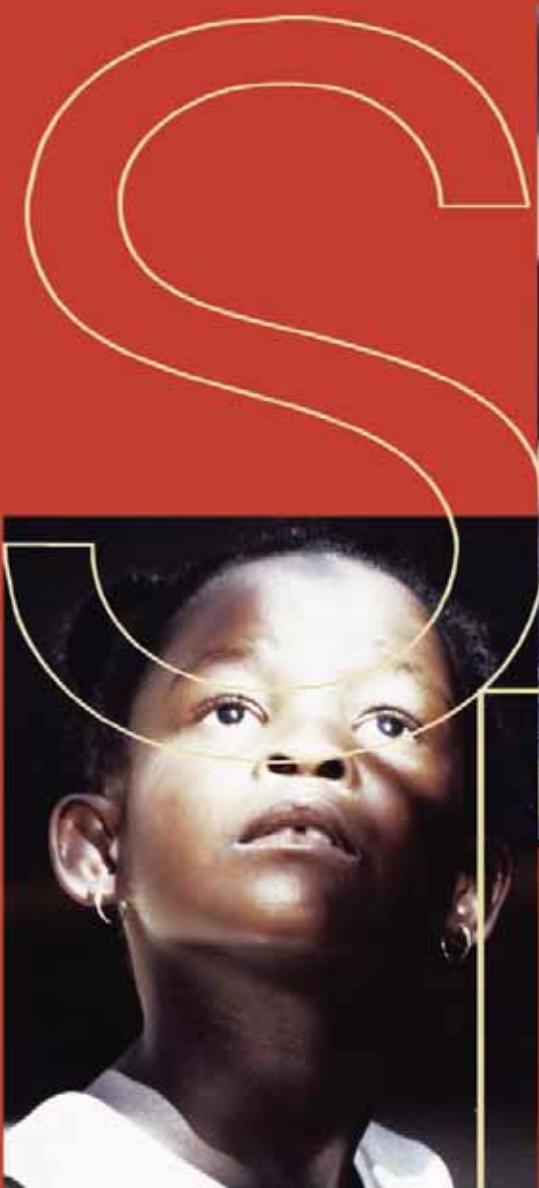


# Guidelines to Ensure Quality Education and Support in Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres



**education**

Department:  
Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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November 2007



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**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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# 1. Introduction

The inclusive education model depends strongly on resource centres to offer support to full service schools, but it is clear that special schools cannot be supportive unless the resource centres themselves function well.

This document has two aims:

1. To provide guidelines for special schools, which will ensure that they function well and offer appropriate, quality education to learners. This is the first step in developing special school resource centres.
2. To provide guidelines on the requirements for a special school resource centre.

Education White Paper 6 speaks of “The qualitative improvement of special schools for the learners that they serve and their phased conversion to special school resource centres that provide professional support to neighbouring schools and are integrated into district-based support teams.”

The support that the special school resource centres offer to mainstream and full service schools is a most important lever in establishing an inclusive education system. However, special schools themselves must be strengthened so that they offer quality education in good conditions to their own learners, before they can offer support to other schools.

Of particular concern are special schools built in rural areas and townships before 1990 (some are public schools on private

land). Also of concern are newly established schools that do not yet have staff establishments, and where proper hostel facilities are not provided.

These guidelines indicate what is expected of a special school. They will enable national and provincial departments of education to monitor and support special schools. The guidelines aim to strengthen special schools so that they can play a significant role in providing specialised knowledge, support, services and equipment to learners with high-level support needs.

The Department of Education must first ensure that a special school meets the standards described in these guidelines before the school can begin to function as a special school resource centre.

Special schools have a particular role to play in an inclusive education system. They must therefore operate in terms of the principles underpinning an inclusive education system:

- Promote full development, human potential, sense of dignity and self worth, and strengthen human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity (see UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, 2007)
- Promote the inclusion and participation of all learners in all

The guidelines aim to provide substance to the process of strengthening special schools so that they play a significant role in providing specialised knowledge, support, services and equipment to learners with high level support needs.

academic, social and sporting activities in the school.

- Involve parents and the community in the life and services of the school.
- Be cost-effective in the utilisation of human and material resources.
- Emphasise the support of learners in the classroom, rather than withdraw them for individual specialised interventions.
- Where withdrawal for specialised intervention is the best option, this must be done for therapeutic purposes in order to facilitate re-integration.
- Make specialised support available to all schools in a district in an effectively managed programme



# 2

## 2. Background

In 2007, 408 special schools across the country provided education to 91,280 learners identified with special needs. Typically, the best resourced special schools are in the urban areas. These schools also attract the best qualified specialists and have comparatively better material resources and assistive devices.

