St. Joseph's Catholic Infant & Junior Schools Birtley

Inclusion Strategy – St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley

This statement details our school's approach to delivering 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	September 2026 to August 2027
Date this statement was published	25th June 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	30th November 2027
Statement authorised by	K. Swaddle

Statement of intent

You may want to include information on:

- *your ultimate objectives for whole-school inclusion and meeting the needs of your pupils with additional needs and SEND*
- *how your inclusion strategy works towards achieving these objectives*
- ***how the 7 principles of inclusion are addressed in your inclusion strategy***
- *how you have worked with families and the wider school community to develop your inclusion strategy*

We suggest that you keep your statement to 500 words or below to ensure that it remains concise and purposeful. You should write in an accessible style, allowing children, young people, and parents to gain an understanding of the school's overarching aims.

At St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, Birtley, we are committed to creating a culture where every child and young person feels valued, belongs within our community and is supported to achieve their full potential. We recognise that pupils learn, develop and participate in different ways, and we believe it is our responsibility to remove barriers that may prevent any pupil from thriving academically, socially or emotionally. Through an inclusive approach, we aim to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND and additional needs, can access a broad, ambitious and enriching curriculum, participate fully in all aspects of school life, and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed for future success.

Our Inclusion Strategy has been developed alongside our School Development Plan and Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. This ensures that inclusion is not viewed as a separate initiative, but as an integral part of our approach to school improvement. We recognise that many pupils experience overlapping barriers to learning and participation, and we are committed to developing coherent and joined-up approaches that improve attendance, engagement, wellbeing, belonging and achievement for all learners. By aligning our inclusion priorities with wider school improvement objectives, we aim to create sustainable improvements that benefit the whole school community.

Following a review of our school data, pupil outcomes, attendance patterns, stakeholder feedback and self-evaluation processes, we have chosen to focus our improvement activity on three of the DfE's seven Principles of Inclusion. Whilst we recognise the importance of all seven principles and remain committed to embedding them over time, we believe these three priorities will have the greatest impact on addressing the most significant barriers currently experienced by our pupils:

- High-quality adaptive teaching with a curriculum designed for all learners.
- A safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance and participation in learning.
- Strong partnerships with families and wider services.

We believe that high-quality adaptive teaching is the foundation of effective inclusion. By investing in staff development, curriculum accessibility and evidence-informed classroom practice, we aim to improve access to learning for all pupils and ensure that needs are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity. Alongside this, we recognise the importance of creating a school culture where every pupil feels safe, respected and connected to their learning community. Through our work on attendance, wellbeing, behaviour and pupil voice, we aim to strengthen pupils' sense of belonging and participation. Finally, we recognise that effective inclusion can only be achieved through meaningful collaboration with families and external partners. We are committed to listening to and working alongside parents, carers and other professionals to ensure that support is responsive, effective and centred around the individual needs of each child.

The development of this strategy has been informed by discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and external agencies. Their views have helped us identify strengths, understand areas for development and determine the priorities outlined within this strategy. We will review progress regularly using a range of evidence, including attendance data, engagement measures, attainment outcomes, stakeholder feedback and pupil voice, to ensure that our inclusive practices continue to evolve and meet the changing needs of our school community.

Barriers to learning and participation

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

	Detail of barrier to learning *(including notable trends or themes over time, such as a growing prevalence or increasing complexity)*
1	**Speech, Language and Communication:** **National Trends**: The SEND Green Paper: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time identifies from DfE's figures that, in primary schools, Speech, Language and Communication Needs form the largest group of children identified with SEND (34%).

