Inclusion Strategy – Sunnyside Primary Academy 2026/2027

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

Strategy Overview

Academic year that our current Inclusion Strategy covers	2026/27
Date this statement was published	October 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement produced by	Katie Ridnell, Assistant Principal for Inclusion
Statement authorised by	Dale Johnson, Principal
Academy % SEN Support	10.8%
Academy % EHC Plan	4.8%
IMF allocation	£19,200

Statement of intent

The purpose of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund is to help schools become more inclusive by design. The fund supports schools to strengthen their universal offer, remove common barriers to learning and participation, and provide early, effective support for pupils with additional needs and SEND. We use this funding, alongside our core budget and notional SEN budget, to ensure that inclusion sits at the heart of Sunnyside Primary Academy.

This inclusion strategy sets out how the academy invests in a small number of carefully chosen activities that improve outcomes for pupils. These activities aim to help more pupils access learning, feel safe, develop independence, attend well, take part fully in school life, and achieve well.

As this is the first year of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, the academy has chosen to publish a one-year strategy. This allows leaders to focus funding, time and staff development on a small number of high-impact priorities. The academy does not see this work as starting from scratch. It builds on the inclusive practice that is already in place, such as high-quality teaching, adaptive teaching strategies, targeted interventions, pupil voice, work with families, and support from external professionals.

Leaders have developed this strategy by looking carefully at the needs of its pupils and the barriers they face. This has included consulting parents, pupils and staff to ensure that the strategy reflects local needs and the lived experience of children at the academy.

Staff Voice
Staff report that inclusion is a clear strength of the academy and is actively prioritised through strong leadership, adaptive teaching, effective intervention systems and a culture of high expectations for all pupils. Colleagues highlight the positive impact of visual supports, scaffolding, modelling, structured routines and strong relationships in helping pupils access learning and develop independence. Staff identified opportunities to further strengthen support for pupils with dyslexia, cognition and learning needs, and to continue developing consistency in adaptive teaching and inclusion practice across the academy. [Inclusion...taff(1-21) | Excel]

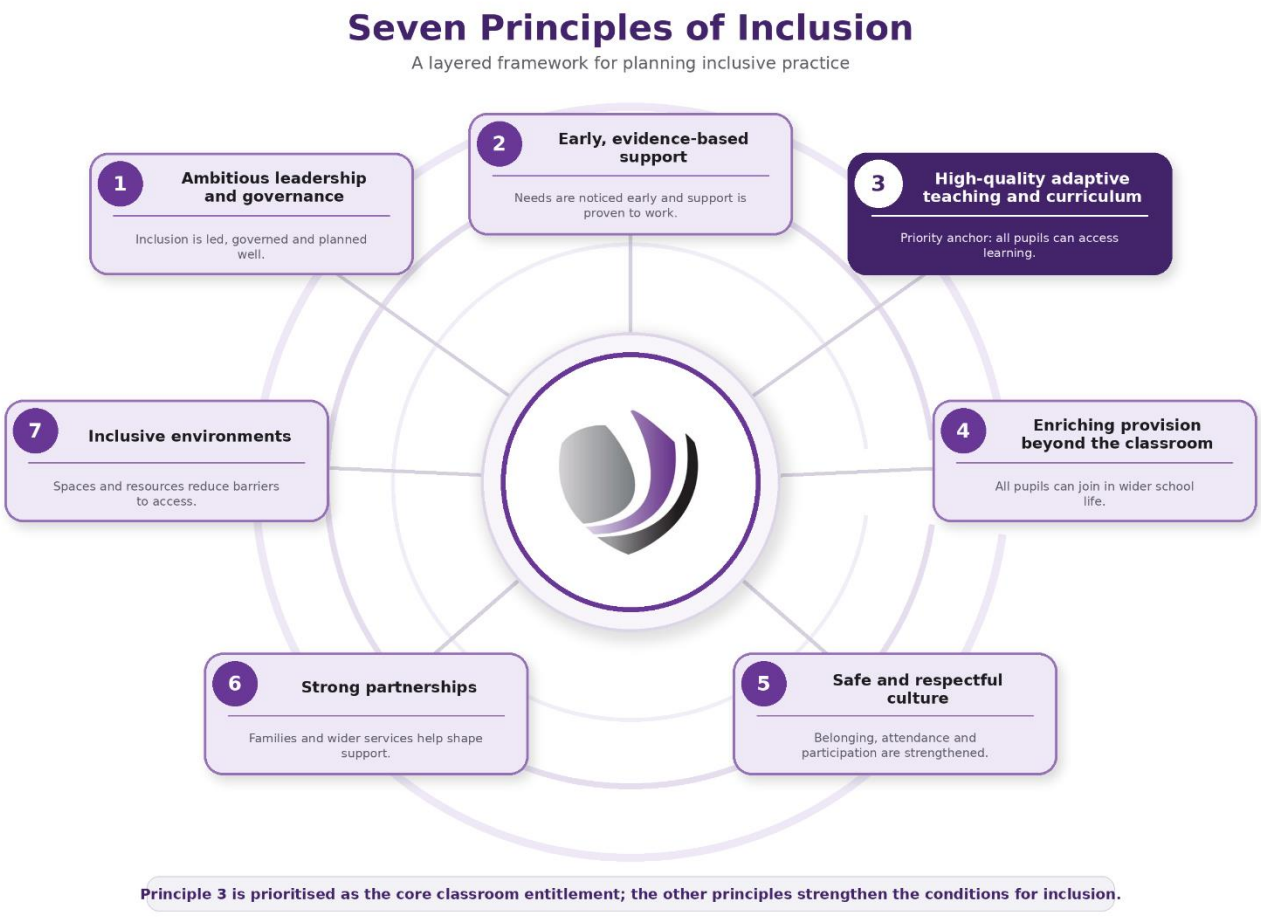
Family Voice
Families overwhelmingly recognise Sunnyside as a caring, supportive and inclusive school where children feel safe, valued and encouraged to succeed. Parents particularly value the strong communication, pastoral support, personalised approaches and the willingness of staff to listen and respond to concerns. Families identified the importance of continued development in areas such as SEMH support, communication and

