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Special kids get NMC helping hand

Nagpur: For the first time, the education department of the [Nagpur Municipal Corporation](#) (NMC) has started a unique residential bridge course for special children. Giving details, co-ordinator Abhijit Raut explained, "Special children are divided in three categories- severe, moderate and those on the border-line. Those who fall in to severe category including orthopaedic cases cannot be included in normal schools as they need individual attention and have to be accompanied by parents or guardians in some cases. The moderate or borderline cases can be included in schools run by the government with help and proper guidance."

With this aim in mind, NMC has started the bridge course referred as RBC to help bring moderate and borderline cases at par with normal students. Officials say such a course would boost their confidence, help them compete with normal students and make up for the lacunae, if any. Some 90 special students have been included in this first residential bridge course, the first phase of which will conclude on October 31. The second phase will resume after a short break for Diwali.

The 90-day course is being run at three centres- Katol Road, Hingna and Kuhi. "The response has been very good. Special educators from the Inclusive Education for Disabled (IED) department are enrolled for the course and are imparting skills to the students to make up for the loss in the curriculum and help them catch up with the rest," informed another NMC official.

The NMC has recruited 30 teachers exclusively for children with special needs this year. NMC's education department has earmarked Rs 35 lakh for its IED programme under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. "Special education refers to the education of mentally and physically challenged children. It is specially designed instruction for students with exceptional learning needs, to help them realise their potential and capabilities. All children have a right to be educated, regardless of any disability they suffer from," Raut added.

After starting a special school for children living on railway platforms, NMC has also started schools for rag pickers and street children living in Bhandewadi dumping yard and other places in the city. Under the ambitious Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project, the civic body, in collaboration with Church of North India's Social Service Institute (CNI-SSI) will impart education as well as vocational training to street children.