Waterwells
Primary Academy & Pre-School

Waterwells Primary Academy
Inclusion Strategy

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Inclusion Strategy

Waterwells Primary

At Waterwells Primary, we recognise inclusion is not an additional strategy, nor a discrete area of school improvement, it is central to every decision we make. We judge the quality of education by the impact we have on all pupils' outcomes and experiences, especially our pupils with special educational or additional needs. This statement therefore should be read in conjunction with our school improvement priorities and associated plans and evaluations.

This statement details our school's approach to addressing identified barriers to inclusion to deliver inclusive practice for all children, including those with SEND, funded by our core school budget (including the notional SEN budget) and the inclusive mainstream fund (IMF).

Strategy overview

Detail	Date
Academic year/years that our current Inclusion Strategy covers	2026-2027
Date this statement was published:	December 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed:	December 2027
Statement authorised by:	Stephen Derry

Statement of intent

At Waterwells Primary Academy, inclusion means ensuring every pupil—irrespective of background, neurodiversity, socio-economic context, or special educational needs—develops a genuine sense of belonging, accesses a high-quality universal curriculum, and achieves their full potential. We measure our success not solely by academic attainment, but by pupils' engagement, physical and emotional wellbeing, attendance, and active participation in wider school life. This strategy builds on our high-quality universal offer to increase both accessibility and stretch, using a robust graduated approach to ensure additional, early, targeted support and intervention removes barriers to learning before they compound and increases impact on pupils' access to the universal offer.

In line with DfE Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) guidance, our strategy focuses on building a strong, accessible universal offer while delivering early, evidence-based targeted interventions without relying solely on statutory diagnoses.

The 7 principles of inclusion are:

- ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion
- evidence-based support prioritising early intervention
- high quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners
- enriching provision beyond the classroom that all children can access
- a safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance, and participation in learning
- strong partnerships with families and wider services
- inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility

We specifically prioritise the following core DfE principles of inclusion:

- **Principle 3: High quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners** – Placing high-quality, evidence-informed classroom practice at the heart of our strategy as the single most effective lever for all children, supported by structured instructional coaching and adaptive pre-teaching.
- **Principle 2: Evidence-based support prioritising early intervention** – Addressing speech, language, and self-regulation needs early in Pre-School/EYFS, and delivering targeted small-group and 1-1 academic and nurture interventions.
- **Principle 5: A safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance, and participation in learning** – Sustaining relational attendance support, reducing persistent absence, and utilizing Thrive/Nurture provisions to build self-regulation and reduce suspension rates.

This strategy has been informed by our evaluation of current provision, internal and statutory assessment data, attendance and punctuality tracking, Thrive profile assessments, behaviour and suspension records, stakeholder surveys, and external visits. It should be read alongside the school's SEN Information Report, Accessibility Plan, and Pupil Premium Strategy Statement.

Barriers to learning and participation

This details the key barriers to learning and participation that we have identified amongst our pupils.

	Detail of barrier to learning, participation or both	How we know this is priority to address (evidence from our cohort)
1	**Communication, Language, and Literacy Gaps in Early Years and on school entry:** Underdeveloped oral language, listening, and attention on entry to EYFS/Pre-school; compounds impact on reading, writing and maths attainment.	• Pre-School and Reception entry baseline data • Speech link assessment data (Reception individual pupil assessments) • Communication & Interaction (SLCN) is the largest area of need in EYFS and Key Stage 1. **EYFS Entry/ baseline Data:** Pre-school: Listening, attention & understanding 62% below expected (38% ARE) Speaking 46% below expected (54% ARE) Reception: Speaking 64% ARE, Listening, attention & understanding 63% ARE, Word reading 61% ARE and Writing 57% ARE.
2	**Belonging, sensory and self regulation** **Growth in Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) Needs & Self-Regulation Interruption:** Higher rates of emotional regulation difficulties impacting classroom engagement, behaviour, and attendance. Sensory environment triggers and emotional regulation difficulties hinder transition times and peer/adult	**SEND Register profile:** Increasing SEMH numbers over time. SEMH is a primary identified need across 20+ registered pupils, including 3 of 8 EHCPs (Nov 2026). Internal data shows an increase in pupils referred, awaiting diagnosis and diagnosed with ADHD.

	relationships, for some pupils, contributing to classroom disengagement.	• **Suspension Data:** 2025–26 suspension data shows vulnerable/ disadvantaged pupils with SEND represented 80% of suspensions (8/10 in 25/26). • **Attendance link:** Relational/anxiety factors noted for some pupils as core drivers for absence.
3	**Attendance and persistent absence Gaps for SEND, Disadvantaged pupils:** Although whole-school attendance has improved significantly, persistent absence (PA) remains disproportionately higher for Pupil Premium pupils and SEND pupils vs non disadvantage/ SEND pupils.	**PA Data (2025–26):** PP Persistent Absence is 24.5% compared to Non-PP at 6.3% (a 18.2% gap). SEND 15.7% compared to all pupils 13%. • **Gender Disparity (2025–26):** Girls' PA much greater at 17.5% compared to Boys' PA at 7.9%. School identified need from stakeholder surveys: further nurture groups/ targeted anxiety/EBSA interventions for identified pupils.