language skills, inclusive enrichment opportunities, and ensuring that pupils with additional needs are supported to learn in ways that recognise their individual strengths and barriers. [Inclusion...ilies(1-9) | Excel]

Pupil Voice
Pupils report feeling safe, supported and listened to by adults in school. They value teachers who explain learning clearly, provide help when they are stuck and create opportunities to work with partners and friends. Pupils identified that visual resources such as working walls, boards and displays help them learn, while excessive noise and distractions can make learning more difficult. Many pupils find that quieter spaces help them remain calm, focused and ready to learn.

Sunnyside Primary Academy has established strong inclusive practice and effective SEND provision; however, leaders recognise that an increasing number of pupils experience barriers linked to trauma, adverse childhood experiences, emotional regulation, attendance and social, emotional and mental health needs. In response, this strategy will focus on embedding a trauma-informed culture across the academy through enhanced staff expertise, early identification and intervention, strengthened support for emotional wellbeing and self-regulation, and closer partnership working with families and external agencies, ensuring that all pupils feel safe, supported and able to achieve their full potential.

Our strategy is organised around the seven principles of inclusion. The principles give a clear structure for planning, checking and improving inclusive practice.



Within this layered approach, the academy places the strongest emphasis on Principle 3 (high-quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners). This is because high-quality teaching is the primary lever for improving outcomes for all pupils, especially pupils with SEND. Sunnyside Primary Academy, therefore, prioritises professional development, curriculum access, classroom adaptations, scaffolding, modelling, feedback and vocabulary development.

Every activity in this strategy has a clear rationale and a secure evidence base. Leaders use the DfE best practice guidance, the EEF's Guide to Inclusive Teaching, and other well-supported evidence on effective

inclusive provision to choose approaches that are likely to make a difference. The academy follows the same discipline used in effective pupil premium planning: diagnose needs, use reliable evidence, develop a focused strategy, deliver and monitor it well, and evaluate and sustain what works.

The academy also uses the EEF's guidance on implementation. Leaders know that a good idea only improves outcomes when staff understand it, believe in it, and have the support to put it into practice. The academy therefore plans how each activity will be introduced, who will lead it, how staff will be trained, how progress will be monitored, and how leaders will adapt the work if needed. Leaders engage staff and the school community, unite people around what is being implemented and why it matters, and reflect, monitor and adapt throughout the year.

The activity section of this strategy makes these implementation arrangements visible. For each chosen activity, it shows the barrier being addressed, the inclusion principle (and any secondary principles) it links to, the planned actions, the intended outcome, the success criteria, the evidence that supports the approach, the staff development needed, and how impact will be checked. This helps trustees, leaders, staff, families and pupils understand how the strategy moves from planning into everyday practice.