Historically, learners in the Special Needs sector were poorly provided for.

*The Report of the Human Rights Commission of 2004 revealed that learners in rural areas suffer the worst forms of exclusion. There are very few special schools in rural areas and none in many deep rural areas. Where they do exist, they operate in the most deplorable conditions, and they lack qualified staff and specialists.*

There are few special schools that offer appropriate, quality education and many learners never progress beyond Grade 1.

Some of the worst factors that prevent special schools from offering quality education and support are the following:

- Ownership of school buildings but not the land;
- Partial ownership of buildings;
- Partially qualified and partially skilled teachers;
- Inadequate staffing, especially non-teaching staff and care professionals in hostels
- Lack of learning and teaching support material and other material resources;
- Lack of assistive devices;
- Reliance on disability grants for payment of school fees by learners;
- Inadequate transport





# 3

## 3. Policy and Regulations

- 3.1 Special schools must adhere to all policy requirements and legislation under the National Education Policy Act (1995) and the South African Schools Act (1996). Policy and regulations under previous Acts do not apply.
- 3.2 White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), provides the policy framework for Inclusive Education.
- 3.3 Teaching and learning is determined by the (Revised) National Curriculum Statement (2005) and any adaptations which are appropriate to enable learners to access the curriculum.
- 3.4 Special schools must adhere to all policy and legislation relating to financial matters, including the recording of all donations to the school. Where appropriate, such schools may be considered “no fee schools”.
- 3.5 White Paper 6 must guide management, education and support in special schools.
- 3.6 All national and provincial requirements apply to special schools unless otherwise indicated.
- 3.7 School governing bodies must be elected in accordance with the relevant regulations.
- 3.8 In accordance with the Bill of Human Rights, no aspect of the provision of education, support and/or accommodation may impair the human dignity of learners at special schools.

# 4

## 4. Role of the Education Department

*4.1 The Department of Education at national, provincial and district levels has an obligation to monitor all special schools on a regular basis, and to provide the necessary support to protect the rights of the most vulnerable learners in the system.*

All aspects of schooling must be monitored, including management, curriculum, infrastructure and professional support. Special schools must not be seen as the sole responsibility of Inclusive Education officials.

4.2 The Department of Education must keep comprehensive records of all special schools.

4.3 When signing the annual progression and promotion schedules, the relevant district officials must ensure that all learners at special schools are benefiting educationally.

4.4 Provincial Departments of Education must develop District-based Support Teams to support the implementation of White Paper 6. As District-based Support Teams are introduced, districts must ensure that these teams are fully functional in accordance with the Framework for the Establishment of District-based Support Teams (July 2005). Staff at special school

resource centres will assist District-based Support Teams.

4.5 A key role of the District-based Support Team is to liaise with sister Government Departments, such as Health and Social Development, to provide support to schools through the services of health professionals.

4.6 Special school resource centres will operate under the auspices of the District-based Support Team as far as provision of support to other schools and learners is concerned. This liaison should be managed via a District-based Support Team management committee. Principals of all special school resource centres in the district must be represented on this committee. Their responsibility, inter alia, is to manage the balance between ensuring that quality teaching, learning and support takes place at their schools, whilst ensuring that staff at special school resource centres provide adequate support to the District-based Support Teams.

# 5

## 5. Criteria for Quality Education and Support in Special Schools

### 5.1 Admission of Learners

- 5.1.1 Every special school needs to give careful consideration to the special needs that it can effectively and efficiently cater for with the available material and human resources. As places in special schools are limited, a special school may not admit learners who need lower levels of support than the school is staffed and equipped for. Admission to a special school should be considered as a last option for a learner, where appropriate support is not available in the local school.
- 5.1.2 All schools should be shifting the parameters according to which learners are admitted; they should be towards accommodating those who need higher levels of support. In order to do this in a responsible way, targets need to be set for admission and exit of learners.
- 5.1.3 All Grade R classes should be inclusive and offer places to all learners, unless a learner needs specialised support from an early age. Where possible, Grade R learners should access additional support from staff at special schools.
- 5.1.4 Learners who meet the requirements for additional support have a choice as to whether they are ed-

ucated in a special school or a mainstream/full service school.

