
Island SEND Review

Report: October 2025



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Introduction:

This report presents an independent external analysis of the current quality of inclusive education provision for Jersey pupils in Government-provided schools with a focus on the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A team of four off-Island reviewers commenced work in January 2025. Each member of this team were experienced as Her/His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in England and have extensive SEND expertise and experience. All of them have been involved in conducting Jersey School Reviews and so are familiar with Jersey's education system.

The team conducted four separate three-day visits, before concluding in June 2025. Their findings are based on gathering extensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders together with their detailed analysis of current systems, policies and practices. This report identifies key strengths and weaknesses across various critical areas.

This report finds that positive intentions and pockets of good practice certainly exist. However, strategic planning, leadership, system cohesion, and the implementation of inclusive education, remain underdeveloped and inconsistent. The overarching goal of establishing a fully inclusive culture of education continues to be a long-term project with significant political and cultural ramifications.

This Island SEND Review is one part of a comprehensive analysis of inclusion by CYPES that has been taking place over the last year.

Summary of key judgements:

Overall, the current leadership, organisation, systems, strategies, oversight and accountability arrangements, in relation to inclusive education in Jersey are not sufficiently effective. Consequently, there is too great an inconsistency in the experiences and outcomes for Jersey's children and young people with SEND.

Pupils with SEND typically reported that they feel comfortable in their schools and most parents reported having a positive relationship with their individual school. However, there are inconsistencies and a significant number of parents who are concerned about the quality of SEND provision and approaches across Jersey.

The comprehensive [National Association for Special Educational Needs \(nasen\) Review](#) published in 2021 recognised that changing culture takes time, but its recommendations have not yet been responded to effectively. However, this 2025 review recognises and respects several areas of strong practice, and successful projects, both within the central team and in schools. As a result of these, many schools show a willingness to embrace inclusive education and there are emerging examples of schools collaborating and being creative in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Review Findings:

(a) Structure and Strategy

- Leaders know that the current structure of Jersey's school system requires change to address significantly declining pupil numbers forecast in future years together with budgetary challenges. The system does not yet promote collaboration or inclusive practices as effectively as is required. Recent work with school leaders indicates clear potential for schools to take a more central role in the design and implementation of new strategies and systems to enable Jersey's education provision to meet the needs of all groups of pupils more effectively.
- Jersey law offers little guidance or scaffolding for current inclusion goals. Over time a culture has developed of giving too much priority to adult-led complaints in relation to pupil provision. There can be weaknesses in initial communications and/or misunderstandings in relation to how the complaints system works. As a result, an excessive amount of time is spent responding to complaints, some of which are revisited when parents are not happy with the resolutions offered. This has a direct and negative impact on the central team's ability to provide ongoing support and guidance to schools.
- There is insufficient transparency relating to the Island's budget for education and inclusion. Changing priorities for capital spending have directly impacted children and young people's educational experiences, for example through the pausing of building work. School leaders feel negatively impacted by the Island's systems for budget control and management.
- The absence of coherent and coordinated strategy and oversight impedes the development of special schools and the Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) within mainstream schools. School staff have not yet gained access to sufficient training and the supportive structure necessary for the sustainable delivery of inclusive education.
- Lack of clear leadership and management, coupled with changes in priorities at the highest level, have resulted in an enduring sense of turbulence and uncertainty. This has impeded progress.
- Increasing complexity in SEND needs, especially relating to social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), requires better planning and provision. There is no commonly understood strategy and stakeholders are widely concerned about the adequacy of provision. Extensive delays and difficulties in identifying needs are reported to be frequent. Typically, schools feel they receive minimal support from CYPES for SEND, often relying on their own initiatives, commissioning private educational psychologists (EPs), or charity support.
- Structures relating to inclusion need reform. Some of the central inclusion team are perceived to work in isolation from schools and from other teams within CYPES. Social care and education lack integration. Resources in some areas are over-stretched, or too limited, leading to a sense of crisis management. Over time, there has been a lack of collaborative working and co-production across departments, schools and with individual families, children and young people. As a result, too few disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils have had their full range of needs met.
- Leaders have acknowledged weaknesses in the Record of Needs (RoN) system. They are working to systematise and strengthen processes, although concerns continue to exist around the process, the matrix and funding. Professionals widely report an inconsistent match of funding to needs and there has been an increase in schools applying for RoNs and for higher levels of funding.
- Senior leaders across the Government of Jersey fully accept the findings of the nasen Review of 2021. However, the findings have not yet been used to devise and communicate an effective strategic plan to all stakeholders. It is unclear how leaders have prioritised actions or evaluated which aspects of the report to enact. Internal systems of evaluation and accountability lack rigour. Certain key policies are out of date or inaccurately reflect school provision.
- This review team recognised several positive areas. For example, although still at a relatively early stage, reviewers were impressed by the current development of data management and informatics. They also positively noted ongoing work to develop the role of school governance and strengthening transition arrangements from primary to secondary school. Nevertheless, the areas relating to inclusion and SEND remain a priority.