	1 in 4 children who struggled with language at the age of 5, did not reach the expected standard in English at the end of primary school, compared with 1 in 25 children (at the age of 5) who had good language skills. **School Trends:** During induction into Reception baseline activities; there are a notable number of pupils whose SLCN skills present as a cause for concern and Language Screen results (via OxEd) support this hypothesis. • Each cohort presents as unique; however, overarching themes include some difficulties with low expressive and receptive language skills, phonological awareness, or in social pragmatics.
2	**Executive Function:** **National Trends** 15% of pupils with identified speech and language challenges, achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of their primary school years, compared with 61% of all pupils. Given that pupils' cognitive abilities are in continual flux, it is expected that their cognitive strengths and difficulties will shift over time and in response to environmental demands. **School Trends:** As pupils progress throughout St. Joseph's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, those pupils who present as having SLCN difficulties, often progress to demonstrating difficulties in Cognition and Learning/Executive Function. • While each pupil's presentation is unique, overarching themes include weak vocabulary knowledge and language comprehension; reading fluency and comprehension difficulties; literacy gaps that affect wider curriculum access; limited opportunities for language-rich experiences beyond school and increasing numbers of pupils requiring curriculum adaptations to access learning.
3	**Social and Emotional:** **National Trends** Only 20.3% of pupils with speech and language challenges, gained grade 4/C or above in English and mathematics at GCSE, compared with 63.9% of all pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. **School Trends:** More pupils in mainstream settings are being diagnosed with Autism, whose presentation can often manifest in dysregulation. Pupils who display significant SEMH presentation are supported well with a range of services – without this, disengagement in curriculum occurs. Due to a shortage of local/national special school places, LA EHCP inclusion approaches means that mainstream settings are experiencing more dysregulated pupils. • While each pupil's presentation is unique, overarching themes include dysregulation and reduced emotional resilience, difficulties forming and maintaining relationships and low self-esteem and confidence.
4	**Social and Emotional:** **National Trends** 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders, have unidentified speech and language challenges.

	Children with vocabulary difficulties at age 5, are 3 times more likely to have mental health problems in adulthood - and twice as likely to be unemployed, when they reach adulthood. **School Trends:** School are continuing to have to react to impact of SLCN presentation in EY and KS1 and its impact on pupils' abilities to comprehend and make inferences about their curriculum. • While each pupil's presentation is unique, since 2024, the school has committed to Project Oracy, which seeks to incorporate purposeful speaking and listening activities to improve pupils' abilities to communicate with both known and unfamiliar audiences.
5	**Motor and Physical:** **National Trends** DfE 2023/2024 statistics have identified that, nationally, there are nearly 129,000 pupils who have primary difficulties linked to physical and sensory needs. **School Trends:** There are increasing numbers of pupils who, due to social situations e.g. increase tablet use at home, are not developing fine-motor skills in line with age-related expectations. Equally, there are more pupils diagnosed with Autism, hypermobility and developmental coordination disorder meaning that school need to support correct posture and orthographic transcription and correspondence. • While each pupil's presentation is unique, since 2024, the school has trained all staff in fine-motor support – seeking to address notable fine/gross-motor difficulties as soon as they present.

Activity in this academic year

What activities will we prioritise this academic year 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 your universal offer.

Description of activity *(noting evidence and barrier numbers addressed)*	**Activity type** *(whether it is universal or targeted)*	**Total budgeted cost** *(this should account for spend from IMF and core budget allocations)*	

Speech, Language and Communication: All pupils who attend the school in Reception/EY are being proactively assessed using Language Screen – a tool to identify needs in the areas of: • Expressive Language • Receptive Language • Listening Comprehension • Sentence Repetition For those pupils require Augmentative Alternative Communication and are awaiting grant application outcomes in the NHS – they will access TD Snap, alongside Communication Books provided by the NHS while AAC is pending.	Universal and targeted	Teacher assessment time: 20-mins per pupil x 30 pupils 10-hours of assessment £250+on costs per day £500 Whole-class Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) – daily support	*Research consistently highlights the importance of vocabulary knowledge in accessing the curriculum. The EEF's literacy guidance and the DfE's emphasis on speech, language and communication identify explicit vocabulary instruction as a key feature of inclusive classroom practice.* The DfE SEND Reform proposals and Inclusive Mainstream Fund guidance place significant emphasis on early identification, evidence-informed practice and workforce development. Building staff confidence to identify barriers early reduces reliance on diagnosis before support can begin.
Executive Function: All pupils who are experiencing difficulties in the areas of cognition and learning/executive function will receive quality-first teaching. A suite of GL assessment products will be available to use, should specialist assessment be required focussed on: Working memory, non-verbal reasoning, verbal reasoning, long-term memory, phonological awareness, processing speed and spatial ability, Should assessments indicate that further advice is required – Educational Psychology time will be procured to identify precise gaps to enable precision teaching to occur.	Universal and targeted	Widgit Scaffolding - £350 1-year subscription £6.50 per pupil per assessment Allocation - £300 Educational Psychology time: £600 per day – 8 assessments per year anticipated £4,800	The EEF identifies phonics as one of the most effective approaches for supporting younger readers and those who require additional support with decoding. Reading fluency and comprehension interventions are also shown to have a positive impact on attainment when delivered alongside high-quality classroom teaching. The DfE SEND Reform proposals and Inclusive Mainstream Fund guidance place significant emphasis on early identification, evidence-informed practice and workforce development. Building staff confidence to identify barriers early reduces reliance on diagnosis before support can begin.