- i. A special school may admit only learners who have been assessed to be in need of high levels of support.
- ii. A special school may admit only learners who require support in the area of specialisation offered at the school.
- iii. The learners must have undergone a screening and assessment process using the National Strategy for Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support as the base-line tool, before being considered for placement.
- iv. All admissions must be ratified by the District-based Support Team.
- v. In cases of physical and sensory disability, a diagnostic assessment must be conducted by the relevant professionals. At the time of admission, the professionals must provide the school with the information necessary to ensure that the learner receives appropriate support.
- vi. No learner with very high needs may be refused admission on the basis of the severity of the learner's support needs.

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- vii. Priority of admission should be given to learners who need high levels of support, are out-of-school, and have not been able to gain access to any form of schooling.
- viii. Appropriateness of placement of learners should be reviewed annually, or at least every two years.
- ix. Ideally, a special school should accommodate a maximum of 300 learners on site.
- x. A decision to exempt a learner entirely, partially or conditionally from compulsory schooling should be approved by the Head of Department and such a learner should be placed on a register by the Department (SASA, Section 4 (1) and (2)). The Department must put in place measures for the monitoring of such learners in terms of their support and education. The exemption clause is not intended to be used by schools to exclude learners with disabilities. Only parents can request for their child to be exempted from compulsory school attendance.

## 5.2 Provision of quality Support

- 5.2.1 Schools should be organised around specialised support programmes that are available, rather than category of disability. Programmes will be structured around staffing (including psycho-social and health professionals), curriculum, physical infra-structure,

availability of assistive technology, training and qualifications of staff.

- 5.2.2 Each school will offer particular support programmes.

*Schools need to specialise in the kind of support they offer so as to become centres of excellence in a particular form of support and offer an outreach programme to schools where learners with similar needs are being educated.*

When a school offers support in a combination of the above areas, the curriculum must be suitably differentiated to ensure appropriate learning and development.

- 5.2.3 A school that indicates it offers a particular form and level of support must ensure that it is equipped in all respects to offer such support.

- 5.2.4 Support programmes should address the following barriers to learning:

- Severe learning difficulties
- Hearing
- Vision
- Mobility
- Language use and social communication
- Complex, multiple and pervasive disability
- Behaviour and psycho-social factors
- Social and economic neglect

### 5.3 Curriculum

- 5.3.1 The training and retention of staff with particular areas of expertise is critical to the delivery of the curriculum in an inclusive education system. Technological advances are such that these teachers will need training in the use of specialised equipment to support and educate learners.
- 5.3.2. The National Curriculum Statement is the norm for all schools, including special schools

*“The (Revised) National Curriculum Statement adopts an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. The special educational, social, emotional and physical needs of learners will be addressed in the design and development of appropriate Learning Programmes.” (Revised) National Curriculum Statement, Grades R to 9 Overview*

- 5.3.3 Development of learning programmes must be informed by the Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes. The guiding principle of curriculum delivery is high expectations. The Inclusive Learning Programmes must be guided by the learning outcomes and assessment guidelines.
- i. Learners must receive formal tuition each school day.
  - ii. Practical application and skills development must be linked to knowledge, theory and conceptual

development as contained in the National Curriculum Statement.

- iii. The focus of curriculum delivery should be on differentiation in terms of content and/or methodology, taking into consideration the learner’s individual learning needs.
- iv. Adaptation in teaching and assessment should take into consideration the identified areas of difficulty, particularly for learners with visual and hearing impairment.
- v. Individual support plans for learners should emphasise acquisition of learning strategies for cognitive development and academic success.
- vi. Literacy, especially reading, must be a key focus for all learners.
- vii. A school may not offer programmes outside of the National Curriculum Statement without the approval of the provincial Department of Education.

### 5.4 Assessment

The Assessment Policy Grade R to 9 and the Qualifications Framework for the National Senior Certificate apply in principle. The Head of Department may give approval for learners to spend longer than four years in a phase. However, advancement of learners through the grades should be the norm, and no learner should remain in the same grade throughout the learner’s school career.

- 5.4.1. All learners must be appropriately assessed for progression throughout the year.

- 5.4.2. Certification at least at Grade 9 level and, as far as possible, at Grade 12 level should form part of the curriculum package of all special schools.
- 5.4.3. The guidelines for access and support in assessment as used in the National Senior Certificate should guide all informal and formal assessment undertaken at a special school.

## 5.5 Learning and Teaching Support Material

The use of Learning and Teaching Support Material is key to offering quality teaching and learning and allowing the learners to take responsibility for their learning.

- 5.5.1. Appropriate learning and teaching support material must be provided for all learners in an appropriate format, for example in Braille, large print, electronic, etc.
- 5.5.2. The principle of one textbook per learning area or subject should be adhered to.
- 5.5.3. Where necessary, simplified versions and special editions of texts should be considered for curriculum differentiation.
- 5.5.4. Schools must keep a full and up-to-date inventory of all types of learning and teaching support material in the school.

