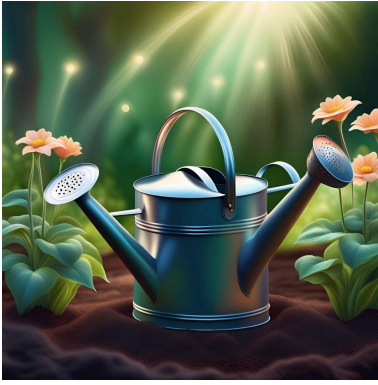




Smashing Down Barriers for Inclusive Teaching and Learning in The Stour Federation



Welcome to The Stour Federation. This booklet is for every single one of you – our dedicated teachers and teaching assistants. It's a guide to understanding not just what we do, but **why we do it**. Our 2030 Strategy sets a bold vision: to create a constellation of schools where every member of our community experiences genuine growth and wellbeing. This vision, our unwavering North Star, is **flourishing**. This booklet will explore why inclusive teaching and learning is the cornerstone of that vision, not just for our pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), but for all our vulnerable learners.

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

The Stour Federation defines inclusion as creating a culture where every child, regardless of their special educational needs or disabilities (SEND, disadvantage or vulnerability, feels **not just valued but celebrated** as an integral part of the learning community. This culture is fundamental to achieving the Trust's mission of providing a flourishing educational experience that empowers every child to embrace 'life in all its fullness'.

The Trust's vision for inclusion is built on several core principles:

- **Dignity and Respect:** Differences and disabilities are viewed as normal aspects of humanity. The educational approach for all children is characterised by dignity, respect, and high expectations.
- **Empowerment and Success for All:** The Trust creates learning environments that celebrate diversity, where all children feel empowered to embrace their unique strengths. Success is recognised in many forms, valuing a wide range of achievements beyond the academic.
- **Expertise and Innovation:** Achieving an "ethic of excellence" for children with SEND requires specialised expertise and high-quality teaching. We are always learning, committed to using evidence-informed, pioneering approaches to break down barriers to learning.
- **Action at All Levels:** Every person working with children has the power and agency to advance inclusion and improve outcomes for children with SEND.

This definition is deeply connected to the Trust's overarching 2030 vision of "**flourishing**". A core aspect of flourishing is fostering a profound sense of **belonging** for every member of the school community—children, staff, and families. This is achieved by intentionally creating a safe, nurturing, and inspiring environment where everyone feels valued. This concept is described as the Trust's "unreasonable hospitality".

Ultimately, inclusion in The Stour Federation is about ensuring every individual is seen as **unique and precious**, with diverse talents to celebrate. It is a collective effort for the common good, recognising that "no one really flourishes unless we flourish together".

WHY? THE MORAL IMPERATIVE AND OUR VISION

Nationally, the SEND system is under significant strain, evidenced by persistent attainment gaps for pupils with SEND, rising costs, and increasing teacher workload. The national system faces challenges of poor pupil outcomes, inequitable access to support, and a reliance on a reactive,

diagnosis-driven model that can disempower teachers. Our proactive, inclusive approach is a necessary, evidence-informed solution designed to meet these profound challenges and ensure every child in our care can flourish.

Wellbeing & Learning	Social Intelligence & Artificial Intelligence	Equity-Equality Investments	Systemness
			
<p>This driver emphasises that happy, healthy children learn best, particularly when staff are flourishing, and promotes a supportive environment and an exciting curriculum.</p>	<p>This driver focuses on leveraging technology to enhance learning while developing essential human skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.</p>	<p>This driver commits to providing an equitable education for all pupils, making strategic investments to address individual needs and close achievement gaps.</p>	<p>This driver recognises the strength in collaboration across schools, sharing best practices, and fostering continuous improvement within a powerful and effective educational system.</p>

At the heart of The Stour Federation is a simple, powerful idea inspired by *Unreasonable Hospitality*. We intentionally craft experiences designed to make our children feel **safe, valued, and inspired**. We want to give every member of our community a profound sense of belonging. This is our "unreasonable hospitality" extended to all.

Our core purpose is to advance education for public benefit. As a Trust embracing both community and Church of England schools, our RESPECT values are grounded in the belief that every individual is unique and precious, deserving the opportunity to live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). We work collectively for the common good, recognising that we flourish best when we flourish together. This commitment is not just an aspiration; it is our fundamental duty.

This is why our **Equity-Equality Investments** driver is so critical. We are committed to providing an equitable education for all our pupils, ensuring that every child, regardless of background or circumstance, has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We must do more to overcome the extra barriers some learners experience. This includes our vulnerable pupils:

- **Disadvantaged pupils:** Nationally, there is a persistent and wide gap in achievement separating children who grow up in poverty from their more affluent peers. This gap is 4.6 months at the end of Reception, doubling by the end of primary school, and doubling again to a staggering 19.2 months by the end of secondary school. High-quality teaching is the most important factor in narrowing this gap.
- **Pupils with SEND:** Children with SEND are disproportionately affected by poor outcomes, including wider attainment gaps, higher rates of persistent absence, and significantly higher exclusion rates. They may also face additional safeguarding risks, such as bullying and abuse.
- **Looked-after and post-looked-after children:** We have a designated teacher to ensure these pupils receive the high-quality support they need, making sure their Personal Education Plans (PEPs) improve their learning opportunities.
- **Children known or formerly known to social care:** These pupils are among our most vulnerable learners and may be experiencing complex needs or adverse childhood experiences. We pay particular attention to their specific needs and social and emotional

complications, recognizing that they may have heightened safeguarding risks or disrupted experiences.