Intended outcomes

This explains the clear, realistic outcomes we want our inclusive approaches to achieve **by the end of our inclusion strategy**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
1. Communication, Language & Early Literacy: Improved communication and language outcomes in EYFS (speaking, listening, attention, and understanding) and reduced early literacy gaps across EYFS and Key Stage 1.	• **Pre-School Progression:** The proportion of Pre-School pupils achieving Age-Related Expectations (ARE) increases from baseline (38% in Listening, Attention & Understanding; 54% in Speaking) to at least **75%+** by the end of the Pre-school year. • **Reception & GLD Attainment:** Reception cohort achieves **75%+ ARE** across Communication & Language (up from 63–64% baseline) and reduce early literacy gaps in Word Reading (from 61% ARE) and Writing (from 57% ARE) to meet or exceed national Good Level of Development (GLD) benchmarks. • **Targeted SLCN Impact:** 85%+ of pupils receiving targeted Speech Link and language interventions make accelerated progress, closing identified oral language gaps prior to Year 1 transition. • **KS1 Literacy Transfer (in forthcoming years):** Year 1 Phonics Screening Check outcomes and end-of-KS1 reading/writing attainment for disadvantaged and SEND pupils narrow the gap to peers.
2. Belonging, Sensory & Self-Regulation (SEMH): Reduce emotional regulation interruptions and sensory overload while building pupil self-efficacy, relational safety, and sense of	• **Nurture & Thrive Impact:** 85%+ of pupils accessing Thrive, nurture groups, or targeted SEMH/neurodiversity (ADHD) support demonstrate measurable stage advancement and improved emotional regulation

belonging across all key stages.	strategies. ● **Inclusive Environments:** Environmental audits confirm 100% of classrooms maintain predictable routines, visual timetables, and accessible adaptations to support smooth transitions. ● **Pupil Voice & Belonging:** Pupil voice/ survey to evidence that 90%+ of SEND and vulnerable pupils identify a trusted adult and report feeling safe and included at school. ● **Classroom Engagement:** Reduction in classroom-based behaviour and emotional regulation interruptions during whole-class instruction and task transitions (reflected in lower termly CPOMS/incident logs and reduced suspension rates).
3. Attendance & Persistent Absence (EBSA & Equity): Reduce relational and anxiety-driven attendance avoidance (EBSA) and narrow the persistent absence (PA) gap for Pupil Premium, SEND, and female pupils.	● **Whole-School Attendance:** Whole-school attendance is sustained at or above **95.5%** (≥95.5%). ● **Pupil Premium PA Gap:** Pupil Premium persistent absence drops from 24.5% to **below 18%** (narrowing the current 18.2% gap against Non-PP peers at 6.3%). ● **SEND PA Reduction:** SEND persistent absence drops from 15.7% to **below 12%**, aligning closely with or outperforming the whole-school cohort average (13%). ● **Gender Parity in PA:** Girls' persistent absence reduces from 17.5% to **below 10%**, closing the disparity with boys' persistent absence (7.9%). ● **Targeted EBSA/Anxiety Support:** 85%+ of pupils identified for nurture/EBSA interventions show sustained term-on-term attendance improvements.

Activity in this academic year

What activities we will prioritise this academic year to achieve our intended outcomes.

In this context, ‘activity’ is a reporting term to help understand where funding has been allocated to build an inclusive core offer and does not indicate only targeted provision. Activity may address multiple barriers identified.

Layer (*Universal / Targeted)*	**Description of activity**	**Evidence that supports this approach**	**Barrier number(s) addressed**	**Total budgeted cost** *(this should account for spend from IMF and core budget allocations)*
Universal *(with Targeted Pre-Teaching)*	**Instructional Coaching & High-Quality Adaptive Teaching:** • Embed **Steplab** instructional coaching across all teaching staff to master high-leverage adaptive teaching routines (dual-coding, scaffolded sentence stems, structured talk, chunked instructions) for SEND and vulnerable learners. • Scale dedicated Teaching Partner (TP) pre-teaching and short-burst maths fluency/writing interventions into Years 3, 4, and 5 so pupils access whole-class lessons with confidence. • Embed predictable classroom routine, adaptations and visual timetables across all	• **EEF Effective Professional Development & Pupil Premium Guide:** High-quality teaching is the single most important lever for closing achievement gaps. Instructional coaching and deliberate practice yield significant pupil progress gains. • **EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit – Metacognition & Self-Regulation (+7 months):** Explicitly scaffolding cognitive strategies and chunking tasks reduces working memory overload and supports executive functioning. • **EEF Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants (+4 months):** Structured, time-limited pre-teaching and brief catch-up sessions delivered by trained TPs	**1 & 2**	**£650 Steplab (partial funding)** **£1800 towards PD release cover and training**