## 5.6 Staff Supply and Qualifications

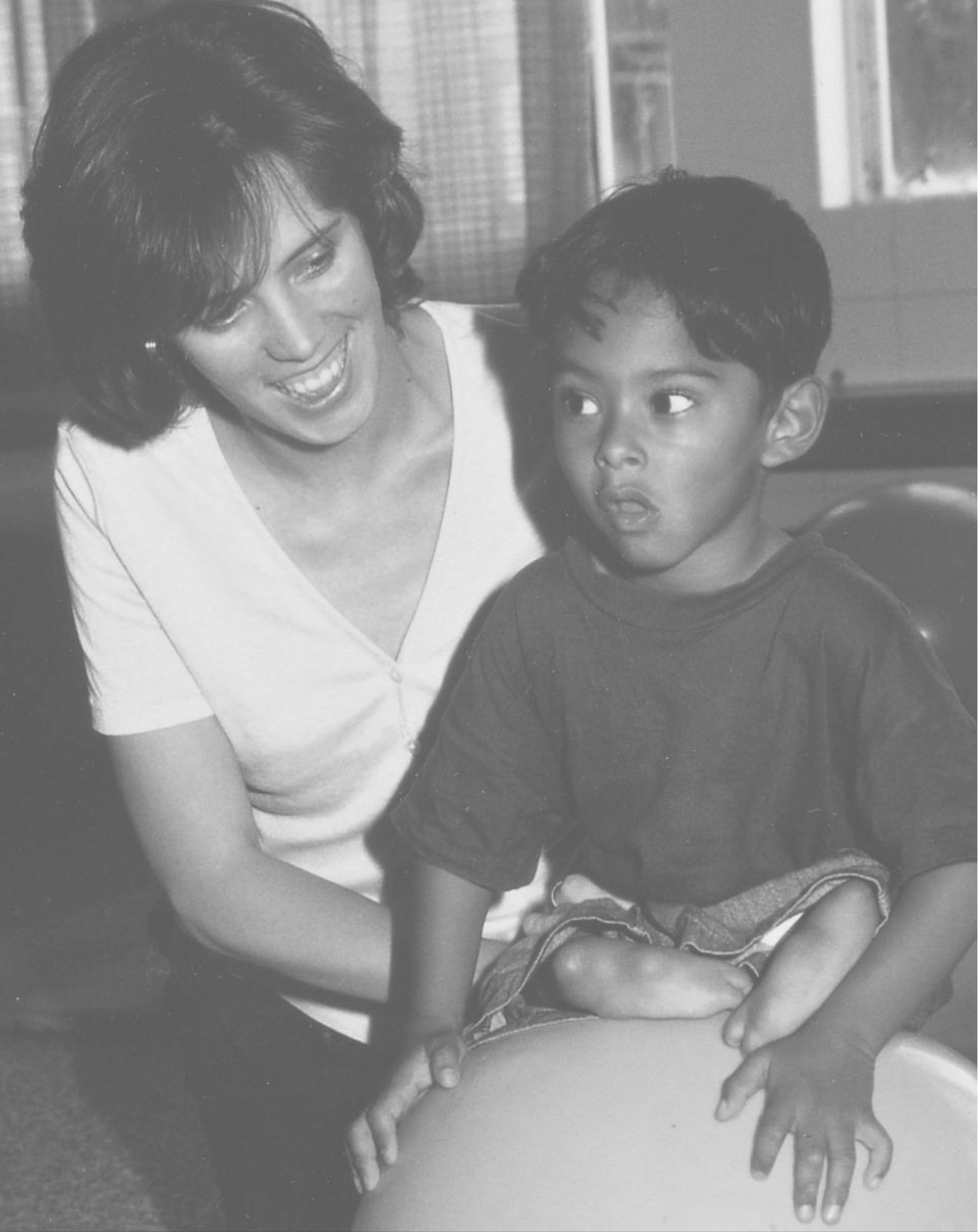
Special schools require both professional teaching and professional support staff, as well as non-professional staff. All staff must be thoroughly screened to ensure suitability for work with children with special needs.

Special schools require both professional teaching and professional support staff, as well as non-professional staff. All staff must be thoroughly screened to ensure suitability for work with children educated at special schools.