- **Pupils with protected characteristics:** We actively champion British values and protected characteristics, ensuring our approach creates a culture of respect, equality, and diversity for all. Our commitment to equity requires us to acknowledge biases and value the diverse stories, identities, and cultural capital that each individual brings to the classroom.
- **Other contextual barriers to learning (e.g., Young Carers, pupils with English as an Additional Language):** We recognise that educational disadvantage extends beyond Pupil Premium eligibility, requiring us to address controllable factors impacting learning within the school environment. This includes specific vulnerabilities like being a Young Carer or an EAL learner, who benefit disproportionately from proactive adaptations. We utilise accessible design features and digital tools (e.g., screen readers or translation) as a normal way of working, removing stigma and ensuring equitable curriculum access for every child.

Our vision is for **everyone**. By championing dignity and respect, we can make empowerment and success an achievable reality for every child in our care.

HOW? SHIFTING OUR MINDSET AND PRACTICE

Achieving our vision for inclusion depends entirely on having the right ethos and culture, with buy-in from every single staff member. This requires a fundamental shift in our thinking—away from a reactive, deficit-focused model towards a proactive, inclusive approach centred on high-quality teaching for all. Inclusion doesn't live in a strategy or an intervention, but in the everyday decisions and actions that happen when teachers plan and deliver their lessons. Inclusion isn't just one room or in addition to our provision - it is woven into our school tapestry, ensuring support is built in, not bolt on.

Our intentional focus on anticipating and removing barriers is paramount to achieving equity. External accountability frameworks strongly reinforce this approach: the revised Ofsted Inspection Toolkit frequently uses the word 'barriers' (appearing 81 times in the document, at the time of writing), underscoring that focusing on pupils who face barriers to their learning is central to planning, delivery, activity, and assessment.

This commitment ensures that our practice aligns directly with the professional expectations set out in the Teachers' Standards. Our focus on high-quality inclusive teaching enables every teacher to meet standard 5: *Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils*. Furthermore, all teaching assistants are expected to adhere to professional expectations by demonstrating a clear understanding of specific learning requirements and contributing effectively to the adaptation and delivery of support to meet individual needs.

Adopting an Equity Mindset

Based on extensive research, an equity mindset involves four key principles:

1. **Equity not equality:** Doing more to overcome the extra barriers some learners experience.
2. **Capacity not deficit thinking:** Recognising the talents in all pupils.
3. **Deep not shallow relationships:** Developing authentic, individual relationships.
4. **Multiple not singular talents:** Acknowledging that human talents come in many forms.

This mindset shifts the entire conversation. By starting with the question, "**What challenges or barriers might children face in this subject?**", we move from adding adaptations as an afterthought to designing with equity in mind from the very beginning. It reframes our entire

purpose. As one Trust has put it: "When we talk about inclusion, we're really talking about equity. Inclusion is the why. Equity is the how".

Adopting an equity mindset requires a pedagogical approach that is responsive, precise, and empowering for both teacher and learner. The most powerful method for achieving this is **Contemporary adaptive teaching**.

Contemporary adaptive teaching moves us beyond pre-planned variations for different groups. Instead, it is a dynamic, real-time process where teachers use insights about learners to meaningfully adjust their teaching during the lesson. It's the difference between simply amending a pre-planned task and truly adapting the conditions for learning based on what a child needs in that moment.

Contemporary Adaptive Teaching evolves this practice by blending evidence-informed pedagogy with the opportunities afforded by modern digital tools. This approach is not about technology for its own sake; it is about repurposing our time and energy towards more human-centred, targeted support. It helps us address the significant social and emotional challenges many learners now face, such as classroom anxiety or persistent absence, by creating more relevant, accessible, and achievable learning experiences.

This contemporary approach is built on five key strands that will shape our practice:

1. **Data-informed teaching:** Moving beyond assumption to precise, individualised insights.
2. **Inclusion through design:** Making lessons accessible for all from the start, removing stigma.
3. **Deliberate autonomy:** Empowering learners to take control of their learning pace and challenge.
4. **Intervention questioning:** Using rich data to ask deeper, more targeted questions.
5. **Equity as a mindset:** Ensuring every learner has an equitable opportunity to show what they know and to benefit from personalised provision.

By embedding these principles, we can ensure our commitment to equity is visible in every lesson, for every child.

This mindset shift requires every staff member to be an expert in their pupils as individuals, not labels. We intervene based on a pupil's specific needs as a learner, because labels risk setting limitations and anonymise children. Our focus must be relentlessly on the individual child's experience. This fundamental shift requires moving away from the deficit discourse around disadvantage. Disadvantaged pupils and their families are not a problem to be solved; they are part of our school communities. We must focus our energy on addressing the controllable factors that impact learning and participation within the school environment, rather than blaming circumstances outside of our gift.

Embracing the Five Principles of Inclusive Teaching

Evidence shows that a profound shift is needed from a diagnosis-driven model to a proactive, inclusive one. This approach is not about creating separate plans for every individual, which increases workload and can lower expectations. Instead, it's about making our core teaching better for everyone. Quality first teaching is not enough; it must be high quality and inclusive. For pupils with more limited language or background knowledge, the highest quality explanations, formative assessment, and strong relationships are needed.

1. **Embrace Cognitive Similarity:** How we learn is more similar than it is different. Strategies designed to manage cognitive load, such as breaking down complex tasks or providing clear explanations, benefit everyone, especially those who might otherwise struggle.