(b) Vision and Communication

- Leaders and stakeholders developed an aspirational [Inclusion Charter](#) following the nasen Review. However, this has not yet been adopted and embedded to become a shared vision for inclusion. There is a long way to go to reach a shared and common understanding of what inclusion means in principle and reality. The collaboratively developed and updated [Jersey School Review Framework](#) (JSRF) for 2025 has made a good start here.
- Central leadership has not secured commitment to a common vision, a sense of shared responsibility, ambition or possibility. Communication is often poor. Central staff perceive resistance to inclusion from some schools and schools perceive significant weaknesses at the centre. School leaders typically consider that they meet children and young people's SEND needs well but may express concerns about other schools. Unsurprisingly, staff reported that morale at the centre, and in some schools, is low.
- Schools report feeling isolated and/or uninvolved in decision-making processes. 80% of those who shared their views stated that they did not understand or know about centrally made decisions, for example, relating to changes at specialist provision.
- Projects intended to promote inclusion have been launched without appropriately thorough pre planning of sequencing and/or consultation and collaboration. This has led to confusion and added to the levels of mistrust. Some initiatives, such as the Inclusion Charter, were introduced prematurely before schools were equipped to deliver them. The impact of changing Governmental priorities (including relating to school buildings) adds further concern.
- School leaders recognise the strengths offered by individuals in CYPES. However, they expressed their frustration stemming from what they see as inaction, ineffective decision-making, and/or poor change management processes. Positive examples of policy development, such as the development of the revised JSRF and the emerging approach to collaboratively creating Inclusive Practice Guidance, demonstrate CYPES' potential for constructive engagement when projects are well-managed.
- Communication is inconsistent between schools and parents. Many schools and SENCOs provide parents and carers with helpful information and updates, but some families feel marginalised. School staff reported that it is difficult for families with SEND needs to access advice beyond school. Parents say that they often resort to private assessments, which schools may then dispute or ignore.
- Effective co-production is not well established at either strategic or individual pupil levels. This is reflected in part by the increasing numbers and complexity of concerns and complaints. Currently the processes involved in raising and responding to stakeholders' concerns with individual schools and/or the education department are not sufficiently well understood. Members of central and school staff, and some parents, have been left feeling unsupported as a result.
- Parents, carers, school leaders and other stakeholders are not always viewed as partners. Consequently, thus far, many report feeling insufficiently involved in strategic planning and decision making relating to the inclusion agenda. Parental involvement at the implementation stage of the inclusion agenda, was described to reviewers as 'lip service'.
- Successful moves have been made to establish cluster groups for SENCOs and Designated Safeguarding Leads, fostering a more consistent approach and valuing these roles through greater communication and cooperative working. SENCOs told reviewers that they appreciate the support, advice and networking opportunities.

(c) In Practice

- The issues already outlined previously occur within a highly competitive school system that is not always well supported or challenged by governance. Inclusive education and ensuring effective working and communication between different schools, agencies and services that support children with SEND are given too low priority. Consequently, too little focus is given to the experiences and needs of children and young people with SEND.
- There are some expert staff in both the central team and in schools. However, this expertise is not fully utilised. Shared learning and system-wide improvement are limited by capacity,

relationships and culture. In addition, there is a lack of clarity about the role of special schools in supporting and promoting inclusion across Jersey. Significant inequity exists.

