

# **Birmingham's Ordinarily Available Guidance (OAG)**

Section One: Principles of Inclusive Education  
Strategic Reflection Framework

# CONTENTS

## Introduction

|                                                                          |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <u>OAG Section One Principles</u>                                        | 3 |
| <u>Section One - Expectations for Inclusive Practice in All Settings</u> | 4 |

## Principle Cards

|                                                           |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <u>Working Together with Children and Families</u>        | 5  |
| <u>High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning</u>        | 6  |
| <u>Continuous Professional Learning &amp; Development</u> | 7  |
| <u>Creating Enabling Environments</u>                     | 8  |
| <u>Transition Across Whole Life Course</u>                | 9  |
| <u>The Team Around the Child &amp; Family</u>             | 10 |
| <u>Leading Inclusion in Schools and Settings</u>          | 11 |
| <u>Graduated Approach</u>                                 | 12 |
| <u>Equity and Diversity</u>                               | 13 |
| <u>Additional Needs</u>                                   | 14 |

## Reflection Frameworks

|                                                           |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| <u>Strategic Reflection Framework</u>                     | 15      |
| <u>Suggested leadership activities</u>                    | 16 - 17 |
| <u>Working Together with Children and Families</u>        | 18 - 19 |
| <u>High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning</u>        | 20 - 21 |
| <u>Continuous Professional Learning &amp; Development</u> | 22 - 23 |
| <u>Creating Enabling Environments</u>                     | 24 - 25 |
| <u>Transition Across Whole Life Course</u>                | 26 - 27 |
| <u>The Team Around the Child &amp; Family</u>             | 28 - 29 |
| <u>Leading Inclusion in Schools and Settings</u>          | 30 - 31 |
| <u>Graduated Approach</u>                                 | 32 - 33 |
| <u>Equity and Diversity</u>                               | 34 - 35 |
| <u>Additional Needs</u>                                   | 36 - 37 |

# OAG Section One Principles

Co-produced through activities with local area partners and through a further 169 feedback responses from settings.

**Working Together with Children and Families**

**High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning**

**Continuous Professional Learning & Development**

**Creating Enabling Environments**

**Transition Across Whole Life Course**

**The Team Around the Child & Family**

**Leading Inclusion in Schools and Settings**

**Graduated Approach**

**Equity and Diversity**

**Additional Needs**

# Section One - Expectations for Inclusive Practice in All Settings

Section One sets out the expectations for inclusive practice that all education settings in Birmingham are expected to have in place for all children and young people, including those with SEND.

The section is structured around 10 key principles that describe what strong, inclusive practice looks like across a setting.

## **Use Section One to:**

- Reflect on what inclusive practice looks like across your setting
- Review how welcoming environments are created and maintained
- Consider how strengths, interests and development areas are known and supported
- Support teaching & learning, development and induction
- Guide professional conversations in meetings and reviews

**Leaders and governors can use the 10 key principles to reflect on what is working well and identify next steps.**

# Working Together with Children and Families

Working together with children, young people and their families is central to inclusive practice. Schools build relationships rooted in trust, respect and shared understanding so that decisions are made with children and families rather than delivered to them. Children and families are listened to, their expertise is valued equally, and their experiences inform planning, review and delivery. When genuine partnership is embedded in everyday practice, decision-making becomes more open and honest, support is more personalised, and children & families feel included and empowered to participate.

## **Expectations:**

- Leaders promote a culture where children, young people and families are treated as equal partners, and relationships are built on trust, empathy and shared goals.
- Communication with families is clear, timely and accessible, using plain English and approaches that are culturally responsive and inclusive.
- Children and families have regular, meaningful opportunities to share their views in ways that feel safe and appropriate to their age and communication preferences.
- The school works in partnership with families to understand strengths and needs, anticipate barriers and agree next steps in support and planning.
- Co-production is embedded in everyday practice so that children's and families' views inform plans, reviews and decision-making, not only formal meetings.
- Leaders review and strengthen partnerships by gathering feedback from children and families and acting on what they hear.
- Staff know how to signpost families to the right local information and support, including the Local Offer, and do so consistently.

## **Signposts and Support:**

- [OAG Parent Carer Guides](#) - One-page summaries co-produced with parents explaining each OAG principle in clear, accessible language.
- [Children and Young People's Views Guidance](#) - Guidance on gathering, understanding and using pupil views to inform planning and review.
- [Capturing the Views of Children and Young People](#) - A person-centred toolkit offering practical tools and strategic approaches for embedding views.
- [Person-Centred Thinking Tools](#) - Tools such as One-Page Profiles and What's Working/Not Working to help CYP express what matters to them.
- [Parental Partnership Guide](#) - Practical guidance on building open, respectful and solution-focused relationships with families.
- [Person-Centred Review Facilitator Training](#) - 2-day training enabling staff to lead reviews and meetings centred around the child or young person.
- [Be Empowered Workshops](#) - Parent-carer-led workshops supporting families to understand processes, rights and how to work in partnership with settings.
- [Working Together to Improve Engagement and Participation](#) - Co-produced guidance outlining what effective, meaningful engagement with families looks like.
- [SEND Co-production Award Scheme](#), and [Training](#) - City-wide framework & charter, training and recognition scheme for strengthening co-production practice.
- [Birmingham Parent Carer Forum](#) - City-wide parent-carer network offering support, information and partnership opportunities.
- [Family Hubs & community networks](#) - Local spaces offering support, information and activities for families.

# High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning

High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning is the foundation of success and engagement for all children and young people. It is rooted in the belief that every learner can make progress when teaching is responsive, well-planned and based on a strong understanding of need. Assessment and professional judgement is used to remove barriers, adapt approaches and ensure every learner can access and participate in the curriculum. Drawing on the best available evidence, high quality adaptive teaching and learning combines challenge and support so that children develop confidence, independence and a sense of belonging in the classroom. Adaptive teaching ensures that every child is included, has their needs met and makes progress in their learning.

## Expectations:

- Leaders establish a consistent approach to high quality adaptive teaching so that everyone understands the most effective inclusion strategy begins with everyday high-quality inclusive teaching, which has most benefit for the those who find learning hardest and reduces the need for individual adaptations.
- Ongoing professional development strengthens staff knowledge, confidence and skill in delivering adaptive, evidence-informed teaching.
- Teachers use regular, proportionate assessment to understand strengths and barriers, and adapt teaching so that all children and young people can access the curriculum.
- Teaching promotes progress, independence and resilience, supporting both academic learning and personal development.
- Staff work with families and external professionals to personalise support and respond to emerging needs.
- Classrooms promote safety, respect and positive relationships, enabling children and young people to engage confidently and take purposeful risks in their learning.
- Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of high quality adaptive teaching and use this to inform school improvement and staff development.