Leaders review the impact of this strategy throughout the year. The progress section of this strategy has been included to record termly summaries of leaders' ongoing monitoring. As this is the first year of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, the first annual review will take place at the end of the 2026/27 academic year – this will be recorded in the review section at the end of this strategy.

Sunnyside Primary Academy aligns and unites this work with wider academy improvement priorities through its AIP, so that inclusion remains central to school improvement and every pupil has the best possible chance to achieve and thrive.

Barriers to Learning and Participation

This section details the key barriers to learning and participation that we have identified amongst our pupils, necessitating inclusive universal approaches and targeted support

Ref.	What is the barrier?	How do we know it is a barrier?
A	**Increasing Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs, Emotional Regulation Difficulties and the Impact of Trauma** **Why this is a barrier:** • Difficulty regulating emotions and managing feelings appropriately. • Reduced resilience when learning becomes challenging. • Anxiety impacting concentration, memory and engagement. • Dysregulated behaviour resulting in missed learning opportunities. • Difficulties developing and maintaining positive relationships. • Reduced participation in learning and wider academy opportunities. • Increased risk of poor attendance and persistent absence. • Barriers to developing independence, confidence and a sense of belonging.	SEMH is an increasing area of need within the academy, accounting for 10% of pupils on the SEND register. Attendance for pupils with identified SEMH needs is 96.7% compared to 98.7% for pupils without SEND. Behaviour, safeguarding and pastoral records demonstrate that emotional regulation, anxiety and resilience continue to present barriers to learning for a number of pupils. Consultation with staff, pupils and families also identified emotional wellbeing and self-regulation as areas requiring further support.
B	**Communication, Language and Interaction Needs Create Barriers to Curriculum Access and Participation**	Communication and interaction is a significant area of need across the academy. Currently 7% of pupils on

	Why this is a barrier: • Difficulty understanding and following instructions. • Reduced vocabulary affecting learning across the curriculum. • Challenges expressing ideas, thoughts and understanding effectively. • Difficulties participating in discussion and collaborative learning. • Reduced confidence when communicating with adults and peers. • Barriers to building friendships and positive social relationships. • Increased dependency on adult support. • Difficulties accessing and demonstrating learning successfully.	the SEND register have an identified communication and interaction need, while 32.3% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language. Speech and language assessments, classroom observations and attainment information indicate that some pupils experience barriers in understanding language, processing instructions and communicating their ideas effectively. These difficulties can impact learning, social interaction and curriculum access.
C	**Specific Learning Difficulties, Working Memory and Cognitive Processing Needs Affect Learning and Achievement** **Why this is a barrier:** • Difficulties acquiring and retaining phonics, spelling and reading skills. • Reduced reading fluency and comprehension impacting curriculum access. • Working memory difficulties affecting retention of new learning. • Increased cognitive load when processing information and completing tasks. • Difficulties recording ideas and demonstrating knowledge independently. • Reduced confidence and self-esteem as learners. • Greater reliance on scaffolding and adult support. • Risk of falling behind peers despite possessing the underlying understanding of concepts.	Cognition and learning is one of the largest categories of SEND need within the academy, accounting for 3% of pupils on the SEND register. Internal assessment, phonics screening, reading fluency assessments and writing outcomes indicate that a number of pupils experience difficulties associated with dyslexia, working memory and processing. Staff consultation identified cognition and learning as a priority area for further development, while pupils highlighted the positive impact of visual supports, modelling and scaffolded learning approaches in helping them access the curriculum.

Activity in this academic year

This section sets out the activities we have prioritised this academic year – across the seven principles of inclusion – to alleviate the above barriers to learning and participation faced by pupils with additional needs and SEND.

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, particularly for improvements to our universal offer.

Principle 2: *Early, evidence-based support*					
Activity 2.1	Establish a trauma-informed SEMH identification and graduated response framework				
Barrier ref.:	A	***Activity type:***	Universal & Targeted	***Budget:***	£3200
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:			3, 5, 6 & 7		
Description (including intended outcome): Develop a clear graduated pathway for identifying, assessing and responding to SEMH, attachment and trauma-related needs. This will include staff training, pupil profiling, pastoral support systems, wellbeing assessments, family engagement and multi-agency referrals. The intended outcome is that needs are identified earlier, interventions are implemented more effectively and pupils receive support before barriers become entrenched.					