2. **Prioritise High-Impact Core Instruction:** The quality of everyday, whole-class teaching has the biggest positive impact on pupils with additional needs. They are most disadvantaged by unclear instruction and gain the most from highly effective, explicit approaches. Adaptive Teaching strategies should be designed and implemented to meet the needs of 95% or more of children in any given classroom, ensuring high-quality instruction is the primary lever for inclusion. **As OFSTED guidance confirms, "the most effective inclusion strategy begins with everyday high-quality inclusive teaching, which has most benefit for the pupils who find learning hardest". High quality teaching - each day and each hour - is likely to prove the greatest lever for securing success in education. Not only that, but it is likely to be disproportionately beneficial to pupils who struggle and have additional learning needs.** Precision matters. While all pupils benefit from great teaching, pupils with more limited foundational skills - such as language, background knowledge, and self-regulation—require the absolute highest quality of explicit explanations, formative assessment, and strong relationships.
3. **Make Lessons Accessible by Default:** We must proactively remove barriers during the planning phase. Just like a ramp benefits a wheelchair user and a parent with a pram, accessible lesson design benefits all learners. Inclusion is the *why*, and accessible design is the *how*, ensuring support is built in, not bolted on. This means ensuring lessons are perceivable (e.g., clear fonts, uncluttered layouts), understandable (e.g., clear language, frequent checks for understanding), and **doable** (e.g., manageable tasks, scaffolding).
4. **Adapt Minimally and Appropriately:** When universal strategies aren't enough, we make the *minimum necessary adaptation* to enable a pupil to engage with the core learning alongside their peers. This is not about lowering expectations or providing a separate, simplified task. It is about temporary scaffolds that are faded out as the pupil develops skills.
5. **Empower Effective Teacher Assessment:** While a formal diagnosis can be useful, our professional judgement, informed by ongoing, real-time formative assessment, is critical. We use our observations to understand a pupil's specific strengths and needs within our classroom context. We recognise that data alone - such as headline figures or attendance rates - cannot fully tell the story of whether every individual child is achieving, belonging, thriving, and flourishing, as data inherently compresses reality and loses crucial detail. Therefore, assessment must always be rooted in professional judgement and forensic analysis of needs, focusing on individual context, not simply abstract data points.

High Quality Teaching and Targeted Support: A Both/And Approach

While high-quality teaching is our top priority, we recognise that for some pupils it will not offer the volume of necessary practice they need to catch up and keep up with their peers. Evidence-based interventions, when aligned with classroom instruction, can be essential and complementary to great teaching.

To guide this, we use the EEF's tiered approach, which is also central to our Disadvantaged Strategy. This model helps us to consider how to bring great teaching and great targeted support together.

Before applying the tiered model, the essential first step is to diagnose our pupils' needs with clarity. A key focus of an effective Pupil Premium strategy is to intervene early to prevent attainment gaps from growing. This begins not with a pre-packaged intervention, but with a deep, contextual understanding of the individual child. This process involves:

- **Building Deep Relationships:** We are committed to developing authentic, individual relationships with our pupils and their families. Engaging thoughtfully with families and the community helps build the constructive, trusting relationships needed to support our children. The Stour Federation is here to support not just our schools, but also the families

in our communities, striving to create welcoming environments where everyone feels connected.

- **Understanding Specific Barriers:** We must explore a child's struggles before assuming a solution. For example, a pupil who struggles with reading may have challenges with decoding, vocabulary, language delays, or a lack of background knowledge. Effective assessment is vital to pinpoint the specific barrier.
- **Collaborative Assessment:** This diagnosis is a collaborative process. While a formal diagnosis can be useful, our professional judgement, informed by ongoing, real-time formative assessment, is critical. We use our observations to understand a pupil's specific strengths and needs within our classroom context. This vital emphasis on knowing the individual child and working with their family is a cornerstone of inclusive practice.

Only once we have a clear diagnosis can we effectively move to the tiered model to align the right support.



- **Tier 1: High-Impact Instruction for All:** This is the foundation. Every teacher is supported to deliver high-quality, evidence-informed teaching in every lesson.

- **Tier 2: Targeted Academic Support:** For pupils who are struggling, we provide more intensive practice through high-quality targeted support. For this to be effective, it must be aligned with classroom teaching in its content and strategies.

- **Tier 3: Wider Strategies:** We address non-academic barriers like attendance or social and emotional needs, which are often managed by individual schools based on their context.

Consider a pupil like "Phillip," who is in Year 5 and struggles with reading. High-quality teaching every day will expose him to rich book talk and a knowledge-building curriculum. However, this alone may not be enough. First, we must diagnose his needs with clarity—is it decoding, vocabulary, or a lack of background knowledge? Based on this assessment, an aligned, targeted intervention like 'Reciprocal Reading' could provide the intensive, scaffolded practice of reading strategies he needs to narrow the gap.

The challenge, therefore, is not choosing between great teaching and targeted support, but bringing them together through careful planning and alignment.

From Vision to Practice: The Power of Co-created Tools

Adaptive Support
Subject: Geography

FEATURES OF ALL LESSONS:

- Demo of resources
- Glossary of terms
- Key word bank
- WAGOLL

ALWAYS ASK: "WHAT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS MIGHT CHILDREN FACE?"