	classrooms to support smooth transitions and working memory. *DfE Principles:* *Principle 1 (Ambitious leadership), Principle 3 (High-quality adaptive teaching), Principle 7 (Inclusive environments).*	supplement—rather than replace—high-quality teacher instruction.		
Targeted *(with Universal Oracy Link)*	**Specialist Speech, Language & Communication (SLCN) Provision:** ● Deploy a trained adult to screen both Pre-School and Reception cohorts and deliver targeted **Speech Link** and **Language for Thinking** interventions in EYFS and KS1. ● Deliver individualised Speech & Language Therapy (SaLT) targets as prescribed by external therapists for identified pupils. ● Cascade vocabulary and structured talk routines into universal EYFS/KS1 provision. *DfE Principles:* *Principle 2 (Evidence-based early intervention), Principle 6 (Strong partnerships with wider services).*	● **EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit – Oral Language Interventions (+6 months):** Emphasising spoken language, explicit vocabulary instruction, and verbal interaction has very high impact for low cost, particularly in Early Years and Primary settings and for disadvantaged pupils. ● **EEF Preparing for Literacy Guidance Report:** Prioritising the development of high-quality communication and language in EYFS is foundational to subsequent word reading and writing attainment. ● **EEF Teaching Assistant Interventions (+4 months):** Structured, evidence-based 1:1 and small-group language programmes delivered consistently (3+ times weekly) by trained staff accelerate oral language catch-up.	**1**	**£6700 (Trained practitioner SLCN interventions for two terms, 10hrs per week)** **£375 (Little Link)**

Targeted	**Thrive Practitioner, Nurture TP Support & Targeted Mentoring:** • Deliver dedicated **Thrive** 1:1 and small-group sessions, Drawing & Talking therapy, Lego therapy, and Trailblazer MHST referrals to build emotional self-regulation and neurodiversity (ADHD) support. • Provide structured nurture groups and targeted anxiety/EBSA interventions for identified pupils. • Deploy targeted mentoring for pupils whose needs exceed universal/in-house thresholds while awaiting external specialist pathways. • Deliver whole-school CPD on relational practice and de-escalation to reduce classroom removals and suspensions. *DfE Principles: Principle 2 (Early intervention), Principle 4 (Enriching provision beyond the classroom), Principle 5 (Safe and respectful culture fostering belonging).*	• **EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit – Social and Emotional Learning (+3 months):** Structured SEL interventions improve pupils' decision-making, self-regulation, and interactions with others, yielding particularly strong benefits for disadvantaged learners. • **EEF Improving Behaviour in Schools Guidance Report:** Proactive relational approaches, whole-staff consistency in de-escalation, and targeted small-group support reduce disruptive behaviour and suspensions. • **EEF Teaching & Learning Toolkit – Mentoring (+2 months):** Providing vulnerable pupils with a consistent, trusted adult role model improves confidence, resilience, and engagement.	**2 & 3**	**Mentoring £2500** **NB: Thrive practitioner and nurture also through PP strategy funding.**
Targeted	**Attendance Officer, Morning Nurture Arrival & EBSA Interventions:** • Proactive relational attendance tracking, soft-landing morning routine support groups, and targeted family casework to remove barriers to attendance for Pupil Premium and SEND	• **EEF Attendance Interventions Rapid Evidence Assessment:** Responsive, relational, and family-centred approaches—combined with targeted mentoring and anxiety support—are most effective at tackling persistent absence (PA). • **EEF Working with Parents to Support**	**3**	**EBSA and attendance support** **£2675**

	pupils. • Nurture team to deliver targeted relational check-ins and barrier-removal plans specifically for high-risk female pupils (addressing the 17.5% PA disparity) and PP families. • Embed graduated, trauma-informed Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) return-to-school plans in partnership with parents and external agencies - supported by attendance support practitioner. *DfE Principles: Principle 5 (Safe culture fostering attendance & belonging), Principle 6 (Strong partnerships with families and wider services).*	**Children's Learning (+4 months):** Building supportive, non-judgmental partnerships with families and offering practical communication/support strengthens school attendance and engagement. • **DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance:** Emphasises early identification of attendance patterns, 'listen, understand, empathise and support' relational workflows, and multi-agency EBSA support.		

Review of the previous academic year

From year two, you should outline the progress you made towards your intended outcomes during the previous academic year and explain how this was assessed. In doing this, you should note the impact that your strategy had on pupils' engagement, participation, attendance, sense of belonging, and attainment. This should include a reflection on the positive outcomes achieved for children and young people with additional needs and SEND.

You should critically review what aspects of your strategy worked well / did not have the intended impact and explain how this has informed your drafting of this year's strategy.

To support this, you should use:

- *Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications, once published (a note of caution can be added to signal that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).*
- *Information from summative and formative assessments the school has undertaken.*
- *School data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting inclusion, including access to learning, attendance, engagement, and early identification.*

Intended outcome	Activity undertaken	Evidence of impact (what worked well)	What did not have the intended impact?	Future considerations
Add or delete rows as needed				

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any additional information you think necessary to help others understand your strategy.

Dual Need Overlay: Internal analysis confirms that 31% of disadvantaged pupils also have SEND. Factoring out SEND reveals that Pupil Premium pupils with no SEND perform comparably to, or above, non-disadvantaged peers across several cohorts. Inclusion strategies are strictly aligned to ensure both academic scaffolding and emotional regulation are delivered concurrently