## Signposts and Support:

- [EEF "5-a-Day" high-quality teaching for pupils with SEND Guidance](#) - Evidence-informed daily teaching principles that support adaptive, inclusive classroom practice for all.
- [Teacher Handbook: SEND](#) - Practical guidance to understand learners and remove barriers to learning from Whole School SEND and Nasen.
- [Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants](#) - Evidence-based guidance that supports adaptive teaching by helping schools deploy teaching assistants effectively and build pupils' independence through structured professional development.
- [Birmingham SEN Toolkits](#) - Guidance that supports adaptive teaching through identifying gaps in learning, tracking small-step progress and informing planning for pupils working below age-related expectations.
- [AET Progression Framework](#) - A flexible assessment tool that supports adaptive teaching by helping staff identify learning priorities, set clear intentions and track progress in areas closely related to autism differences.
- [Assistive Technology - Call Scotland Website](#) - Information about get the most from technology to access the curriculum.

# Graduated Approach

The graduated approach enables schools to respond to every child's strengths and needs through a continuous cycle of 'Assess-Plan-Do-Review'. Children, young people and their families are central to this process so that decisions are informed by what matters most to them. This enables schools to build a clear and evolving understanding of each learner's needs, reviewing what is working and adapting support as circumstances change. By connecting high-quality teaching, targeted support and specialist guidance when required, the graduated approach promotes progress, belonging and equitable access to learning for all.

## **Expectations:**

- The Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle is understood by all staff and embedded in classroom practice and school systems.
- Assessment and review are used proportionately to understand needs, inform planning and ensure support leads to meaningful progress.
- Children, young people and their families are involved at every stage so that decisions reflect what matters most to them.
- Support plans are personalised, strengths-based and co-produced, identifying barriers to learning and setting clear, achievable outcomes.
- Staff draw on a graduated range of universal and targeted strategies to meet individual needs.
- Leaders make sure pupils receive effective support, consult with external specialists and implement their advice as necessary, and ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice.
- Schools use learning from individual cases to strengthen practice over time and reduce barriers earlier for other children and young people.

## **Signposts and Support:**

- Framework for Intervention (Revised) – Toolkit to help school-based teams to plan, record and evidence universal, targeted and specialist support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Provision Mapping Tools – Tools that support schools to plan, monitor and review provision across the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle, ensuring equity and impact.
- MAP Meetings – Multi-agency planning meetings that prioritise, coordinate and review support for children and young people.
- [SEND Advisory & Inclusion Service \(SAIS\)](#) – Professional advice, joint planning & training to support assessment, intervention and review within the graduated approach.
- [Speech and Language Therapy \(NHS\)](#) – assessment, advice and intervention for speech, language and communication needs. Access is typically through school link therapists or referral pathways
- [Paediatric Occupational Therapy Website](#) – Universal advice and support, including an advice line service, which supports with giving early help to families and professionals working with the child, as well as free downloadable resource packs and information

# Leading Inclusion in Schools

Inclusive leadership sets the vision and tone for a culture where everyone feels they belong. School leaders work with staff, children, families and partners to create a shared commitment to equity, participation and high expectations for all. They ensure that policies, systems and decision-making reflect inclusive values and strengthen everyday practice. When leaders model inclusive behaviours and enable staff to do the same, the whole school community benefits. Children and young people are known, valued and supported to achieve their best; families feel respected and included; and staff feel trusted, confident and able to contribute to a positive and inclusive school culture.

## **Expectations:**

- The SENCo has sufficient authority, protected leadership time and strategic influence to shape decision-making and improve provision across the school.
- Leaders model inclusive behaviours and promote staff wellbeing, creating a culture where staff feel valued, confident and equipped to meet diverse range of barriers to learning and/or well-being, including those specific to their community and the school's context.
- Leaders work with families and professionals to identify barriers, monitor provision and take coordinated action to strengthen inclusion.
- Leaders contribute to the local area partnership by sharing expertise, aligning with city-wide priorities and strengthening inclusive practice across the wider system.
- Inclusion is embedded in the school's vision, policies and improvement plans, with policies co-produced and regularly reviewed to reflect shared values.
- The school's published SEN information report, is easily accessible and accurately describes the school's provision and support for pupils with SEND.
- Leaders make sure that any alternative provision the school uses is suitable and safe, and the decisions to place pupils in it are made in pupils' best interests.
- SEND and inclusion are integral to staff and leadership discussions, informing everyday practice, school improvement and whole-school decision-making.
- The SEND Link governor holds leaders to account appropriately and effectively for the school's SEND support and provision.

## **Signposts & Resources:**

- [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) - Statutory guidance on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25.
- [EEF Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools](#) - Whole-school strategic guidance offering five evidence-informed recommendations for inclusive leadership
- [Every Leader a Leader of SEND Tool](#) - A tool for leaders to explore how inclusion is communicated through policies, in practice and experienced by stakeholders.
- [The Head Teacher Handbook: SEND](#) - Practical guidance to remove barriers and strengthen inclusive teaching from Nasen and Whole School SEND.
- [Whole School SEND Review Guide](#) - A guide for SENCOs and other senior leaders to consider how the whole school functions for pupils with SEND.
- [Ofsted School Inspection Toolkit](#) - Guidance for inspectors and schools on inspecting maintained schools and academies in England.
- [NPQ SENCO, NPQH and other NPQ Frameworks](#) - National professional qualifications supporting strategic leadership of SEND and whole-school improvement.
- [SEND Link Governor Training](#) - Training that supports governors and trustees to understand their role in overseeing SEND provision in schools.
- [Birmingham SEND & Inclusion Strategies](#) - City-wide strategies setting the vision for SEND & inclusion.

# Creating Enabling Environments

An enabling environment helps every child and young person feel welcome, safe and ready to learn. It reflects a school culture where relationships, routines and spaces are designed to reduce anxiety, anticipate barriers and support participation. These environments recognise sensory, physical, communication and emotional needs and adapt proactively with input from children, families and professionals. When environments are inclusive by design and reviewed regularly, children feel a stronger sense of belonging, are better able to regulate and engage, and are supported to thrive across the school day.

## **Expectations:**

- Leaders create an inclusive ethos and culture where every child and young person feels welcome, valued and ready to learn within the school community.
- Staff receive training to understand sensory, communication and emotional differences, and to adapt the physical and social environment accordingly.
- Staff make reasonable adjustments and adaptations when considering pupils' needs, challenges and barriers.
- Learning and social spaces are organised to reduce barriers, support accessibility and promote positive interaction, connection and belonging.
- The environment design recognises and supports diverse communication needs, using visuals, alternative communication methods and accessible resources.
- Adjustments and adaptations to the environment and policies are made in ways that support children and young people to access education.
- Adaptations are reviewed regularly with children, families and relevant professionals to ensure settings remain enabling and inclusive.
- Schools avoid practices that may stigmatise or isolate learners, and design routines and responses that uphold dignity, safety and a strong sense of belonging.