Social and Emotional: All pupils in Year 3 are being pre-emptively screened using the GL assessment Pupil Attitudes to Self and Study to identify subtle disengagement to learning. Where results indicate that specialist support is required, further adaptations and intervention can take place and pupils can be reassessed so that impact can be noted.	Universal and targeted	£210 (30 pupils x £7)	Current DfE guidance emphasises the importance of schools acting early rather than waiting for formal assessment or diagnosis. Emerging SEND reforms and the proposed "Experts at Hand" model reinforce the expectation that schools develop strong universal and targeted provision while external referrals and specialist support are progressing.
Social and Emotional: Proactive in-school social and emotional support is being procured by The Road Centre to support pupils to overcome any difficulties they may be facing in this area.	Targeted	£120 x 39 = £4,680	Current DfE guidance emphasises the importance of schools acting early rather than waiting for formal assessment or diagnosis. Emerging SEND reforms and the proposed "Experts at Hand" model reinforce the expectation that schools develop strong universal and targeted provision while external referrals and specialist support are progressing.
Motor and Physical: Fine-motor assessments and intervention are a strong part of the provision on offer to support pupils to develop correct fine-motor skills.	Targeted	Pearson Clinical Assessments £240 for Sensory Profile Measure Pegs to Paper - £200 intervention	Current DfE guidance states that equipment is matched to children and young people's individual needs (pg. 36)

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
Speech, Language and Communication: *EY Language Screening:* *Evidence shows that on average, pupils who take part in spoken language interventions make approximately five months' additional progress over a year, with some studies showing progress of up to six months - for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds*	Pupils who are identified in the 'red/orange' range in percentile ranks or standardised scores which are below average receive intervention and support to address these difficulties and progress to: • improved percentile rank scores on testing and as such make progress towards achieving the ELG in the Communication and Language.

Executive Function: *For all pupils to reach the expected standards in statutory testing and ensure that they become independent, enabling them to function in society.*	Pupils who are identified as working 'below' will receive comprehensive packages of universal and targeted support as soon as needs have been identified to ensure that 'nothing is left to chance'. This will mean that there will be: • Increased percentage of pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading so that at least 95% of pupils meet the phonic check in Y1. • Improved reading fluency and comprehension outcomes for identified pupils so that the proportion of pupils reading fluently improves by 15%.
Social and Emotional: *For all Year 3 pupils to be screened using GL Pupil Attitude to Self and School so that pupils' voices are being 'heard' and any difficulties with expressing social and emotional problems, verbally, are eliminated through the use of wholesale assessment opportunities.*	Pupils who are identified in the 'red/orange' range in percentile ranks or standardised scores (which are below average) receive adaptation, and intervention where necessary to overcome their difficulties. • Pupil voice evidence demonstrate improved access to learning across the curriculum and a reduction in pupils' reliance on adaptations and support.
Social and Emotional: *For pupils to access early intervention via urgent therapeutic input, where required, or cognitive behavioural support, if necessary.*	Pupils who are identified as needing support and struggling to thrive and flourish are given opportunity to access a therapeutic programme by a trained expert. • Reductions in behaviour incidents linked to emotional regulation difficulties.
Motor and Physical: *For all pupils to be able to accurately write in a fluent joined-up and legible style, where appropriate, given their starting point.*	Pupils who are identified as needing support and struggling with proprioception, spatial awareness and fine-motor difficulties access a discreet programme of support delivered by trained staff, using high-quality resources. • Evidence from provision reviews demonstrates that interventions are implemented consistently and lead to positive outcomes for pupils.