### 5.6.1 Professional Teaching Staff

- i. All teaching staff should be qualified at least with a first degree or a diploma which includes training on special needs or inclusive education. Teachers who are appointed to the school without a formal qualification in special needs or inclusive education must undertake such training with immediate effect.
- ii. All teaching staff should have had training in the development of Inclusive Learning Programmes.
- iii. All teaching staff must engage in ongoing professional development related to the needs of the learners.
- iv. All teaching staff must be competent in the method of communication used by the learners in the school. Where sign language is used, teachers must be competent in academic sign language.





- v. Teaching staff may include teachers, Learning Support teachers/coordinators, Teaching Assistants.
- vi. The teacher:learner ratio – determined by the Department of Education in accordance with the level of support required by the learners – must be adhered to.

### 5.6.2 Professional Specialist Support Staff

- i. Professional Specialist Support Staff refers to those who address the provision of health, therapeutic, psychological and social support to enhance learners' capacity to achieve maximum benefit from learning experiences.
- ii. Professional Specialist Support Staff may be appointed on a full time or part-time basis.
- iii. Professional Specialist Support Staff must be familiar with the requirements of White Paper 6 and must engage in regular in-service training to ensure that the support they offer adheres to the latest practice.
- iv. Only those categories of staff that are relevant to the specialised programmes offered at the school should be employed at the school.
- v. Professional Specialist Support Staff includes:
  - a. Guidance and counselling specialists
  - b. Psychologists
  - c. Sign Language interpreters
  - d. Braille and Orientation and Mobility Instructors
  - e. Therapists: Occupational, Speech and Language; Audiologists, Music and Physiotherapists
  - f. Social workers
  - g. Nursing Staff
  - h. Rehabilitation workers
  - i. Child and youth care workers (especially in schools with hostels)

### 5.6.3 Non-teaching and Non-professional Staff

- i. In some schools, such as those for learners with physical disabilities, non-teaching and non-professional staff may exceed the number of professional teaching staff, because of the high level of needs of learners, especially in the foundation and intermediate phases. The norms and standards for the allocation of non-teaching staff will be determined by the Department of Education following the necessary consultative processes.
- ii. Parents may not be required to subsidise the salaries of non-professional staff. Individual parents may choose to pay additional costs relating to non-professional staff, in which case such payments must be agreed to with, and monitored by, the school governing body.
- iii. House mothers and assistant house mothers employed in schools catering for learners with physical disability and cerebral

palsy should possess a minimum qualification or training in health, social and/or home based care and should comply with standards outlined in the Children's Amendment Bill (2006). In hostels that admit deaf learners, housemothers should possess minimum qualifications in South African Sign Language.

- iv. Drivers, particularly where the school operates as a daily facility and daily transport is provided, should possess some previous driving experience and a full driving licence appropriate for the type of vehicle he/she is driving. Drivers can be appointed full-time at school or the service could be outsourced to a private transport provider, provided the above mentioned standards are met. Drivers must be trained in basic first aid, and be able to support the learners that they are transporting. Principals are responsible for ensuring that vehicles are road-worthy at all times.
- v. Security guards employed in special schools in the daily and/or residential facility must receive additional training in the needs of the learners at the school.

#### 5.6.4 Management

- i. In addition to the requirements of management at all schools, members of management at special schools are responsible for the

overall management and coordination of support provided at the school.

- ii. School principals should possess a minimum graduate qualification and any other qualification or training required of school managers.
- iii. Specialised qualifications in education management, management of inclusion, learning support, disability studies, educational psychology, social work or educational therapy will be a strong recommendation for a school principal.
- iv. Principals should also have some experience in mainstream schools. Where this is lacking, efforts should be made to organise manager-exchange links with mainstream schools, with a view to sharing ideas and strategies for enabling inclusive policy and practice across and between the settings.
- v. *All members of the management team must have had training in White Paper 6, Inclusive Education Programmes and Assessment requirements.*
- vi. The School Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the school has an active Institution-level Support Team.
- vii. The School Management Team is

responsible for ensuring that all learners are assessed regularly and have access to the necessary assistive devices.

## 5.7 Physical Infrastructure

5.7.1 The norms for physical infrastructure in mainstream schools apply to special schools.

5.7.2 In addition, the following requirements, over and above the baseline requirements, apply in special schools:

- i. Architects with experience in designing buildings for people with physical disabilities must be consulted when designing or renovating special schools.
- ii. Full physical accessibility, including ramps, and space for manoeuvrability of all learners, including ablution blocks, play areas and hostels, where applicable, must be provided according to prescribed standards for access.
- iii. The minimum classroom space available should be in accordance with specifications related to the nature of support programmes offered at the school, e.g. in respect of mobility.
- iv. All classrooms should be accessible for the installation and manoeuvring of specialist equipment, material resources and learning support equipment for the highest level of need possible at that school.
- v. Additional therapy rooms should be provided and equipped with the

necessary specialised equipment. Safe storage must be provided preferably close to teaching and learning spaces.