- The extent to which all school leaders accept the findings of the nasen Review is unclear. Around two-thirds (who expressed a view) do not believe that pupils with SEND achieve as well as they could. Most school leaders are eager to engage with future challenges and solutions. However, several tend to blame either funding levels, availability of specialist resources, central services, and/or the commitment of other schools to inclusion. Too few identify strengthening the quality of education and collaborative partnerships as being a vital part of the solution.
- Schools visited offer safe environments, high levels of care and a will to meet pupils' needs. Some schools commission external advisers, and others undertake extensive training relating to inclusive practice. Whilst this demonstrates ambition and positive attitudes towards inclusion, it further reinforces how attitudes to inclusion, inclusive practices and adaptive teaching are widely inconsistent across the Government provided schools.
- While many schools are praised by parents for their support, several parents reported concerns about; delays in identifying needs, disagreements about a child's needs and/or a perceived lack of support and expertise. Some parents feel their requests and opinions are disregarded and that there is a failure to adapt teaching methods to meet individual needs.
- A significant minority of parents reported feeling that the mainstream education system is outdated and often unwelcoming for children with SEND. Some reported their children were moved from mainstream schools if they 'don't fit in'. Beyond school, parents highlight a 'huge dearth of other specialists' and cite minimal support for activities and clubs for children with additional needs. Parents and professionals share concerns about the availability of appropriate onward routes and college courses post-16.
- There is an absence of systematic analysis of the impacts of diverse projects. For example, the cumulative impact and strategic management of ARPs is unclear. Overall, staff and facilities are not equipped to meet these children and young people's needs well. Some leaders express a desire for better liaison and sharing of practice across ARPs to avoid duplication of effort and ensure effective interventions. For example, there have been cases where weaknesses in change management have contributed to significant workload and wellbeing issues for staff and/or raised questions about value for money.
- Significant work to identify pre-school children who are at risk of facing barriers to learning has been undertaken. This, coupled with strengthening use of data, means that leaders are building a clearer understanding of future need.
- Training provision for SENCOs is in place, is generally well-received and reported to be impactful. Cluster meetings for SENCOs are valued. A project to recruit, train, and systematise Teaching Assistant (TA) provision is generally regarded as a success. Schools offer very mixed views on the quality and availability of ongoing training.
- A committed Elective Home Education (EHE) community is well organised and works positively with CYPES.
- The virtual school programme has increased access to education for children who are looked after. However, evidence suggests that, over time, these (and other disadvantaged) children and young people have not accessed an appropriate full-time educational provision. In addition, some funded well-being posts have not been effectively utilised.
- Pupils who met with reviewers, at different points in the review typically said that they feel comfortable and supported in their schools and value extra-curricular activities.

Review Recommendations:

The 2021 nasen Review provided an expert analysis and a comprehensive set of 50 recommendations. Whilst this has steered the direction of change, this team recognises how the vast scope of that report and its many recommendations has felt overwhelming. Therefore, this review proposes streamlining and grouping its findings together with the most pertinent ongoing nasen priorities into following three themes. These themes acknowledge the Island's changing context, demographics, current strengths and some emerging green shoots of better practice.

Ensuring Stability

- Until Education (Jersey) Law 1999 can be updated, there needs to be clear time-limited systems for complaints and appeals. Additionally, as per the nasen Review, the law should be amended to include specific reference to the Government's commitment to inclusion in education.
- The Government should consider how it can best promote an improved public understanding of the needs of the Island's population. There needs to be a better Island-wide promotion of equity. The strategic coordination of more consistent approaches to inclusion is needed across all Government departments and public services, including Education.
- CYPES should continue its emerging work to redesign education provision in line with changing demographics. There are a number of ways in which this could be organised. Whichever model chosen for the restructure should combine the separate teams of school improvement and inclusion within CYPES. Statutory functions need to be retained centrally with suitably expert staff. Consideration should be given to the appointment of key personnel to link central and school leadership.
- In the short term, the early work of seconded headteachers to bridge the work between schools and the centre should continue. The two secondees gained a critical mass of support. Continued careful management is needed as their ongoing role to consider the scope and impact of various options for possible changes to the structure of the education department is complex. Going forward further research will be needed to ensure their work aligns with the recommendations of this review, and that any proposed changes ensure clearer lines of accountability for all aspects of inclusive education.
- Governance and accountability mechanisms need to be more robustly secured at school and senior leadership levels, building on what has already been started. More wide-ranging, ongoing monitoring of funding is required. Leaders are aware of this and have recently commissioned a review of inclusion funding which is currently ongoing. Accountability must be more closely related to the impact on the achievement and engagement of pupils, rather than the completion of activities.
- Leaders need to consider the balance between specialist and generic provision in the ARPs with a focus on the best way of meeting the needs of pupils with differing SEND needs.
- Data and wider information should be used to identify trends and construct a map of provision versus needs, identify future gaps and how they will be filled in accordance with the inclusion policy.