## **Helpful Approaches & Signposts:**

- [Classroom Checklist](#) - Autism Education Trust Resource
- [Design Principles for schools](#): Autism Education Trust Resource
- [C-SENSE Environment Audits](#) - A FREE checklist that can be used to evaluate the mainstream school environment used by children with sensory processing differences
- [Birmingham Local Offer](#) - Communication-Friendly and Sensory Processing audits
- [Trauma Informed Multi-Agency Working Resource Pack](#) - Pages 21 and 22 provide visual ideas for creating a regulating environment
- [Equality Act 2010](#) - Government legislation making provisions that reduce inequalities
- Communication-friendly environment tools e.g. symbol-supported resources, AAC guidance and visual communication \_ e.g. [Widgit Symbols](#)

# Transition Across Whole Life Course

Transitions are significant moments in a child or young person's educational journey, whether moving into a new setting, changing year groups or preparing for the next phase of education. Effective transition support is planned, relational and informed by the needs and experiences of the individual. Schools work closely with children, families and other professionals to share information, reduce uncertainty and build confidence. Transitions are approached proactively so that support is in place early, expectations are clear and every learner feels prepared and welcomed into their new environment. When transitions are well supported, children and young people settle more quickly, sustain relationships, and are better able to engage and thrive.

## **Expectations:**

- Leaders support and communicate clear, consistent processes that support successful transitions at every stage, with children, families and other settings involved throughout.
- Transitions are planned across the whole life course – within the school day, between classes and year groups, between settings and phases, and into post-16 pathways – so that children experience a continuous and coherent journey.
- Communication with children, families and receiving settings is clear, timely and accessible, with opportunities to visit new environments and meet key staff.
- Information, records and relevant documents are transferred promptly and securely to support smooth handover.
- Schools identify early any children and young people who may need enhanced transition support and plan this with them and their families.
- Person-centred approaches help children and families share what matters to them and shape their transition plans so they feel prepared, informed and heard.
- Where support beyond universal provision is needed, transition planning follows the Graduated Approach, with clear outcomes, actions and responsibilities.
- Transition handovers are joined-up and multi-agency, with education, health, social care and other partners working together to coordinate information, plans and support.

## **Helpful Approaches & Signposts:** (\*To see examples of what this looks like in practice, see ['Additional Resources'](#) downloadable section online.)

- Visual supports such as maps, virtual tours, timetables, social stories.
- Transition events for CYP & families e.g. open evenings, welcome meetings, induction days, workshops, stay & plays, city-wide transition days.
- Robust One Page Profiles/Passports updated with CYP, families and staff, shared with new setting
- Buddy system or opportunities for previous CYP to meet and speak with current cohorts.
- Early communication with new setting identifying vulnerable CYP and sharing of SEND and medical information to enable new setting to be proactive with relevant training.
- Individual person-centred transition meetings/ SEND reviews with new school staff and families in attendance.
- Additional bespoke transition support involving CYP and families with key staff in new settings.
- SEND specific parent carer workshops/ coffee mornings focusing on transition.
- Signpost and advertise admission information, open events, induction and welcome events to families.

# Continuous Professional Learning and Development

Ongoing professional learning ensures all staff feel confident, knowledgeable and empowered to support children and young people with diverse needs. Effective CPD is part of a culture of continuous improvement, shaped by local context, staff feedback and the needs of children and young people. It prioritises practical, evidence-informed learning that strengthens classroom practice and builds professional confidence. When leaders invest in staff development and communicate these priorities clearly, it enhances the quality of provision, supports staff wellbeing and contributes to a positive and inclusive school culture.

## Expectations:

- All staff understand how their role contributes to children and young people feeling safe, included, confident and able to learn.
- Ongoing SEND-focused CPD is planned for all staff and is tailored to the needs of the cohort, setting and local community, complementing whole-school priorities.
- Early Career Teachers and new staff receive SEND-specific training as part of their induction.
- Staff contribute to their own professional learning through co-designed processes that recognise their strengths, interests and development needs.
- Leaders identify learning and development needs through a range of approaches and provide targeted training, evaluating its impact on practice and outcomes.
- Professional learning promotes staff wellbeing, confidence and a positive culture of support.
- Schools communicate key CPD priorities to families to build shared understanding of how staff are developing their SEND practice.
- Professional learning draws on expertise from Local Authority SEND Services, therapy teams, external partners and locality networks such as SENCO Consortia.

## Helpful Approaches & Signposts:

- [Using the OAG Training Slides](#) - Three sections. A set to share with SLT, a set for Parents and a set to introduce the OAG Section Two to teachers and support staff.
- [SENCO Noticeboard](#) - Regular updates containing valuable information for SENCOs and SEND Leads.
- [SENCO Induction Training](#) - Support to SENCOs new in post; complements the 'Aspiring SENCo' programme and the NPQ SENCo
- [SEND Occupational Therapy Training Offer](#) - Training to help improve confidence in daily activities, build independence and support sensory regulation.
- [Language, Learning and Strategic Support Team \(LLSS\) Training Offer](#) - Courses for education professionals to help support children with learning and language needs.
- [Communication and Autism Team Training Offer](#) - Training, practical tools, and a wealth of free resources to better support autistic children.
- [Physical Support Team Training Offer](#) - Courses for professionals to help support children with physical difficulties.
- [Nasen Whole School SEND Online SEND CPD Units](#) - Exploring some of the most common barriers in learning environments.
- [Autism Education Trust \(AET\) Training -The Bell Foundation Guidance](#) - Guidance focuses on different aspects of supporting EAL learners.
- [Birmingham Local Offer Website](#) - CPD and training from the Local Area Partnership - e.g. Educational Psychology, Health, SEND Therapy Teams, Social Care training offers.
- [WalkThrus](#) - System for professional development.

# Equity and Diversity

Equity and diversity are essential to creating a school where every child feels represented, respected and able to succeed. Equality means offering everyone the same, whereas equity means recognising that children may need different support to achieve fair outcomes. Diversity means valuing the full range of identities, languages and experiences within the community. Schools anticipate and remove barriers before they limit participation and ensure that policies, environments and curriculum choices reflect the community they serve. When equity and diversity are embedded in everyday practice, children feel seen and valued, and all have equal access to opportunities to learn, participate and feel included.