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.*

November 2026 N/A at this stage due to first year of implementation

Setting	*SEND Notional Funding*	*Inclusion Mainstream Funding*
St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School	*£ 37,859.48*	*£5,604*
St. Joseph's Catholic Junior School	*£ 66,241.20*	*£6,904*

Further information (optional)

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

N.B. The schools have above average EHCPs (8.4%) and pupils at SEND Support (22%); we therefore have four-qualified SENDCos across the two sites. This ensures pupils receive expert support and families and staff receive expert advice.

Principle		Activities / Strategies
1	**Ambitious leadership** and governance that embeds inclusion in planning – this includes a continuous consideration of learning and development needs within schools' cohorts, data collection and peer review to deliver high standards for all children and young people	• EHT supporting Trust-wide Inclusion • Close relations with OxEd and SLCN Ambassador networks • St. Joseph's has been involved in delivering RISE training for OxEd and supporting DfE Delivery Unit Research Programme. • Cradles to Careers Reach Foundation collaborative work • BWCET SEND Strategies • SENDCo release • Insights Hub (Phron) • Spotlighting/class profiles/ SEND oversight. • Language Screen and high-quality intervention delivery • Extensive BWCET Training Programme for SEND and high-quality teaching and learning. • Phonics trackers/development days • EBSA strategic forum • Stakeholder voice – School Survey Company/Teacher TAPP • Relational Practice Schools Training • NPQSEND – 4 -qualified SENDCOs • Transition Support
2	**Evidence-based support** prioritising early intervention, so children and young people with SEND can access effective targeted provision at the right time	• NELI Whole Class • Phonics programmes – targeted groupings • Going for Gold (times table training) • Embedding mastering number
3	**High-quality teaching** with curriculum designed for all learners, with teaching and support staff trained, supported and effectively deployed to address a diverse range of needs	• Trust CPD Offer • Relational Approach • Time for spotlight plans – progress reviews • Trust visits to Columbia Grange Special School arranged by EHT/BWCET Inclusion Lead • Phonics CPD • Opening Worlds/training • Communities of Excellence CPD • TA training programme

		• Writing moderation/CPD sessions • Curriculum materials – English/MFL/ Humanities • Curriculum Leadership meetings
4	Accessible and **enriching provision** beyond the classroom which provides all children with opportunities to support their personal development, build their independence and prepare for adulthood	• NE Ambition Primary Careers • Specific extra-curricular clubs/trips including residentials/ careers programmes targeted at pupils across the demographics. • PD networks/DfE enrichment framework
5	**A safe and respectful culture fostering belonging and attendance** – approaches may include practice and policies supporting attendance or behaviour ambitions and upskilling of staff by alternative provision specialists	• Relational Approach • Attendance Strategy/networks • Trust visits to Columbia Grange Special School arranged by EHT/BWCET Inclusion Lead • Inclusion Bases • Gateshead LA Attendance Support Network • Thrive Training • CH Cluster • Oracy Project
6	**Strong partnerships with families and wider service**s to support children and young people, particularly through transitions – activities may include sharing expertise and resource across settings, extra staff time to aid transitions, and outward engagement with families to support wellbeing and attendance	• Cradle to Career HT conference attendance • Cluster work – strategic projects with local authorities • Enhanced transition to secondary – parent events/ additional transition focused visits • Safeguarding and wellbeing officers • Transition Support – development of additional transition curriculum materials
7	**Inclusive environments with continued improvements to accessibility**, creating more supportive learning experiences – classrooms should be designed to support learning, minimise distraction, and meet a range of sensory and regulatory needs	• NELI Intervention • EP Training • Inclusion Bases • ASK Psychology • Columbia Grange