Clarity of Strategy:

- Collaboratively developed short-term and medium-term strategic plans need to be urgently prioritised. These must include systems for ensuring ongoing evidence-based quality assurance.
- Leaders should ensure that a definition of inclusion is revisited, clarified, agreed and adopted. The review team recommends that inclusive practice be defined to be in line with all of the groups of pupils identified under the 'Equity' pillar within the revised 2025 Jersey School Review Framework.
- There needs to be an agreed protocol for admission to specialist provision including assessment of pupils' needs, risk assessments and evaluation of resources. There needs to be agreed, commonly understood and transparent processes for all admissions to specialist provisions. Curriculum pathways need to be planned then published to be made freely available.
- Leaders should ensure that all schools understand what is expected in terms of meeting pupil's SEND needs on a day-to-day basis. Training must be provided to facilitate this.
- The ongoing work to strengthen the RoN process should be continued. However, leaders are aware that currently there are negative unintended consequences that need addressing to ensure equality and value for money. The process requires careful monitoring and quality assurance.

Quality Assurance:

- Better ongoing analysis of current existing expertise in SEND, reflecting on the impact of the ARPs, and identification of any gaps in provision is required. Its findings should be used to inform strategic plans and, in particular to, offer better provision for pupils with social, emotional or mental health needs.
- Specialist knowledge needs sharing between specialist and mainstream schools in a systematic and co-ordinated way, including around the appropriateness of the curriculum in mainstream and specialist settings.
- Leaders have begun the process of relaunching work to support ordinarily available provision. Workshops are rightly focussing on developing resources and support for schools to develop and share a common language and approach to developing more inclusive practice. This work needs to continue and ensure that ongoing training enables it to be applied and embedded as consistently as possible across the Island.
- There needs to be more effective professional development and effective career pathway planning. Clear roles are needed to be responsible for sharing good practice and ongoing quality assurance. This could include developing the roles of 'advanced skills teachers' within the school system.

Next steps:

Reviewers recommend immediate priority is given to ensuring:

- the centre, schools and wider stakeholders work together to develop, share and publish their immediate priorities together with medium-term and longer-term strategic plans containing targets, timescales, milestones and success criteria
- systems for governance and accountability are clarified
- an ongoing programme of internal and external monitoring is devised.

Considering the fact that the nasen Review recommendations have not yet become embedded, and the scale of the tasks ahead, leaders should consider including a programme of ongoing support and monitoring visits by external experts to support, validate and challenge the progress being made towards their published plans.

Information about this review:

During the course of this review an extensive and comprehensive body of evidence and opinion was accumulated and evaluated. Over the four separate visits, the review team conducted 20 half-day school visits and also engaged with a representative set of stakeholders including; leaders from the education department, school leaders, school staff, parents, and pupils drawn from Government of Jersey provided schools.

Reviewers worked collaboratively with CYPES leaders, including the two headteachers seconded to CYPES, meeting during each visit to discuss and share their emerging evidence and findings as the review progressed.

Evidence gathering activities included:

The Education Department

A meeting was held with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. The review team also conducted a series of meetings with directors and officers from Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES). These included meetings with; the Interim Chief Officer, Director of Children and Young People's Services, Chair of the Inclusion Review Delivery Board, Associate Director of Education, SEND Service Manager, Service Manager for Psychology and Well-being Service, Virtual School Headteacher, Chair of the Elective Home Education (EHE) community, School Improvement and Advisory Service (SIAS) officers, SEND Advisory Teachers, a representative of the safeguarding education team, the project leader for the teaching assistant training programme, the Social, Emotional and Mental Health Inclusion Team (SEMHIT) and Autism Spectrum Condition Inclusion Team (ASCIT).

A large number of policies, documents and plans were scrutinised. These included; the nasen Review report and recommendations, Inclusion Charter, SEND Code of Practice, data reports, central SEND records, strategic planning, governance records, and documents related to funding, organisational development, staff training and various project updates.

Schools and pupils

20 separate school visits, including to specialist provisions, were conducted to speak with headteachers, school senior leaders (including SENCOs), teachers, groups of pupils, and a sample of parents. Reviewers visited Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) in relevant schools. Separate meetings were held with primary and secondary SENCOs, school-based documents and policies were reviewed.

In addition, Headteachers and senior leaders from all Government provided schools were invited to share their views. The reviewers are grateful to the 50 who did so.

Parents and carers

In addition to the parents met during school visits, the review team are grateful to the 276 parents and carers of children known to have SEND, just over half with a Record of Need, who shared their views through surveys.

A meeting was held with a representative of the Parent Forum.