

The Derbyshire Inclusion Framework

Helping every child feel included, supported and able to succeed

The Derbyshire Inclusion Framework helps mainstream schools review and strengthen how they include and support all children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

It supports schools to understand the needs of their pupils, remove barriers to learning and participation, and provide help as early as possible. Support is based on a child's individual strengths and needs and does not depend on having a diagnosis.

Families do not need to wait for a diagnosis before discussing support with their child's school.

How does the Inclusion Framework work?

Schools use the framework to look carefully at their current inclusive practice. They consider what is already working well, what needs further development and what action they will take next.

The framework brings this together in an Inclusion Impact Plan, with priorities reviewed after three, six and twelve months. This helps the school check whether changes are making a positive difference for children and young people.

The full Inclusion Framework brings together the school's evidence, its review of eight areas of inclusive practice and the actions recorded in its Inclusion Impact Plan.

The Inclusion Support Service works alongside school leaders, SENDCOs and school staff throughout this process. Every Derbyshire school has a named Inclusion Support Advisory Teacher (ISAT), who provides a consistent point of contact and helps the school review evidence, identify strengths and barriers, agree priorities, complete its Inclusion Framework review and develop an Inclusion Impact Plan.

How does this link to the DfE's inclusion principles?

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out seven principles to help mainstream schools become inclusive by design. In simple terms, this means planning school life from the start so that every child can belong, take part, learn and thrive. The Derbyshire Inclusion Framework helps schools turn these national principles into practical action.

DfE inclusion principle	How the Inclusion Framework supports this:
Ambitious leadership and governance	Leaders and governors make inclusion everyone's responsibility, review evidence and agree clear priorities for improvement.
Evidence-based support and early help	Schools identify needs and barriers early, use reliable evidence and act before difficulties grow.
High-quality, adaptive teaching	Teaching, the curriculum and classroom approaches are adapted so that all pupils can learn and participate.
Accessible opportunities beyond lessons	Schools check that trips, clubs, enrichment and leadership opportunities are open to every child.
A safe, respectful culture of belonging	The framework helps schools strengthen belonging, relationships, attendance and participation.
Strong partnerships	Children, families, school staff, the Inclusion Support Service and wider services work together and share their knowledge.
Inclusive and accessible environments	Schools review and continually improve their routines, communication, physical spaces and wider environment to remove barriers.

How can schools use the Inclusion framework for their inclusion strategy?

The Inclusive Mainstream Fund provides additional funding to help mainstream schools strengthen inclusive practice. As a condition of this funding, schools must use their allocation in line with the seven DfE inclusion principles and publish an inclusion strategy on their website by **31 December 2026**.

Schools can use their completed Derbyshire Inclusion Framework review and Inclusion Impact Plan as the evidence base for this strategy. Together, they show what the school understands about its pupils, the barriers children may face, what is already working well and the improvements the school will prioritise.

In practice, schools can use the framework to:

- Identify the main barriers to learning and participation across the school;
- Link priorities to the seven DfE inclusion principles;
- Choose inclusive activities and support to address those barriers;
- Show how the school will use its core budget, notional SEN budget and Inclusive Mainstream Fund allocation;
- Set clear intended outcomes and explain how progress will be reviewed; and Involve pupils, families, staff and governors in shaping and reviewing the strategy.

For parents and carers, the published strategy provides a short, accessible summary of the school's inclusion priorities, how funding is being used to remove barriers and how the school will know whether its actions are improving children's experiences and outcomes. If the strategy covers more than one year, the school reviews it annually.

What does the Inclusion framework look at?

The framework is organised around eight areas of inclusive practice:

Belonging

The school creates a welcoming environment where your child feels valued and part of the school community. This includes support during transitions, social times, periods of absence and returning to school.

Responsibility

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. School leaders, governors, teachers and support staff work together to understand and meet pupils' needs.

Opportunities

The school ensures your child has fair access to lessons, trips, clubs, leadership roles and wider school life. Teaching and activities are adapted where needed so that every child can take part.

Celebrating strengths

The school actively values and celebrates difference. Children's achievements, progress, strengths and contributions are recognised and shared with families.

Flexibility

The school proactively adapts its teaching, routines and environment to meet pupils' needs. Children are not expected to fit into arrangements that create unnecessary barriers for them.

Identification

Schools identify emerging needs and respond as early as possible. Teachers work with children and families to understand what may be making learning, attendance, wellbeing or participation more difficult.

Provision

Schools plan, provide and review support using the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** approach. Support is matched to need, checked regularly and changed when it is not having the intended impact. The school agrees with families when support will be reviewed and how its impact will be measured.

The four-step cycle of support

The school works through four simple steps with you and your child. Each step helps everyone understand what is needed, agree the right support and check whether it is making a difference.

1. ASSESS → Understand your child's strengths and needs The school listens to you and your child and brings together information about what is going well and any barriers to learning or taking part.	2. PLAN ↓ Agree the support and intended difference You, your child and the school agree what support will be provided, who will help, when it will be reviewed and what positive change you hope to see.
4. REVIEW ↑ Check what difference the support has made You, your child and the school review progress together and agree whether support will continue, change or increase.	← 3. DO Put the agreed support into practice School staff provide the support consistently, help your child use it and records what happens.
REVIEW ∪ ASSESS Review, adapt and repeat as your child's needs change	

ISATs then work with school staff to put agreed priorities into practice. This may include coaching, learning walks, reviewing policies and provision maps, modelling inclusive approaches, providing training and helping the school connect with targeted or specialist support where needed. Progress is revisited through regular review conversations so that plans can be adjusted and improvements sustained.

Working together with children and families

Children, young people and their families are active partners in decisions about support. Schools listen to their views, involve them in reviews and explain how to raise a concern or speak to the SENDCO.

What this means for my child?

You can expect your child's school to:

- Recognise and build on your child's strengths;
- Listen to your child and to you;
- Notice needs and barriers early;
- Put suitable support and reasonable adjustments in place;

- Explain what support is being provided and why;
- Involve you and your child in planning and reviewing support;
- Check whether support is making a difference;
- Adapt support when your child's needs change;
- Support your child to take part in all aspects of school life; and
- Help your child feel safe, welcome and included.

How will parents and carers be involved?

Parents and carers have valuable knowledge about their child. Schools provide accessible ways for families to:

- Share their child's strengths, needs and experiences;
- Contribute to support plans and reviews;
- Discuss what is working at home and at school;
- Share concerns, feedback or suggestions;
- Meet with the school's SENDCO or inclusion lead; and understand what will happen next.

Schools use parent and pupil feedback to improve individual support and wider school practice. If you have a question or concern, your first point of contact can be your child's teacher, the school's SENDCO or its inclusion lead.