Success criteria:

- All identified pupils have an appropriate SEMH profile, support plan or graduated response pathway in place.
- SEMH concerns are identified and reviewed through termly pupil progress and inclusion meetings.
- Staff survey data demonstrates increased confidence in identifying and responding to SEMH and trauma-related needs.
- Attendance and engagement improve for identified pupils compared with baseline measures.
- Behaviour records demonstrate a reduction in repeat incidents for targeted pupils.
- Pupils receiving support demonstrate improved emotional regulation, wellbeing and participation as evidenced through pupil voice, provision reviews and support-plan evaluations.

Evidence to support this approach:

The DfE Inclusive Mainstream Fund guidance highlights the importance of early identification and graduated responses. Research demonstrates that early intervention improves outcomes for pupils experiencing SEMH and trauma-related difficulties.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:

SENDCo, DSL, Principal, pastoral team, class teachers, families and external agencies will contribute to identification, planning and review processes.

Monitoring:

Termly review of SEMH data, pastoral records, support plans, attendance, behaviour information, stakeholder feedback and case studies.

Activity 2.2	Strengthen early identification of communication, interaction and neurodiverse needs				
Barrier ref.:	B, C	***Activity type:***	Universal & Targeted	***Budget:***	£2400
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:				3, 5 & 6	

Description (including intended outcome):

Introduce enhanced screening and assessment processes to identify communication, interaction, language and neurodiverse needs at the earliest opportunity. Staff will implement a consistent graduated response process to ensure pupils receive appropriate classroom adaptations and interventions. The intended outcome is improved curriculum access, communication skills and participation.

Success criteria:

- Screening and assessment processes are implemented consistently across the academy.
- Identified pupils receive appropriate support within agreed timescales.
- Staff demonstrate increased confidence in identifying communication and neurodiverse needs.
- Pupils accessing support show measurable progress against identified targets.
- Teachers report improved participation, communication and curriculum access for identified pupils.
- Parent feedback demonstrates increased confidence in the support provided.

Evidence to support this approach:

Evidence from the EEF SEND guidance highlights the importance of early identification and responsive support for communication and interaction needs.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:

SENDCo, EYFS Lead, Inclusion Team, teachers, support staff, families and external professionals.

Monitoring:

Assessment information, intervention records, SEND reviews, pupil voice and external professional feedback.

Principle 3: *High-quality adaptive teaching and curriculum design*

Activity 3.1	Embed trauma-informed and regulation-aware classroom practice				
Barrier ref.:	A	***Activity type:***	Universal	***Budget:***	£5000
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:				2, 5 & 7	

Description (including intended outcome):

Embed trauma-informed approaches within everyday classroom practice through consistent routines, co-regulation strategies, safe relationships, emotional check-ins and predictable learning environments. The intended outcome is improved engagement, reduced dysregulation and increased readiness to learn.

Success criteria:

- Learning walks demonstrate trauma-informed and regulation-aware strategies are consistently implemented across all classes.
- Staff survey data demonstrates improved confidence in trauma-informed practice and co-regulation strategies.
- Pupil voice demonstrates that pupils feel safe, listened to and supported in school.
- Behaviour monitoring identifies a reduction in incidents linked to dysregulation.
- Attendance and engagement improve for identified vulnerable pupils.
- Monitoring shows that pupils are increasingly able to regulate independently and sustain engagement in learning.

Evidence to support this approach:

Research consistently highlights that positive relationships and emotionally safe environments improve learning, behaviour and wellbeing outcomes.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:

Principal, SENDCo, SLT, teachers, support staff and pupils.

Monitoring:

Learning walks, pupil voice, behaviour analysis, lesson visits, staff survey feedback and wellbeing reviews.

Activity 3.2	Strengthen adaptive teaching for pupils with dyslexia, cognitive processing and communication needs				
Barrier ref.:	B, C	***Activity type:***	Universal	***Budget:***	£3200
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:				2, 5 & 7	

Description (including intended outcome):

Develop staff expertise in adaptive teaching through the use of scaffolding, visual supports, explicit instruction, vocabulary development, cognitive load reduction and assistive approaches. The intended outcome is improved access to the curriculum, independence and achievement for pupils with SEND.