## **Expectations:**

- Equity, diversity and inclusion are reflected in the school's ethos, policies and everyday practice, with clear action to address racism, discrimination and bias.
- Children, young people, families and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and diversity is recognised and celebrated across school life.
- Reasonable adjustments are planned proactively to remove barriers to participation and learning and are reviewed to ensure they meet individual needs.
- Everyone has equal access to and participates in relevant extra-curricular activities, high-quality careers education opportunities and personal development opportunities.
- Communication with families is inclusive and accessible, using translated materials, interpreters and approaches that reflect the languages spoken in the community.
- The school's accessibility plan meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, is implemented effectively and is reviewed regularly.
- Curriculum design represents community diversity, uses resources that reflect a wide range of identities and experiences, and actively challenges stereotypes and stigma.
- Parent carers' views are gathered and used to inform decisions about provision, adjustments and school practice, with clear processes for acting on feedback.
- Leaders work with education, health, social care and community partners to identify and remove barriers so that support is coordinated and inclusive.

## **Helpful Approaches & Signposts:**

- [Accessibility Planning Toolkit](#) - A PDNet toolkit to effectively evaluate and plan improvements to access for people, particularly those with a physical disability.
- [Equality Act 2010](#) - Part 6 (Education) statutory duties relating to equality and diversity.
- [Raising Awareness of Physical Disabilities Training](#) - Free online training modules to develop awareness of physical disabilities and the impact this can have on learning.
- [NDCS \(deaf awareness and support\)](#), [RNIB \(vision impairment\)](#) and [Guide Dogs \(mobility and access support\)](#) - Specialist organisations and resources
- Curriculum & resources - inclusive texts and materials
- [Information for Professionals](#) - Information from Birmingham Children's Trust

# The Team Around the Child and Family

Working as a co-ordinated team around the child and family ensures that support is joined-up, timely and centred on the needs of the whole child. Schools collaborate with families, staff and professionals across education, health, social care and community services to build a shared understanding and agree clear actions. This partnership approach promotes consistent communication, shared responsibility and early intervention. When the team around the child works well, families feel included and informed, and children receive support that is joined-up, consistent and focused on their whole needs, strengthening their wellbeing, progress and sense of belonging.

## **Expectations:**

- Communication between all partners is clear, timely and accessible, with agreed processes for sharing information and updates.
- Information sharing is transparent and family-centred, with consent, confidentiality and data protection requirements understood and followed.
- Families know how and why information is shared, who is involved and what the next steps will be.
- Partners use a common, strengths-based language to build a shared understanding of the child or young person.
- The school participates fully in Early Help, Team Around the Family and Multi-Agency Planning meetings, including preparation, review and follow-up.
- Meetings are inclusive and accessible, with interpreters, alternative formats and reasonable adjustments provided where needed.
- Leaders provide clear oversight of multi-agency work, ensuring roles, responsibilities and actions are agreed, followed up and monitored.
- Joint planning focuses on the strengths, needs and aspirations of the child and family, ensuring support is coordinated and not duplicated.

## **Helpful Approaches & Signposts:**

- [Early Help](#) - Early Help enables timely, proactive support around the child and family, helping partners respond early and work together before needs escalate.
- [Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) - BSCP oversees how organisations work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children.
- [School Attendance](#) - advice and resources to assist with improving attendance.
- **Multi-agency planning meetings** - MAPMs are offered on a regular basis. These meetings are used to discuss key strategic actions and individual pupil cases.
- [NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#) - NHS Birmingham & Solihull ICB is part of the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System.
- [Change for Children and Young People: 2023-2028](#) - A five-year Children and Young People's Plan from Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership.

# Additional Needs

Children and families may face additional needs that affect wellbeing, participation or engagement in learning, even when these are not special educational needs. These may relate to health, housing, family circumstance, emotional wellbeing, caring responsibilities or experiences linked to migration, trauma or linguistic background. Understanding these contextual factors helps schools create a culture where every child feels safe, included and ready to learn.

## Expectations:

- Staff understand the diverse additional needs within its community, informed by local context, cultural awareness and the views of children, young people and families.
- Leaders prioritise strong, trusting relationships with children, young people and families so that emerging needs are identified early and barriers are reduced.
- Staff receive training to recognise and respond to additional needs, including mental health, adverse childhood experiences, caring responsibilities, disadvantage and experiences linked to migration or trauma.
- Support for learners who use English as an Additional Language is evidence-informed and includes structured opportunities for language and vocabulary development.
- Early Help, safeguarding and multi-agency processes are embedded within school systems so that children are kept safe and families receive early coordinated support.
- Policies, decision-making and reviews reflect the evolving needs of the community and ensure that support is equitable, anticipatory and joined-up.
- Leaders use Pupil Premium and other contextual funding strategically to remove barriers, strengthen engagement and support wellbeing.

## Helpful Approaches & Signposts:

[The Bell Foundation](#) - A range of CPD and free resources to support EAL learners in the mainstream school.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

[Birmingham Children's Trust](#) - Partnership resources

[Birmingham's Local Offer Website](#) - Find out about our Local Area Partnership across Education, Health & Social Care on the Local Offer website.

[NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board \(ICB\)](#) - NHS Birmingham & Solihull ICB is part of the area's Integrated Care System.

[Pupil premium: overview](#) - GOV.UK , [Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders](#) and [The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium | EEF](#) - guidance on spending pupil premium.

[Service pupil premium \(SPP\)](#) - GOV.UK - Service Pupils Premium guidance

[Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) - BSCP oversees how organisations work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children.

[Early Help](#) - Early Help enables timely, proactive support around the child and family, helping partners respond early and work together before needs escalate.

[City of Sanctuary](#) and [Support for Asylum Seekers](#) - Information about Birmingham as a City of Sanctuary, where we welcome and support people seeking asylum.

[Support for families and friends of prisoners](#) - Support and advice about how to support children with a relative in prison.

# OAG Principles of Inclusive Education: Strategic Reflection Framework

These prompt sheets are designed to help school and setting leaders reflect on the 10 Principles of Inclusive Education in Section One of Birmingham's Ordinarily Available Guidance (OAG).

They are not intended to be used as an audit, checklist or judgement tool. Instead, they offer questions and suggested activities to support professional reflection, leadership discussion and shared planning.

Leaders may use the prompts to explore how inclusive practice is experienced by children and young people, families, staff and the wider community. The prompts can support learning walks, policy review, staff discussion, parent-carer engagement, governor conversations, school improvement planning and professional development.

The aim is to help settings recognise what is already working well, identify where practice could be strengthened, and agree meaningful next steps that improve inclusion for all children and young people, including those with SEND.



# OAG - Suggested leadership activities 1/2

## 1. Leadership discussion

Use one prompt sheet during an SLT, inclusion team or phase leader meeting. Leaders discuss what is working well, what feels consistent, and where practice may vary across the setting.