environment

- A low arousal environment where displays are key and successful and geographical resources (e.g. atlases, maps etc.) are easily accessible if required
- Working walls should have key vocabulary, maps and sentence stems which help children to answer using geographical language
- Geographical resources and resources should be accessible in the classroom
- Access to maps which show different maps on different scales
- Low stakes questioning and subtle addressing misconceptions when they arise is essential to developing understanding of all learners

resources

- Sentence frames or sentence starters with explicit reference to language function (specific to geographical skills) e.g.
- Word Match/Knowledge organisers that allow children to access and understand the definition of subject-specific vocabulary so they can apply them during discussions and independent learning activities
- Written responses to lines of enquiry with gaps in the text can enable learners to focus their writing on their captions and understand
- A range of non-fiction literature pitched at all levels available
- Atlases and different scale maps available
- Retrieval starter activities which identify pre-requisite skills or knowledge that will be required in the lesson and pre-teaching of key vocabulary that will be covered
- When modelling key words, ensure the definition is clear and concise and does not require a high reading age
- New material should be presented both verbally and visually (visual coding) whenever possible
- Modelling and scaffolding through teacher modelling the application of geographical skills
- Visual prompts
- Mixed ability grouping
- Provide opportunities for learners to consider geographical concepts through non-writing activities e.g. card sort activities, role-play or use of artefacts or maps

strategies

- Low stakes quizzes can help children to recap on knowledge learnt previously within a current or previous unit
- Use of floor-dispatched maps to record understanding of a specific aspect of geography (e.g. theories or climate) or a question relating to that strand
- Hedge operations are a good method of formative assessment which allows the teacher to identify misconceptions and address those before they are embedded

assessment opportunities

DCiAT

Adaptive Support
Subject: Art and DT

FEATURES OF ALL LESSONS:

- Demo of resources
- Glossary of terms
- Key word bank
- WAGOLL

ALWAYS ASK: "WHAT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS MIGHT CHILDREN FACE?"

environment

- Practical layout and space to work must be put into consideration. Do they have space to work?
- Having a range of work presented in and around the classroom allows for inclusion
- A safe space for children with sensory difficulties to self-regulate
- Incorporate discussion time to create a safe space for students to share their ideas
- Provide a variety of model examples

resources

- Access to all materials while still creating their own work
- Modelling in vital and limited (if possible) invention when using resources
- Allow children to explore the medium before being expected to create a product to allow confidence to build
- Access to larger brushes and pencils for those with difficulties in fine motor

strategies

- Share information visually as well as through discussion
- Allow for talking time
- Key vocabulary to be displayed
- Introduce equipment piece by piece
- Model processes

assessment opportunities

- Recap previous lessons and provide a visible outcome to help students demonstrate their understanding
- Gather pupil feedback on the purpose of each activity completed throughout the term

DCiAT

Adaptive Support
Subject: PE

FEATURES OF ALL LESSONS:

- Demo of resources
- Glossary of terms
- Key word bank
- WAGOLL

ALWAYS ASK: "WHAT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS MIGHT CHILDREN FACE?"

environment

- Displays – use the hall to demonstrate skills, prior to learning, reflective worksheets during lessons to show skills etc.
- Space – Make sure the space is safe for all users and the children will have room to complete the required activity
- Equipment – Make sure you are using the correct equipment. If you are unsure, speak to the subject lead to get advice
- People – Ensure that TA's are deployed effectively and that they are aware of the outcomes and who they should be supporting

resources

- Teacher knowledge of pupils will be key to supporting this. Teacher's should have a good understanding of pupils and be able to adapt their lessons using a range of resources. For example: using a larger ball for a child that has issues with fine and gross motor skills, GET SET 4 PE
- Introduce the children to a wide range of resources that make sport accessible for everyone. For example: blind football, wheelchair basketball, involvement in Boccia and paralympic sports
- A range of sensory resources to support SEND children's engagement in PE lessons and engagement in all learning through sensory circuits.
- Additional opportunities for structured activities and sports festivals (prioritising the most vulnerable pupils)

strategies

- Check key information and create clear, easy-to-follow checklists
- Embed opportunities to recall key vocabulary during the lesson.
- Assess and use learners' prior knowledge to create links between old and new content

assessment opportunities

- In PE, children are assessed formatively at the start of the unit and the assessment is based on the progress they have made from their individual starting point.
- Observations are made of children's progress and skills
- Children can verbally explain the task / health and safety points etc.
- Children can work as part of a small group and take part in appropriate steps
- Written / personal example highlighting key steps and information about the activity
- Peer assessment
- Modelling of skills by teachers and pupils

DCiAT

One Academy Trust responded to the challenge of making the curriculum accessible for all by developing subject-specific adaptive teaching guides. These guides were not a top-down initiative but were co-created with SENDCOs, subject leaders, and teachers. This collaborative process ensured the tools were practical, reduced workload, and felt authentic to classroom practice, making planning for inclusion feel natural and achievable. The result was a set of reflective aids that bring good practice to the surface and help teachers design lessons with equity in mind from the beginning.

