Stage 3) Brookway High School – Manchester.


Example 20 – Contains useful pupil file checklists to ensure that filing systems and files contain the correct information – Sheffield.

Example 21 – has an example from Hammersmith and Fulham of a useful checklist for link inspectors in monitoring Learning Mentors and Learning Support Units.

Example 22 – has an example of a Learning Mentor Delivery Plan which can be adapted for Learning Support Units.

Example 23 – Show two examples of monitoring forms from Sheffield and Southwark.

Example 24 – Contains guidance/evaluation framework for Learning Support Units for primary schools.

Example 25 – contains a range if useful staff/pupil perception questionnaires of the provision for both primary and secondary. Examples are from Sheffield, Haverstock School – Camden and Rushcroft School – Waltham Forest.
Useful documentation to support all areas discussed in this good practice guide is on the Department for Education and Skills website. Most is downloadable and can be customised to individual requirements.

Visit the website at: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/excellence/policies/LSU

This good practice guide has been researched and produced by Anne Hayward Associates and edited by Val Foster.

12 new areas have been announced, subject to satisfactory plans. These are: Barnet, Bishop Auckland, Crewe, Derby, High Wycombe, Hillingdon, Lancaster, Milton Keynes, Norwich, Peterborough, Stockport and Wigan.

Excellence in Cities including Excellence Clusters now covers the following LEA areas:

- Barking and Dagenham
- Barnsley
- Batley
- Birmingham
- Blackburn
- Blackpool
- Bradford
- Brent
- Bristol
- Camden
- Corporation of London
- Coventry (Central)
- Croydon
- Dewsbury
- Doncaster
- Ealing
- East Lancashire
- Enfield
- Gateshead
- Greenwich
- Hackney
- Halton
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Haringey
- Hartlepool
- Hounslow
- Huddersfield
- Islington
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Kingston Upon Hull
- Knowsley
- Lambeth
- Leeds Leicester City
- Lewisham
- Liverpool
- Luton
- Manchester
- Newcastle Upon Tyne
- Newham
- North Tyneside
- City of Nottingham
- Oldham
- Portsmouth
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Rochdale
- Rotherham
- St Helens
- Salford
- Sandwell
- Sefton
- Sheffield
- Shepway
- Skelmersdale
- South Tyneside
- Stockton on Tees
- Stoke on Trent
- Sunderland
- Tameside
- Tilbury & Chadwell
- Tower Hamlets
- Walsall
- Waltham Forest
- Wandsworth
- West Cumbria
- Westminster
- Wirral
- Wolverhampton