Success criteria:

- Learning walks and book scrutiny demonstrate consistent use of adaptive teaching strategies across the curriculum.
- Teachers effectively use scaffolding, visual supports, explicit instruction and cognitive load reduction strategies.
- Staff confidence in supporting pupils with dyslexia, cognition and learning needs increases through professional development evaluation.
- Pupils with SEND demonstrate improved access to learning and increased independence in lessons.
- Reading, writing and wider curriculum outcomes for identified pupils improve from baseline measures.
- Pupil voice demonstrates that pupils feel supported to access learning successfully.

Evidence to support this approach:

The EEF Guide to Inclusive Teaching identifies adaptive teaching as the primary lever for improving outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:

SENDCo, SLT, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.

Monitoring:
Learning walks, book scrutiny, pupil progress meetings, lesson observations, staff survey feedback and pupil interviews.

Principle 5: *A safe and respectful culture*

Activity 5.1	Establish an inclusive attendance, belonging and emotional wellbeing framework				
Barrier ref.:	A	***Activity type:***	Universal & Targeted	***Budget:***	£2,200
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:				2 & 6	

Description (including intended outcome):
Develop a relational approach to attendance that focuses on belonging, engagement and wellbeing. The academy will identify barriers to attendance early, provide targeted support and strengthen reintegration processes for vulnerable pupils. The intended outcome is improved attendance, stronger school engagement and enhanced wellbeing.

Success criteria:
- Attendance for targeted pupils improves compared with baseline figures.
- Persistent absence rates reduce for identified pupils.
- Attendance plans demonstrate timely intervention and review.
- Pupil voice shows an increased sense of belonging, safety and inclusion.
- Families engage positively with attendance and wellbeing support processes.
- Case studies demonstrate successful reintegration and sustained engagement for vulnerable pupils.

Evidence to support this approach:
Research and DfE attendance guidance demonstrate that relational and inclusive approaches are most effective in improving attendance for vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:
Principal, Attendance Lead, SENDCo, DSL, families and external agencies.

Monitoring:
Attendance reviews, persistent absence data, pupil voice, family engagement records and case studies.

Principle 7: *Inclusive environments*

Activity 7.1	Develop regulation-friendly and emotionally safe learning environments				
Barrier ref.:	A, B	***Activity type:***	Universal	***Budget:***	£3,200
Secondary principle(s) of inclusion that this activity supports:				3 & 5	

Description (including intended outcome):
Review and adapt classroom and shared environments to support emotional regulation, communication and independence. This will include visual supports, sensory considerations, calm spaces and consistent environmental expectations. The intended outcome is improved participation, self-regulation and curriculum access.

Success criteria:
- Environmental audits confirm that agreed regulation-friendly strategies are in place across all learning environments.
- Visual supports, sensory regulation tools and calm spaces are consistently available and used effectively.
- Pupils increasingly access regulation strategies independently.
- Learning walks show environments support communication, engagement and inclusion.
- Behaviour and pastoral records demonstrate reduced incidents of dysregulation in targeted areas.
- Pupil and staff feedback indicates that learning environments support wellbeing, focus and participation.

Evidence to support this approach:
Stakeholder feedback identified visual supports, structured environments and calm spaces as helping pupils learn successfully. Research indicates that inclusive environments improve engagement and reduce barriers to learning.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement:
SENDCo, SLT, teachers, support staff, pupils, families and site team.

Monitoring:
Environmental audits, learning walks, pupil voice, behaviour information and SEND reviews.

Progress

This section brings together the findings of leaders' monitoring into a short termly summary of progress. This section is designed to capture headlines: a brief evaluation of what is working well and not so well, and what still needs to happen / or change to achieve the success criteria and reach the intended outcome.

Autumn Term (January 2027)		
Activity	*Progress towards the success criteria and the intended outcome*	*Next steps*

Spring Term (April 2027)		
Activity	*Progress towards the success criteria and the intended outcome*	*Next steps*

Review of the previous academic year

This section sets out the impact the inclusion strategy in 2026/27 on pupils' engagement, participation, attendance, sense of belonging, and attainment. It includes a reflection on the positive outcomes achieved for children and young people with additional needs and SEND, as well as an analysis of which parts of the strategy worked well and those aspects that did not have the intended impact.

This review makes use of:

- Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications.
- Information from summative and formative assessments the academy has undertaken.

- Academy data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting inclusion, including access to learning, attendance, engagement, and early identification.

The next steps section shows how this review informs the 2027/28 activities.

End of the year (July 2027)		
Activity	*Evaluation against the success criteria and the intended outcome*	*Next steps*