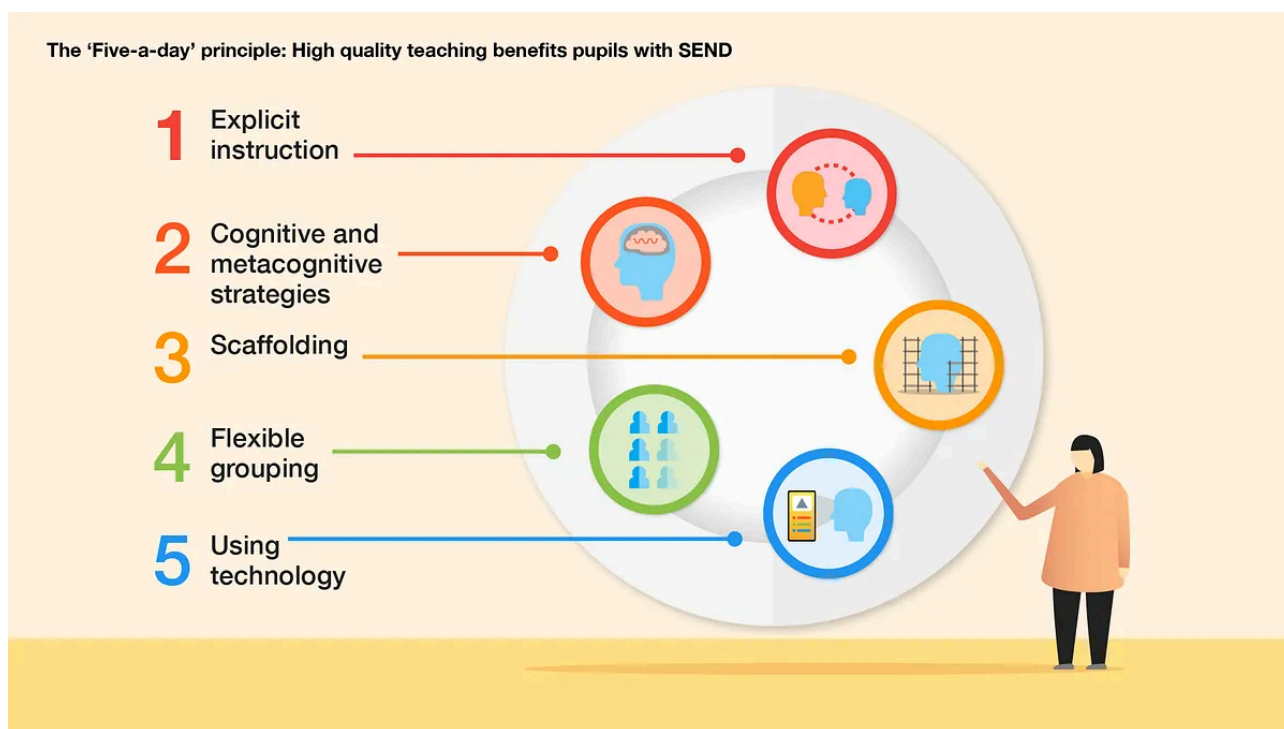
WHAT? OUR STRATEGIES IN ACTION

Our commitment to inclusive teaching is embedded in everything we do, from our Trust-wide strategies to our daily classroom practice.

Our "5-a-day" Adaptive Teaching Approach

Our Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Policy integrates a "5-a-day" adaptive teaching approach drawn from robust EEF evidence. This is the core of our high-quality inclusive teaching. We bring this to life through the lens of Contemporary Adaptive Teaching, ensuring our practice is responsive, evidence-informed, and makes the best use of modern tools to support every learner.

High-Quality teaching is our best intervention: The most effective inclusion strategy starts with excellent, high-quality, inclusive teaching daily. This benefits the pupils who find learning hardest the most, reducing the need for separate interventions.



The five approaches are:

1. **Explicit Instruction:** This is the foundation of high-quality teaching. Explicit instruction means teaching skills and concepts in small steps; using examples and non-examples; using clear and unambiguous language; and anticipating and planning for common misconceptions. This often follows the Model, Lead, Test approach, also known as 'my turn,' 'together,' 'your turn'.

2. **Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies:** We explicitly teach pupils how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning. This includes helping them develop metacognition by explicitly teaching the cycle of 'plan, monitor, evaluate'. We explicitly teach the self-regulation of learning, including goal setting, self-instruction (talk-aloud 'self-statements') and self-monitoring (checking how well things are progressing).
3. **Scaffolding:** Scaffolding (visual, verbal, or written support) is often temporary. The teacher will gradually remove the support (the scaffold) as the pupil becomes able to complete the task independently. Support must be provided so pupils can successfully complete tasks they could not do independently. We can also use fading, where the adult does all but the last step of a task, letting the pupil finish, and then gradually fading back their support.
4. **Flexible Grouping:** Flexible grouping means allocating pupils to groups temporarily based on the individual needs they currently share with other pupils. These groups are formed for an explicit purpose and disbanded when that purpose is met. Allocating pupils to temporary groups can allow teachers to set up opportunities for collaborative learning and work alongside a different range of adults and pupils regularly.
5. **Using Technology to Enhance Pedagogy:** Technology is not an add-on; it is a powerful tool for making our adaptive teaching more precise, inclusive, and efficient. Contemporary digital tools enable us to:
 - **Gather accurate data:** Move beyond assumption by collecting real-time responses from every child, using dashboards to instantly identify common misconceptions or individual needs without the 'halo effect' of whole-class observation. This frees up our cognitive capacity to plan targeted, personal interventions.
 - **Enable inclusion by design:** Offer built-in accessibility features (e.g., text-to-speech, translation, dictate) as a 'normal way of working' for the whole class. This removes the stigma of 'different' provision for our most vulnerable learners and allows them to access the same ambitious curriculum content as their peers.
 - **Promote deliberate autonomy:** Allow pupils to control the pace of their learning through self-paced tasks or to access higher levels of challenge without waiting for teacher permission. Instant feedback from digital tools also plays a vital role in encouraging task persistence and pace.

This contemporary, responsive approach ensures we are not just amending pre-set plans, but truly adapting to meet the holistic needs of every child in front of us.

Evolving Our Practice: Contemporary Adaptive Teaching

As a Trust committed to innovation, we embrace the evolution of our pedagogical approaches by blending evidence-informed strategies with contemporary tools and mindsets. This means evolving our understanding of Adaptive Teaching into Contemporary Adaptive Teaching.