Good for: Intentional reflection, identifying priorities, aligning inclusion with whole-school improvement planning.

## 2. Learning walk with a focus

Use one principle as the focus for a learning walk. The aim is not to judge individual staff, but to notice how the school environment, routines, language and teaching approaches reflect the principle.

Good for: seeing inclusive practice in action, identifying examples to celebrate, spotting barriers that may not be visible in policies.

## 3. Staff meeting or professional learning activity

Use the prompts to support a staff discussion. Staff can consider what the principle looks like in their daily role and what small adjustments would strengthen practice.

Good for: building shared understanding; developing inclusive culture, behaviours and whole-staff ownership

## 4. Parent-carer conversation

Use selected prompts to structure discussion with parent carers, especially around communication, trust, accessibility, partnership and feedback. This links well with Birmingham's Working Together guidance, which emphasises trust, prompt communication, accessible information and relationships without blame.

Good for: strengthening family-centred practice, reviewing communication, understanding lived experience.

# OAG - Suggested leadership activities 2/2

## 5. Pupil voice activity

Use child-friendly questions linked to the principle to gather views from children and young people. This could be through conversation, visuals, one-page profiles, surveys, school council, focus groups or trusted adult check-ins.

Good for: understanding whether children feel a sense of belonging, included, listened to and able to participate.

## 6. Policy review

Use the prompt sheet alongside a relevant policy, for example SEND, behaviour, attendance, accessibility, anti-bullying, curriculum or transition. Leaders consider whether the language, expectations and processes reflect inclusive practice.

Good for: checking that inclusive values are visible in written systems and not just individual practice.

## 7. Governor or trustee discussion

Use one or two principles to support strategic questions with governors or trustees. This can help governors understand how inclusion is being led, monitored and strengthened.

Good for: strategic oversight, SEND governor conversations, keeping a clear focus on inclusion (not just compliance).

## 8. Case reflection

Use a principle to reflect on a recent pupil journey, transition, review meeting or family experience. Leaders ask what helped, what got in the way, and what could be strengthened for future children.

Good for: learning from lived examples, improving systems, reducing barriers earlier.

# Working Together with Children and Families

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we make sure children, young people and families are treated as equal partners in decisions about support?
- How do leaders model trust, empathy and respectful communication with families?
- How do we know whether communication with families is clear, timely, accessible and easy to understand?
- How do we gather children's views in ways that match their age, communication needs and preferences?
- How do families help us better understand strengths, needs, barriers and what matters most to their child?
- Are children's and families' views influencing everyday decisions, or mainly being gathered for formal meetings?
- How do we act on feedback from families and show what has changed as a result?
- Do staff know how to signpost families to the Local Offer and other local sources of support?

## What you might notice in practice

- Families know who to contact and what to expect.
- Conversations with families are respectful, honest and solution-focused.
- Children and young people are supported to share their views in different ways.
- Plans and reviews include strengths, interests, aspirations and what matters to the child and family.
- Staff avoid jargon and explain processes clearly.
- Interpreters, translated information or alternative formats are used where needed.
- Feedback from families is gathered and used to improve practice.
- Parents and carers can see how their views have influenced decisions.



"Working together like this means I feel less anxious and more involved."



# Working Together with Children and Families

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do you know who can help you in school?
- Do you get a chance to say what helps you learn?
- Do you feel included in decisions about your support?

### Ask families:

- Do you feel listened to and taken seriously?
- Is communication clear and easy to understand?
- Do you know what support is in place and why?
- Are meetings accessible and useful?
- Can you see how your views have shaped next steps?

### Ask staff:

- Do we have consistent approaches for communicating with families?
- Do we know how to gather and use pupil views?
- Do we feel confident having honest, respectful conversations with families?
- Do we know where to signpost families for further support?

## Useful leadership activities

- Review a sample of recent support plans or review records and consider how clearly the child and family voice is reflected.
- Carry out a short parent-carer feedback activity focused on communication and partnership.
- Use a staff meeting to explore what good co-production looks like in everyday practice.
- Invite families to review whether written information is clear, accessible and free from jargon.
- Use a case reflection to consider how well the school worked with a family from first concern through to review.
- Discuss with governors how the school knows families feel informed, respected and involved.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one thing that is already working well and should be shared more widely;
- one barrier that children or families are experiencing;
- one practical change that could improve communication, trust or participation;
- one way to review whether the change has made a difference.

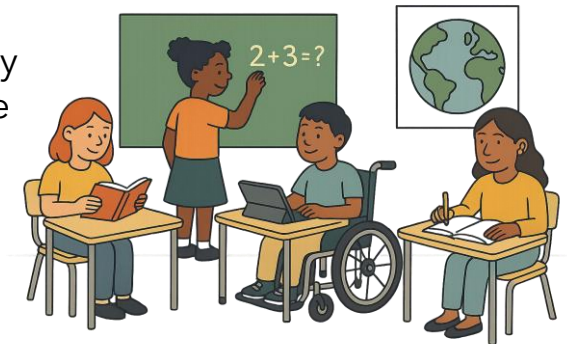
# High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we describe high quality adaptive teaching in our setting?
- Is there a shared understanding that inclusive teaching begins with everyday classroom practice?
- How do leaders know whether teaching is adapted effectively for children who find learning hardest?
- How do teachers use assessment to understand strengths, barriers and next steps?
- How do staff balance appropriate challenge with the support children need to access learning?
- How do we support children to develop independence, confidence and resilience?
- How do we ensure support from additional adults promotes participation rather than dependence?
- How does professional development strengthen adaptive teaching across the school?
- How do leaders use evidence from classroom practice to inform school improvement?

## What you might notice in practice

- Teachers understand the range of needs in their classrooms.
- Lessons include clear modelling, scaffolding, guided practice and opportunities for review.
- Children are supported to access the same broad curriculum wherever possible.
- Adaptations are planned in response to barriers, not added as an afterthought.
- Staff use accessible language, visuals, examples, chunking and flexible recording methods.
- Teaching assistants support independence and engagement.
- Children know what they are learning and what helps them succeed.
- Staff talk confidently about what they are trying, what is working and what they may need to adjust.



# High Quality Adaptive Teaching and Learning

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do you know what helps you learn?
- Do adults explain things in a way you understand?
- Do you get help when you need it?
- Do you feel able to try, make mistakes & keep going?

### Ask families:

- Do you understand how your child is being supported to access learning?
- Are you included in conversations about what helps your child learn?
- Can you see your child developing confidence and independence?
- Are there barriers to learning that you think school should know more about?

### Ask staff:

- Do we have a shared understanding of adaptive teaching?
- What helps us adapt teaching effectively?
- Where do we need further training or support?
- How do we know whether adaptations are improving access, progress and independence?