- vi. Computer centres should be provided and should be compliant with the specifications for specialised support.
- vii. Toilet facilities provided must exceed the specifications in public ordinary schools and must meet the specific needs of the learners. Ablution facilities must be clean and hygienic at all times.
- viii. Fully functional and adequately equipped incontinence facilities should be made available, where necessary.
- ix. Library facilities, in which accessibility and appropriate material are a key consideration, must be made available.
- x. Workshops, where applicable, must meet minimum safety standards. Additional safety measures and accessibility requirements must be in place in accordance with support required by learners in the school.
- xi. Special schools must have an adequate number of sick bays, which must be adequately equipped, especially with regard to the particular needs of all learners at the school.

Regulations that apply to hostels at public ordinary schools apply to hostels at special schools. Particular care must be taken to ensure that hostel accommodation is appropriate, clean and should not offend the dignity of a learner. Particular care must be taken to ensure that no form of abuse takes place at any time or by anyone.





- xii. Multi-purpose rooms/spaces should be available for parent guidance and consultation, community training, therapy, individual or small group interventions, orientation and mobility training, fitting and adjustment of assistive devices.
- xiii. There must be secure storage space for the safe-keeping of expensive specialised equipment.
- xiv. Workshops must be provided for the calibration of instruments, minor maintenance work on equipment, etc.
- xv. Schools should have appropriate recreational facilities.
- xvi. Hostels must be sited in buildings dedicated for this purpose and must meet all physical needs of learners. Hostels must provide a hygienic and secure environment which complies with all health and safety standards.
- xvii. *New schools should as far as possible be built in close proximity to an ordinary school or cluster of ordinary schools so as to enhance the capacity of the special schools ultimately to function as a special school resource centre.*

## 5.8 Hostel Accommodation

Regulations that apply to hostels at public ordinary schools apply to hostels at special schools. Particular care must be taken to ensure that hostel accommodation is appropriate, clean and should not offend the

dignity of the learner. Particular care must be taken to ensure that no form of abuse takes place at any time or by anyone.

- i. Separate facilities must be provided for girls and boys.
- ii. The section for learners under the age of 12 must be separate from that of the older learners.
- iii. Hostels may not be overcrowded.
- iv. Hostels must be provided with appropriate and adequate ramps, toilet facilities, bathing facilities, etc.
- v. Sleeping accommodation, bedding, etc. must be of appropriate standard, clean and hygienic and kept in good repair at all times.
- vi. Meals must follow commonly accepted nutritional prescripts. A meal may not consist of only bread or porridge.
- vii. Learners in hostels must be under constant supervision of an appropriate adult/s.
- viii. The regulations recommended in the Children's Amendment Bill should be adhered to for the safety and development of learners with special needs.
- ix. Safety regulations must be adhered to at all times and by all personnel and learners.
- x. Security personnel must be provided, where appropriate.
- xi. Emergency exits must be accessible to all learners in the hostel and maintained in a state of good repair.
- xii. Hostels must be kept in good repair.

## 5.9 Material Resources

5.9.1 Special schools must be equipped with appropriate, up-to-date and well-maintained material resources. These resources may include:

- i. E-learning facilities.
- ii. Personal devices for learners, such as Perkins Brailers and Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices.
- iii. Devices and equipment required to support teaching and learning such as high volume Braille printers and other assistive technology.
- iv. A library of technology for adaptive assessment or individual use on a long-term basis.
- v. Learning and teaching support material for all learners.
- vi. Library resources, including material in support of the particular needs of the learners.
- vii. All equipment must be kept in good maintenance at all times.

## 5.10 Transport

- 5.10.1 A special school must provide transport for all those learners who require transport in order to be able to access the school. The transport subsidy for special schools, both residential and non-residential, should be evaluated regularly to ensure adequacy.
- 5.10.2 In principle, daily transport should be provided for registered

learners living up to a maximum of 40 kilometres away from the school, while those living more than an hour's drive away from school should be housed in residences within the school, at least during the school week.