This contemporary approach sharpens our focus on five key strands:

1. **Being Truly Data-Informed:** Effective adaptive teaching requires us to move beyond assumptions and generalisations. Traditional methods like mini-whiteboards are useful, but it is nearly impossible for a teacher to accurately remember 30+ individual responses over a series of questions. Contemporary digital tools such as Plickers, Nearpod and Kahoot enhance this process by collecting, collating, and analysing whole-class data in real time, often presenting it on a dashboard. This automates some of the cognitive load for teachers, freeing up their capacity and providing more accurate insights. This empowers us to repurpose our time from generic procedures to targeting personal interventions based on precise, individual data. It helps us move from simply amending a pre-set plan to truly adapting our teaching to meet the specific needs of each child.

2. **Inclusion Through Design:** Our Social Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence driver focuses on leveraging technology to enhance learning. A key part of this is using digital tools to make inclusion the default, not an afterthought. When digital accessibility features—like screen readers, text-to-speech, or translation tools—are offered as a 'normal way of working' for the whole class, it removes the stigma of 'different' provision for our most vulnerable learners. This directly supports our core principles of dignity and respect. This approach ensures pupils can access equitable curriculum content without placing huge additional workload demands on teachers to create different resources.
3. **Fostering Deliberate Autonomy:** While we value scaffolding, we must also be wary of unintentionally promoting 'learned dependency' where pupils wait for teacher permission before moving forward. Contemporary digital tools can foster independence by allowing for self-paced learning and providing instant feedback. This empowers highly capable learners to move at their own pace while freeing up the teacher to support those who need it most. Instant feedback is vital for encouraging task persistence and increasing the pace of learning within a lesson. This is key to preparing our pupils for their next stage of education and life.
4. **Deepening Our Questioning:** While teachers ask hundreds of questions daily, many are simple checkpoints rather than deeper, probing questions that develop understanding. Digital tools can help close this gap by automating quick checks for understanding (e.g., at the start or end of a lesson), freeing up teacher capacity to focus on higher-order, intervention-based questioning that targets nuanced misconceptions revealed by real-time data.
5. **Equity as a Mindset** This brings all the strands together. For us, equity as a mindset means considering it through three lenses:
 - For the learner: Ensuring all pupils have an equitable opportunity to show what they know and benefit from personalised provision.
 - For the professional: Ensuring all staff working with a child are equitably supported to implement adaptive teaching.
 - For representation: Using digital tools to ensure teaching materials value the diverse stories, identities, and cultural capital that each individual brings to the classroom.

By embracing these contemporary approaches, we can redirect our time towards being more human, affording us the capacity to engage more deeply with our pupils and provide the targeted support and connection that lie at the heart of our vision for flourishing.

Creating the Conditions for Learning and Belonging

We believe that just as a gardener creates the best conditions for plants to grow, great teachers create the best conditions for learning.

- **Our Highest Expectation:** We must avoid using language such as 'low ability' or 'the low table' as this risks pigeonholing children. Instead, we focus discussions on attainment, because attainment can be changed. This commitment ensures we maintain high expectations, putting no ceiling on any child's learning. Teachers must directly address low expectations of others (teachers, non-teaching staff, and pupils) for all pupils.
- **Strong Foundations:** Our curriculum prioritises securing strong foundations in the early years, particularly in communication and language, reading, writing, and maths, so all pupils can access the full curriculum.
- **Wellbeing and Emotional Support:** We know that happy, healthy children learn best. The Thrive Approach is central to our commitment, providing a systematic way to support the emotional and social development of every child, building resilience and re-engaging them with learning.

- **Collaboration and Expertise:** We are stronger together. Subject leaders are crucial to inclusion, as their deep content knowledge allows them to anticipate where pupils might struggle and work with SENDCOs to design targeted, subject-appropriate scaffolds. We use Coaching, Communities of Practice, and Digital Champions to share this expertise, foster reflective practice, and drive continuous improvement. Importantly, this culture of strong, inclusive practice and consistent routines ensures that teachers flourish in their roles. It makes the classroom a more joyful experience for staff, rooted in seeing every child being successful day after day. Remember this key mantra: we are always learning, continuously evolving our systems, structures, and practice to meet the vision that all children can thrive.

Securing strong foundations for all pupils



ACCURATE AND
FLUENT WORD
READING



SPELLING



EARLY WRITING –
TRANSCRIPTION



EARLY
MATHEMATICS



HIGH QUALITY
INTERACTIONS

By focusing on these evidence-informed, inclusive practices, we do more than just meet statutory duties; we live our values. We create a culture where every child and every adult can flourish. This is our gift.

Developing Skills for Life: The 6Cs

Our commitment to inclusion goes hand-in-hand with our goal to equip every child with the six global competencies (the 6Cs) that will enable them to thrive in an ever-changing world. Inclusive teaching is the vehicle through which *all* children develop these vital competencies. Our inclusive practices are designed to foster these skills in all learners:

- **Character:** By fostering a culture of dignity, respect, and belonging, we help children develop integrity and learn how to be a kind person.
- **Citizenship:** We help children become responsible, active citizens who value diversity and work for the common good, understanding British values.
- **Collaboration:** Strategies like flexible grouping and prioritising oracy ensure that all pupils learn to work effectively with others.
- **Communication:** Through a focus on oracy, we empower pupils to articulate their ideas, listen with empathy, and engage with others through spoken language.
- **Creativity:** An accessible curriculum with high expectations for all challenges every pupil to innovate and solve problems.
- **Critical Thinking:** We teach children to analyse information, make good choices, and adapt their learning to tackle complex challenges.



OUR SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Our vision of **flourishing** for all is not just an ideal; it is something we build together, every day, through our actions and priorities. To ensure we are all aligned in creating this inclusive culture, it's helpful to understand what excellence looks like across all aspects of our school life. While our work is driven by our own mission and values, these expectations reflect nationally recognised standards for high-quality education and care.