## Useful leadership activities

- Use a learning walk to explore how adaptive teaching is visible across different subjects or phases.
- Use staff discussion to identify what high quality adaptive teaching looks like in everyday practice.
- Review how teaching assistants are deployed and how their support promotes independence.
- Explore examples of planning to see how barriers are anticipated and addressed.
- Use pupil voice to understand whether children feel learning is accessible to them.
- Discuss with governors how leaders evaluate the quality and impact of inclusive teaching.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one area of adaptive teaching that is already strong;
- one common barrier to learning that needs a more consistent response;
- one professional development priority;
- one way to review the impact of adaptive teaching on participation, progress and independence.

# Continuous Professional Learning and Development

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we know what staff need to learn next to strengthen inclusive practice?
- Is SEND-focused professional development planned for all staff, not only the SENCo or support staff?
- How is CPD linked to the needs of children, families and the local community?
- How are Early Career Teachers and new staff supported to understand SEND and inclusion?
- How do staff contribute to identifying their own development needs?
- How do leaders evaluate whether CPD changes practice?
- How does professional learning support staff confidence and wellbeing?
- How do we draw on local authority services, external partners, SENCO networks and specialist expertise?
- How do we communicate key CPD priorities to families where this would build shared understanding?

## What you might notice in practice

- Staff understand how their role contributes to children feeling safe, included and able to learn.
- SEND and inclusion are part of induction for new staff.
- CPD is linked to real children, real barriers and everyday classroom practice.
- Staff have opportunities to discuss, practise, reflect and revisit learning.
- Training is followed up through coaching, modelling, peer support or review.
- Staff feel able to ask for help and share what is working.
- Leaders evaluate whether professional learning has improved practice.
- Staff wellbeing is considered when planning expectations and development.



# Continuous Professional Learning and Development

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do adults understand what helps you?
- What do adults do that helps you feel included?

### Ask families:

- Do staff seem to understand your child's needs?
- Are staff confident in using agreed strategies?
- Do you know how the school is developing its SEND practice?
- Are there areas where you feel staff need greater understanding?

### Ask staff:

- What helps us feel confident supporting diverse needs?
- What training has made the biggest difference to practice?
- Where do we need further development?
- How do we prefer to learn and reflect together?
- What would help us feel more supported?

## Useful leadership activities

- Use staff feedback to identify SEND and inclusion CPD priorities.
- Review induction materials for Early Career Teachers, new staff, supply staff and support staff.
- Use a staff meeting to reflect on how recent CPD has influenced practice.
- Map CPD priorities against the needs of the current cohort.
- Use learning walks or coaching conversations to explore whether training is visible in practice.
- Discuss with governors how leaders know CPD is improving inclusion.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one CPD strength that is improving practice;
- one area where staff confidence could grow;
- one way to make professional learning more practical and sustained;
- one way to evaluate the impact of CPD on children's experience.

# Creating Enabling Environments

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we know whether children feel welcome, safe and ready to learn in different parts of the school day?
- How do leaders ensure the physical and social environment reduces barriers rather than creating them?
- How are sensory, communication, emotional and physical needs considered across the school?
- How do staff make reasonable adjustments to routines, spaces and expectations?
- Are visuals, communication supports and accessible resources used consistently and meaningfully?
- How do we avoid practices that may stigmatise, isolate or shame learners?
- How are children, families and professionals involved in reviewing environmental adaptations?
- How do we ensure adaptations support dignity, independence and belonging?

## What you might notice in practice

- Classrooms and shared spaces are calm, organised and accessible.
- Children know routines and expectations.
- Visual supports are used where they help understanding and independence.
- Staff consider sensory needs, communication needs and emotional regulation.
- Safe or regulating spaces are used supportively, not as exclusion.
- Children can access resources and equipment they need.
- Adaptations are reviewed and changed when they are not helping.
- Movement around the school is safe and accessible.
- Adults respond to distress or dysregulation with dignity and curiosity.



# Creating Enabling Environments

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Are there places that feel too noisy, busy or difficult?
- Do you know what is happening next during the school day?
- Are there resources or spaces that help you manage?

### Ask families:

- Does your child feel welcome in school?
- Are there environmental barriers that affect your child's access or wellbeing?
- Are reasonable adjustments discussed and reviewed with you?
- Do you feel the school understands your child's sensory, communication, emotional or physical needs?

### Ask staff:

- Do we understand how the environment affects learning, regulation and belonging?
- Are reasonable adjustments made consistently?
- Do we know how to review whether adaptations are helping?
- Are there parts of the school day or site that create barriers for some children?

## Useful leadership activities

- Carry out an environment walk with a focus on accessibility, communication, sensory needs and belonging.
- Use pupil voice to map areas where children feel safe, included or overwhelmed.
- Review how safe spaces or regulation areas are used.
- Discuss with staff how routines can support predictability and independence.
- Use family feedback to identify environmental barriers that may not be obvious to staff.
- Review the accessibility plan alongside this principle.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one environmental strength that supports inclusion;
- one barrier in the physical, sensory or social environment;
- one adaptation that could improve access or belonging;
- one way to involve children and families in reviewing the environment and/or school day.

# Transition Across Whole Life Course

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we plan for transitions across the whole school day and across the whole educational journey?
- How do we identify children and young people who may need enhanced transition support?
- How early do we begin transition planning?
- How are children, young people and families involved in shaping transition support?
- How do we share information clearly, securely and in good time?
- How do staff prepare children for changes in routine, staffing, environment or expectations?
- How do we work with other settings, phases and professionals to support smooth handover?
- How do we review whether transition support has worked?

## What you might notice in practice

- Children are prepared for changes before they happen.
- Staff understand which children may find transitions difficult and why.
- Transition information includes strengths, interests, support strategies and what matters to the child.
- Families know what will happen, when and who is involved.
- Receiving staff have the information they need before the child arrives.
- Visuals, visits, social stories, maps, photographs or transition books are used where helpful.
- Transition support is personalised rather than one-size-fits-all.
- Staff check how children have settled and adjust support if needed.



# Transition Across Whole Life Course

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do you know what will happen next?..
- What helps you when something changes?
- Are there parts of the day or year that feel difficult?
- Do you know who will help you during a transition?
- What would help you feel more prepared?

### Ask families:

- Were you given clear information in good time?
- Were your views and your child's views included in transition planning?
- Did staff understand what helps your child manage change?
- Did the transition plan help your child feel more settled?
- What could have been better?

### Ask staff:

- Do we know which transitions are most difficult for children?
- Is information shared clearly and in time?
- Are transition plans practical and personalised?
- Do we review how well children settle after transition?