- 5.10.3 All vehicles used to transport learners must meet the highest safety standards, must be maintained regularly and must be inspected by the school principal regularly.
- 5.10.4 All vehicles used to transport learners must be appropriately licensed and driven by appropriately licensed drivers.
- 5.10.5 All vehicles must provide easy access for all learners to be transported.
- 5.10.6 Schools should be able to provide suitable transport for learners to attend special events.
- 5.10.7 Adult support and supervision must be provided on learner transport to promote learner safety. All such adults must be trained in first aid and in attending to the special needs of the learners being transported.

## 5.11 Family and Community

Special Schools must ensure that they support the family of learners at the school. Such support may include educational guidance and support, psychological and emotional guidance and support, etc. Schools must advise parents on the best possible career opportunities available to learners.



- 5.11.1 Schools must interact with the community to ensure that learners are prepared for integration into the community.
- 5.11.2 Special schools may serve as a training facility for teachers on LTSM production, use, management and maintenance of specialised equipment and assistive technology.
- 5.11.3 Schools may provide community and adult training in Sign Language
- 5.11.4 Schools may have a library of relevant books and technological devices that parents and the community, including local schools, may access.

Special Schools must ensure that they support the family of learners at the school. Such support may include educational guidance and support, psychological and emotional guidance and support, etc. Schools must advise parents on the best possible career opportunities available to learners.





# 6

## 6. Criteria for Quality Education and Support in Special School Resource Centres

Special schools, and the staff employed in these schools, have real expertise in supporting learners who experience barriers to learning. This expertise is both highly valued by the Department and desperately needed as it becomes evident that large numbers of learners are in need of support.

*The National Curriculum Statement is underpinned by the belief that all learners can succeed, in their own time, and with the necessary support.*

The system can therefore not lose this pool of expertise, but need to find ways in which staff from special schools can support inclusive education.

Over time, all special schools will be converted into special school resource centres and serve as centres of excellence, offering high levels of support to learners as well as other teachers, schools and educational institutions within their immediate locale, district or region.

Special school resource centres will be linked to district-based support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to designated full-service and other neighbourhood schools, whilst also providing improved educational services to those learners who require high levels of support in a special school.

All special school resource centres must

adhere to the guidelines set for special schools. In addition, the following guidelines apply:

### 6.1 Admission

- 6.1.1 Special school resource centres should only admit learners with high support needs.
- 6.1.2 Principals of special school resource centres should manage the number of learners admitted to the school to ensure that the professional staff have sufficient time to support schools, teachers and learners not at the school who require specialist support. Professional staff should initially have a minimum of five hours available per week to offer external support.

### 6.2 Staffing

Health professionals may be appointed at district offices and stationed at special school resource centres to ensure mobility of scarce staff.

### 6.3 Provision of quality Support

- 6.3.1 Provision of quality support in

Over time all Special Schools will be converted into Special School Resource Centres and serve as centres of excellence, offering high levels of support to learners as well as other teachers, schools and educational institutions within their immediate locale, district or region.

respect of equipment, resources, services, etc.

- i. Provide E-learning facilities.
- ii. Be equipped with high cost, shared devices and equipment such as high volume Braille printers.
- iii. Provide braille services.
- iv. Serve as a training facility for teachers on LTSM production, use, management and maintenance of specialised equipment and assistive technology.
- v. Provide access to a library of technology for adaptive assessment or individual use.
- vi. Have full time technical assistants who can service equipment, including IT equipment, at the centre and at schools where learners are identified for support.
- vii. Have an audiology technician who can visit schools to help deaf learners with their hearing aids.
- viii. Provide community and adult training in Sign Language.
- ix. Make rooms available for consultations with learners and/or parents who need support.
- x. Make rooms available for non-profit organizations in the field to provide relevant training, to hold meetings etc.
- xi. Make rooms available for other government departments to bring relevant services to the schools in the area.

#### **6.4 Provision of quality Support by Professional Staff at Special School Resource Centres as part of the District-based Support Service**

Special school resource centres should fulfil the following functions:

- i. Be part of the teams that manage the Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support;
- ii. Support schools in the implementation of the strategy;
- iii. Provide a network of support to mainstream schools in collaboration with other community-based support structures;
- iv. Provide curriculum support, including assessment, in respect of specialised teaching methodologies and use of specialised equipment to educators in mainstream schools, who have to meet the needs of learners with disabilities;
- v. Provide therapeutic support to learners with disabilities in mainstream schools;
- vi. Assist in the mobilisation of children and youth who are outside the system and who have no access to schooling;
- vii. Work collaboratively with other sectors including Health, Social Development (Welfare), Labour, Justice, Correctional Services, Transport, Safety and Security, to develop a network of support to schools;

## 6.5 Community Work

Special school resource centres should relate to the community.