A Culture of High Expectations and Safety for All

The cornerstone of our Trust is a culture where every child's interests are put first. We maintain an open, positive, and vigilant environment, always working with the mindset that 'it could happen here'. This means:

- We actively seek and listen to the views of all our pupils, staff, and families, dealing with any concerns promptly.
- We recognise that some pupils, particularly those with SEND or communication difficulties, may have increased safeguarding risks. Staff are trained to be aware of the additional barriers that can prevent these children from reporting concerns and to notice any changes in behaviour or mood, investigating them thoroughly.
- Our curriculum explicitly teaches all pupils how to stay safe, including online. This teaching is thoughtfully adapted to be developmentally appropriate and meet the specific needs and vulnerabilities of our pupils with SEND.

Leadership That Champions Inclusion

Our leaders, at every level, are the driving force behind our inclusive ethos. Their role is to:

- **Establish and sustain our vision** for providing high-quality education to all pupils, upholding the high standards that prepare children from all backgrounds for their future.
- **Understand our pupils and their needs**, including any specific barriers they may face, and ensure that our pupil premium strategy is based on the best evidence of what works to support them.
- **Empower our SENDCOs** to lead whole-school improvement for pupils with SEND.
- **Engage thoughtfully with our families and community**, building constructive, trusting relationships to support our children.
- **Hold all staff to account for the school's provision for vulnerable learners**, ensuring that our systems for support are fair, valid, and lead to continuous improvement.

Curriculum and Quality of Teaching That Opens Doors for Everyone

High-quality teaching is the most powerful tool we have to support our vulnerable learners. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring our curriculum and teaching practices are ambitious and accessible for all. This means:

- **The curriculum is designed for all pupils**, especially our disadvantaged learners and those with SEND, giving them the knowledge they need to succeed in later life.
- **Strong foundations in reading, writing, and maths are prioritised** so that all pupils can access the full curriculum. This includes ensuring adequate exposure to rich language in the classroom, consistent teaching of pre-teaching core vocabulary, and explicitly building phonological skills.
- **Teaching is adapted in the moment** based on continuous checks for understanding. This responsive, adaptive teaching is more effective than pre-planned, fixed activities and is designed to support all children without lowering expectations.
- **We make lessons accessible by default**, removing barriers during the planning stage. This includes using clear fonts, defining vocabulary, and breaking down complex

instructions to make learning perceivable, understandable, and doable for the widest range of pupils. Crucially, this involves front-loading background knowledge (such as cultural context for literature) to guarantee both social and academic inclusion for all.

- When universal strategies are not enough, we make **minimal, appropriate, and temporary adaptations** to enable a pupil to engage with the core learning alongside their peers.
- **Reasonable adjustments** for pupils with specific needs are well-targeted and effective, focusing on long-term success.

Behaviour and Attitudes That Foster Belonging

We create a calm, orderly, and positive environment where every child can thrive. Our approach is built on positive relationships and mutual respect. We achieve this by:

- **Setting clear routines and high expectations for behaviour**, which are explicitly taught, modelled, and understood by all. This vital consistency creates predictability and emotional safety, ensuring all pupils feel secure and connected. We understand that consistent systems are enablers to inclusive practice, reducing confusion and building confidence.
- Recognising that some pupils may need **additional support to manage their emotions and behaviour**. We use timely and well-chosen interventions to help them meet our high expectations.
- Creating an environment where **bullying, discrimination, and derogatory language are not tolerated** and are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Working in close partnership with families to promote **excellent attendance**, recognising that some of our vulnerable pupils may face additional barriers. We provide tailored support to help them attend regularly.

Personal Development That Nurtures the Whole Child

Our commitment goes "unreasonably beyond academic outcomes". We provide a rich programme of personal development that helps every child to flourish. We ensure:

- **All pupils benefit from high-quality personal development opportunities**, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. We track participation and make adaptations to ensure everyone can be involved.
- Pupils develop into **responsible, respectful, and active citizens** who understand fundamental British values and respect the protected characteristics.
- Our taught curriculum and wider opportunities develop pupils' **confidence, resilience, and knowledge**, so they can keep themselves mentally and physically healthy.
- Pupils with SEND are supported to develop their independence, build friendships, and are prepared for a successful transition to their next stage of education and life.

Our Blueprint for Success: The Trust's OS

The inclusive practices described in this booklet are enabled and sustained by our Trust's wider operating system, ensuring a coherent and focused approach to achieving our vision.



The 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX)

This framework ensures we remain focused on our "Wildly Important Goals" (WIGs) for inclusion, such as closing attainment gaps for SEND and Disadvantaged pupils. It helps us translate our strategy into concrete results by focusing our energy on what truly matters.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: This is the personal effectiveness framework that empowers every staff member and child to take ownership (Be Proactive) and work collaboratively (Synergize) to make inclusion a reality. It builds the character and competence necessary for everyone to flourish together.

By focusing on these evidence-informed, inclusive practices, we do more than just meet statutory duties; we live our values. We create a culture where every child and every adult can flourish. This is our gift. Thank you for being a vital part of this journey.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

The following summaries highlight effective inclusion strategies demonstrated in mainstream primary schools, or secondary examples whose core principles are highly relevant to primary education. They are taken from <https://inclusioninpractice.org.uk/>.

Burton End Primary Academy: Universal Visual Support

Burton End Primary Academy utilised expertise from its specialist support hub to expand the use of **visual aids and prompts** into a whole-school approach for mainstream classrooms, particularly in Reception and Year 1. This strategy was chosen due to strong evidence supporting its effectiveness in making abstract concepts more concrete, reducing anxiety, and fostering independence.