## Useful leadership activities

- Map key transition points across the school day, year and phase.
- Review a recent transition case and identify what helped or could be strengthened.
- Gather family feedback after transition into the school, a new class or a new phase.
- Review the quality and usefulness of transition information shared between staff or settings.
- Use pupil voice to understand daily transitions that may create anxiety or barriers.
- Discuss with governors how transition planning supports attendance, wellbeing and inclusion.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one transition process that works well;
- one transition point that needs more consistent planning;
- one way to strengthen child and family involvement;
- one way to review the impact of transition support.

# The Team Around the Child and Family

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How do we ensure communication between partners is clear, timely and accessible?
- How do families know who is involved, why they are involved and what will happen next?
- How do we make information sharing transparent, lawful and family-centred?
- How do partners use strengths-based language when talking about children and families?
- How well do we prepare for, participate in and follow up multi-agency meetings?
- How do leaders ensure the right staff attend meetings and actions are followed through?
- How are roles, responsibilities and timescales agreed and monitored?
- How do we avoid duplication or confusion for families?
- How do we know whether multi-agency working is improving outcomes and experience?

## What you might notice in practice

- Families understand who is involved and why.
- Meetings are accessible, purposeful and focused on the child and family.
- Interpreters, alternative formats or reasonable adjustments are arranged where needed.
- Actions are clear, recorded and followed up.
- Staff and professionals use respectful, strengths-based language.
- Information is shared appropriately and with clear consent.
- Leaders maintain oversight of complex cases and multi-agency work.
- Support feels coordinated rather than fragmented.



# The Team Around the Child and Family

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do you know who supports you and why?
- Are you asked what matters to you?
- Do meetings or plans help things feel better for you?

### Ask families:

- Do you understand who is involved and what their role is?
- Do professionals communicate clearly with you and with each other?
- Do meetings feel accessible and useful?
- Are actions followed up?
- Do you feel you have to repeat your story too often?

### Ask staff:

- Are we clear about roles and responsibilities in multi-agency work?
- Do we prepare well for meetings?
- Do we follow up actions consistently?
- Do we use family-centred and strengths-based language?
- Are there barriers that make partnership working difficult?

## Useful leadership activities

- Review a recent multi-agency meeting to consider preparation, participation and follow-up.
- Use family feedback to understand whether support feels joined-up.
- Map the roles of professionals involved in a complex case and identify any duplication or gaps.
- Review how consent, confidentiality and information sharing are explained to families.
- Discuss with staff what makes multi-agency meetings purposeful and accessible.
- Use governor discussion to explore how leaders maintain oversight of multi-agency work.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one strength in current multi-agency working;
- one point where communication or follow-up could be clearer;
- one way to make meetings more accessible for families;
- one way to monitor whether joined-up working is making a difference.

# Leading Inclusion in Schools

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How clearly is inclusion reflected in our school vision, values and priorities?
- How do senior leaders model inclusive behaviours in everyday interactions and decisions?
- Does the SENCo have the authority, time and influence needed to shape whole-school practice?
- How do leaders ensure inclusion is everyone's responsibility?
- How are SEND and inclusion discussed in leadership meetings, staff meetings and improvement planning?
- How do policies reflect inclusive values and practice?
- How do leaders work with families and professionals to identify and remove barriers?
- How does the SEND link governor or trustee understand and support inclusive practice?
- How do we contribute to wider local partnership working and learn from others?

## What you might notice in practice

- Inclusion is visible in strategic plans, policies and everyday leadership decisions.
- The SENCo is part of strategic decision-making.
- Staff understand their role in supporting inclusion.
- Leaders talk about children's strengths, needs and barriers using respectful, solution-focused language.
- SEND is considered in curriculum, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, pastoral and staff development decisions.
- Governors ask thoughtful questions about experience, access, progress and belonging.
- Families and professionals are involved in identifying barriers and planning support.
- Staff feel supported, valued and equipped to meet diverse needs.



# Leading Inclusion in Schools

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do adults understand what helps you feel included?
- Are there times when you feel left out or unable to join in?
- Do you know who you can speak to if something is difficult?

### Ask families:

- Does the school feel welcoming and inclusive?
- Do you feel leaders listen and respond when there are barriers to your child participating?
- Is information about SEND and support easy to find and understand?
- Do you feel confident that inclusion is a whole-school priority?

### Ask staff:

- Do leaders model inclusive practice?
- Do we understand our role in supporting children with SEND?
- Do we feel confident and supported to adapt practice?
- Are SEND and inclusion visible in whole-school decisions?

## Useful leadership activities

- Use the prompt sheet in an SLT meeting to reflect on how inclusion is led across the school.
- Review the school improvement plan and identify where SEND and inclusion are explicitly reflected.
- Discuss with the SENCo whether they have sufficient leadership time, authority and influence.
- Use a governor meeting to explore how leaders know inclusion is making a difference.
- Review key policies through an inclusion lens.
- Use staff feedback to understand whether staff feel equipped and supported.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one way inclusion is already strongly embedded in leadership practice;
- one area where inclusion needs to be more visible in whole-school systems;
- one leadership action that would strengthen staff confidence;
- one way governors can better understand and support inclusive practice.

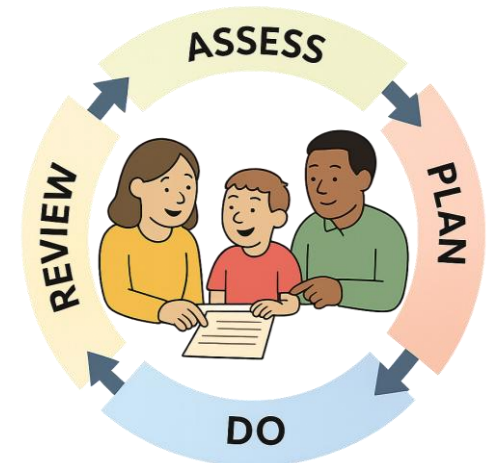
# Graduated Approach

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How well do staff understand the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle?
- Is the graduated approach embedded in classroom practice, or mainly held within SEND paperwork?
- How do teachers identify strengths, barriers and emerging needs?
- How are children, young people and families involved at each stage?
- Are support plans strengths-based, personalised and focused on clear outcomes?
- How do leaders ensure staff use OAG strategies before moving too quickly to look for more specialist support?
- How do we know whether support is making a meaningful difference?
- How do we use learning from individual cases to strengthen practice for other children?
- How are external partners involved when needed, and how is their advice implemented?

## What you might notice in practice

- Staff can explain the needs, strengths and barriers of children they teach.
- Support is planned around clear outcomes rather than general activities.
- Children and families are involved in agreeing and reviewing next steps.
- Strategies are reviewed and adjusted when they are not working.
- Teachers remain responsible for children's learning, even where additional support is in place.
- External advice is translated into practical classroom strategies.
- Records are useful, proportionate and accessible to staff who need them.
- Leaders use patterns from individual cases



# Graduated Approach

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do adults know what helps you?
- Do you know what you are working towards?
- Are you asked what's working and what's not working?
- Do you feel included in conversations about your support?