- 6.5.1. Work collaboratively and draw on the expertise and resources of community organisations and structures including disabled people's organisations, parent organisations, teacher unions, NGOs;
- 6.5.2. Draw on community members as resources including traditional/indigenous healers, parents, grandparents and caregivers;
- 6.5.3. Work with the community on advocacy and awareness-raising in the community aimed at changing attitudes and supporting inclusive education policy and practices.







# 7

## 7. District-based Support Teams

In the framework for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system, White Paper 6 emphasises the role of District-based Support Teams (DBSTs) in the ‘strengthening of education support services’ (p28).

“The strengthened education support service will have, at its centre, new district-based support teams that will comprise staff from provincial district, regional and head offices and from special schools. The primary function of these district support teams will be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modifications. Through supporting teaching, learning and management, they will build the capacity of schools to recognise and address severe learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs” (WP6, p29).

The District-based Support Team (DBST) is a dedicated matrix team which coordinates and drives all activities related to inclusive education within a district. These activities range from support to teachers in differentiation of the curriculum and management of diversity in the classroom, to support principals to establish inclusive policies, cultures and practices. The DBST must support Institutional Level Support Teams to identify, assess and support children with special needs and disabilities and those who experience barriers of a socio-economic nature which would require counselling support.

In an inclusive education system, support is defined as all activities that increase the capacity of schools to respond to diversity and to the challenges faced by its learners and teachers. This support should therefore become the responsibility of all officials working within the education system. To spearhead this support, White Paper 6 proposes that each district institute a District Based Support Team. By involving specialised professionals such as psychologists, social workers and therapists in an integrated, multi-disciplinary team, which works according to a consultative service delivery model, scarce human resources can be utilised more effectively to make support available to all learners in the system and not only to those who attend special schools. Children in disadvantaged urban and rural settings should also have access to these support services. The approach proposed in Education White Paper 6 of establishing trans-disciplinary District-based Support Teams as a mechanism for making support available to more learners and teachers offers the most cost effective and contextually relevant solution to the challenges.

Members of the DBST should therefore not only come from the Inclusive Education units, but also involve staff from the curriculum, educational management development, Early Childhood Development (ECD), Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), teacher development, personnel planning, provisioning, physical planning units as well as from special schools (with core team members from Curriculum, Institutional Development and Inclusive Education).

## Framework and Functions of the District-based Support Team

Programmes	Focus Area 1	Focus Area 2	Focus Area 3	Focus Area 4
	Classroom-based Support	Institutional Support	Administrative Support	Psycho-Social, Environmental and Health Support
<b>Programme 1:</b> Developing enabling environments through capacity building	Training/orientation of teachers	Development and monitoring of school policies that would enhance inclusivity and minimise exclusion	Training in financial management	Monitoring the development and implementation of prevention and intervention programmes to children who are vulnerable and in need of care
	Consultative and mentoring support to teachers	Staff development	Information systems and technology support	Capacity building in management of challenging and anti-social behaviour
	Training and Monitoring of ILSTs	Whole school and organisational development	Admin training	Programmes for HIV and Aids
	Coordinating and monitoring of assessment of learner needs	Establishment and management of school-based support structures	Personnel supply, management, training and support	Developing strategies for schools, teachers and institutions on whole school development and classroom support
	Planning and monitoring learning support programmes for identified learners/groups of learners	Managing enrolment and admissions  SGB and parent development	Transport management	Health promotion and safety, including child justice, support for street children, prevention of child labour  Developing networks for social support and counselling  The coordination at an inter-sectoral level of all support services and intervention programmes which address barriers to learning and development

Programmes	Focus Area 1		Focus Area 2		Focus Area 3		Focus Area 4	
	Classroom-based Support		Institutional Support		Administrative Support		Psycho-Social, Environmental and Health Support	
<b>Programme 2:</b> Developing and monitoring curriculum support programmes	Curriculum development Monitor implementation of guidelines for curriculum differentiation Assessment of learner achievement and planning support programmes		Development of curriculum leadership  Monitoring assessment and promotions		Administration of assessment		Development, implementation and monitoring of guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes  Development, implementation and monitoring of dynamic and adaptive assessment	
<b>Programme 3:</b> Resource provisioning	Provisioning of LTSM  Development of LTSM		Managing and monitoring LTSM budgets and supply  Managing and monitoring development of LTSM		Management of physical facilities  Provisioning of assistive devices		Selection, Procurement and Monitoring provisioning of LTSM  Development of LTSM to address specific barriers	



# GUIDELINES