- **Practical Examples:** Implementing '**Now-next-then**' boards to help pupils understand transitions, using **choice boards with** pictures for selecting activities, and introducing a **Sign of the Week** (Makaton sign and symbol) across classrooms.
- **Impact on Inclusion:** The proportion of reception pupils within the expected or borderline range for language development rose significantly (from 43% to 60%), and severe difficulties halved. Leaders observed that this visual approach positively supported emotional regulation and reduced behaviour incidents, as pupils were better able to anticipate routines and understand expectations.

[Marine Academy Primary \(MAP\): Consistency and High-Quality Universal Teaching](#)

Marine Academy Primary (MAP) embedded inclusive practice through a whole-school framework of consistent classroom strategies known as the **Core 10**, used by every teacher, every day. MAP operates on the principle that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) do not need different provision, but rather expert, well-informed classrooms that provide a consistent and high-quality learning environment beneficial to all children.

- **Practical Examples:** Routines include **Thresholding** (warm greetings at the door to establish connections and readiness), **SHAPE Talk** (structured approach to speaking and oracy), and **Signal-Pause-Insist** (a predictable 3-2-1 readiness prompt for attention).
- **Impact on Inclusion:** This approach, reinforced through regular coaching and deliberate practice, ensures predictability and emotional safety, dismantling everyday barriers to understanding and participation, and fostering a strong sense of belonging.

[Ormiston Academies Trust: Specialist Internal Provisions \(SIPs\)](#)

Ormiston Academies Trust developed **Specialist Internal Provisions (SIPs)** across six of their primary schools to provide targeted, additional support for pupils with more complex needs, including pre-verbal pupils. The SIPs are intended as a stepping stone, complementing high-quality teaching, rather than a final destination, to avoid pupils becoming 'stuck' in separate settings.

- **Practical Examples:** SIPs are structured to meet specific needs such as early communication and interaction, often providing full-time support for pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1. The provision utilizes allocated funding to ensure a dedicated teacher lead and incorporates tailored resources like sensory areas and calming zones.
- **Impact on Inclusion:** Early evidence showed improved behaviour, attendance, and pupil engagement. The model supports meeting needs in a mainstream context, which reduces the risk of exclusion.

[River Learning Trust \(Bayards Hill Primary School\): Targeted Emotional Support](#)

Bayards Hill Primary School initially focused on embedding whole-school improvements in teaching and behaviour policies. Subsequently, to address prevalent Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, they implemented a targeted **Emotional and Social Curriculum intervention** (from Mulberry Bush School).

- **Practical Examples:** The intervention runs in small groups (EYFS to Year 4) led by a teacher with pastoral expertise. Sessions are strategically timetabled, for example, on Monday and Tuesday mornings, to directly address issues like Emotionally Based School Avoidance and improve punctuality. Activities focus on five core areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Impact on Inclusion:** 81% of pupils in the intervention showed a reduction in emotional and behavioural difficulties, and 75% improved attendance. The school emphasizes **instructional coaching** for staff to embed adaptive strategies and inclusive learning environments universally.

[Star Academies: Codified Strategy and Pupil Profiles](#)

Star Academies implemented the **All Stars Succeed: High Five** framework, which uses consistent, high-impact teaching practices suitable for all learners, particularly those with SEND. The trust utilizes specific profiles called **Star Maps** for all pupils on the SEND register, tailored for Early Years and Primary settings.

- **Practical Examples:** Star Maps (pupil profiles) are dynamic working documents, limiting recommended adaptive strategies for classroom teachers to between three and five high-leverage actions per child. Primary Star Maps involve termly reviews led by the

classroom teacher, in partnership with parents and the pupil, emphasizing co-production. The document ensures teachers understand specific needs (like reading age or cat4 scores) and feel empowered to suggest subject-specific adaptations.

- **Impact on Inclusion:** Trust-wide consistency in universal practice is credited with improved KS2 outcomes for pupils with SEND, achieving more than double the national average for expected standards in reading, writing, and maths combined.

RESOURCES

NASEN teacher handbook for SEND

<https://www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/teacher-handbook>

Staff training for SEND in line with the EEF

<https://www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/page/online-cpd-units>

Staff training focusing on Autism and Inclusion

<https://www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/autism-awareness-and-inclusion>

Ordinarily Available Inclusive Teaching Framework and Targeted Support

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-services-and-support/send-advice-and-2>

Ofsted Inspection Toolkit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

EEF Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools, Guidance report

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/send>

EEF Selecting Interventions for pupils with SEND

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/selecting-interventions>

EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/using-pupil-premium>

EEF Getting it Right For Disadvantaged Children

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/getting-it-right-for-disadvantaged-children-getting-it-right-for-all-the-children>

Warwickshire Inclusion Framework SEND Training Modules

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Vgac7nMWiHnkOAoe-nf3MKaWb2fYKwYc?&overridemobile=true>

Understanding Adaptive Teaching

<https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/Understanding-Adaptive-Teaching-v11.pdf?v=1760955194>

Adaptive Teaching: Understanding Barriers and Enablers

<https://realtraining.co.uk/2024/10/adaptive-teaching-understanding-the-barriers-and-enablers>

Adaptive Teaching Versus Differentiation - What is the Difference?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix7_2lk28k0

Talking Inclusion Podcast

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/talking-inclusion-with-geoff-barton/id1834397941>

Adaptive Teaching - Unlocking Potential Beyond the Label

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jRO7QRUOp8qH-LNldsmX9rRnuCOeODJ/view?usp=share_link