### Ask families:

- Do you understand what support is being provided and why?
- Are your views included when needs are assessed and plans are reviewed?
- Are outcomes meaningful for your child?
- Do you know what will happen next if support needs to change?

### Ask staff:

- Do we understand how to use Assess, Plan, Do, Review in everyday practice?
- Are support plans practical and useful?
- Do we know how to review impact?
- Do we feel confident knowing when to seek further advice?

## Useful leadership activities

- Review a small sample of support plans to explore whether outcomes are clear, personalised and co-produced.
- Use a case reflection to consider how assessment led to planning, action and review.
- Hold a staff discussion on what makes a review meaningful rather than procedural.
- Explore whether specialist advice is being implemented consistently in classrooms.
- Use pupil and family feedback to understand whether the support cycle feels joined-up.
- Discuss with governors how leaders know the graduated approach is effective.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one strength in how the graduated approach is currently used;
- one part of the cycle that needs to be strengthened;
- one way to improve child and family involvement;
- one way to make reviews more focused on impact and next steps.

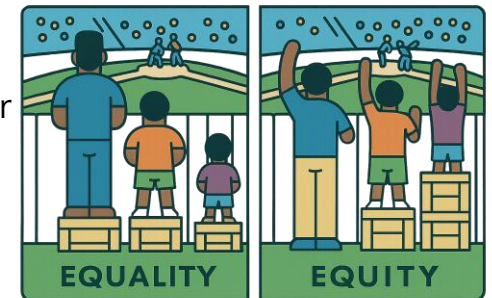
# Equity and Diversity

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How are equity, diversity and inclusion reflected in our ethos, policies and everyday practice?
- How do leaders identify and address racism, discrimination, bias and stigma?
- How do we ensure all children, families and staff are treated with dignity and respect?
- How do we plan reasonable adjustments proactively rather than waiting for barriers to appear?
- How do we know whether all children can access extra-curricular, careers and personal development opportunities?
- Is communication with families inclusive, accessible and responsive to the languages spoken in the community?
- How well does the curriculum reflect the diversity of children's identities, experiences and communities?
- How are parent-carer views used to inform provision, adjustments and practice?
- How is the accessibility plan implemented and reviewed?

## What you might notice in practice

- Children see themselves and others represented positively in the curriculum and school environment.
- Staff challenge stereotypes, stigma and discriminatory language.
- Reasonable adjustments are planned, used and reviewed.
- Families receive information in accessible formats and languages where needed.
- Participation in wider school life is monitored and barriers are addressed.
- Children and families are treated with dignity in policies, routines and decisions.
- Staff understand the difference between equality and equity.
- Leaders use feedback and data to identify patterns of exclusion or under-representation.



# Equity and Diversity

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Do you see people like you represented in school?
- Can you join in with clubs, trips, events and learning opportunities?
- Are there times when you feel treated unfairly?
- Do adults challenge unkind or discriminatory language?

### Ask families:

- Does communication from school feel accessible and respectful?
- Do you feel your child's identity, culture, language and needs are understood?
- Are adjustments discussed and reviewed with you?
- Are there barriers that make it harder for your child or family to participate?

### Ask staff:

- Do we understand what equality and equity means?
- Do we challenge bias, discrimination and stigma?
- How do we know whether all children have equal access to opportunities?
- Does our curriculum reflect our community?
- Are our policies inclusive in language and practice?

## Useful leadership activities

- Review a policy through an equity and accessibility lens.
- Use pupil voice to explore belonging, representation and fairness.
- Review participation in trips, clubs, leadership roles, careers activities and enrichment.
- Walk the school environment and consider what messages it gives about identity, belonging and diversity.
- Review the accessibility plan and identify progress made.
- Use parent-carer feedback to understand barriers linked to language, culture, disability, poverty or access.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one way the school already celebrates and reflects diversity well;
- one barrier to participation or representation;
- one policy, routine or curriculum area to review;
- one way to gather and act on feedback from under-represented groups.

# Additional Needs

## Leadership reflection prompts

- How well do we understand the diverse needs and lived experiences within our school community?
- How do leaders use local context, family voice and community knowledge to inform provision?
- How do staff build trusting relationships so emerging needs are noticed early?
- How do we recognise and respond to needs that may not be SEND but still affect learning, attendance, wellbeing or participation?
- How do staff understand the impact of trauma, disadvantage, caring responsibilities, migration, health or family circumstances?
- How do we support learners who use English as an Additional Language?
- How are Early Help, safeguarding and multi-agency processes embedded in school systems?
- How do policies and decision-making reflect the changing needs of the community?
- How is Pupil Premium and other contextual funding used strategically to remove barriers?

## What you might notice in practice

- Staff know children well and notice changes in presentation, attendance, engagement or wellbeing.
- Families are approached with curiosity, respect and without blame.
- Staff understand that barriers to learning may be linked to wider circumstances.
- EAL learners receive structured support for language development and vocabulary learning.
- Early Help and safeguarding processes are understood and used appropriately.
- Leaders use contextual information to shape provision and priorities.
- Funding is targeted to improve access, engagement, wellbeing and participation.
- Partnerships with community, health, social care and voluntary organisations support early help.



# Additional Needs

## Voices to listen to

### Ask children and young people:

- Are there things outside school that make learning or attending harder?
- Do adults understand what helps you feel ready to learn?
- Do you feel included in school life?

### Ask families:

- Do you feel school understands your family's circumstances?
- Are conversations respectful and supportive?
- Do you know where to go for help?
- Are there barriers that make attendance, learning or participation harder?
- Does the school help you access support early?

### Ask staff:

- Do we understand the wider factors that may affect children's learning and wellbeing?
- Are we confident knowing what to do when needs emerge?
- Do we know how to access Early Help or wider support?
- Are there community needs we need to understand better?

## Useful leadership activities

- Use local context and school data to identify barriers affecting attendance, wellbeing, learning and participation.
- Review how staff identify and respond to emerging additional needs.
- Discuss a case where needs were not SEND but still affected access to education.
- Review support for EAL learners, including vocabulary and language development.
- Map community partners, Family Hubs, Early Help routes and local support.
- Review the use of Pupil Premium and other funding against barriers experienced by children and families.

## Possible next steps

### Leaders may want to identify:

- one additional need or contextual barrier that is well understood;
- one area where staff need greater confidence or training;
- one way to strengthen early identification and support;
- one way to use community partnerships or funding more strategically.