Inclusion Strategy Template

Inclusion Strategy – Herne CE Infant and Nursery School

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 – August 2027
Date this statement was published	November 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	September 2027
Statement authorised by	Angie Cox, SENCO AHT Lucy StJohn Head of School

Statement of intent

At Herne CE Infant and Nursery School all pupils irrespective of need access a broad and balanced curriculum which is delivered through high quality inclusive teaching to enable every pupil to make progress and reach their full potential socially, emotionally and academically. When required to do so, we will make reasonable adjustments to support pupils with their presenting needs. We set high expectations and aspirations for each individual pupil, working together with them, and their parents/carers to ensure that all pupils become confident and independent children and young people who are able to successfully transition to the next phase of their education.

We are committed to creating a truly inclusive learning environment ensuring that we continuously review and adapt physical, sensory, and communication accessibility so every child is welcomed, valued, respected, and empowered to succeed.

Inclusion sits at the heart of everything we do at Herne CE Infant and Nursery School. Guided by our values of respect, forgiveness, trust, love and honesty, we celebrate diversity, remove barriers to learning and help every child thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

We know that children learn and grow in different ways. Fairness does not always mean treating everyone the same but by providing an equitable approach each child is able to access the specific support they need to succeed. Some pupils benefit from extra help, adaptations or targeted intervention to access their learning. Using high-quality adaptive teaching, early identification, nurture approaches, well established evidence based intervention and a graduated approach, we ensure every child can take part fully in school life and enjoy an ambitious curriculum. We tailor our support so that all children feel confident, capable and included.

Inclusion goes beyond academics. We nurture children's wellbeing, communication, independence, self-regulation and sense of belonging. Because we see behaviour as a form of communication, we respond with warmth, consistency and care. Together with a strong safeguarding culture and close partnerships with families, external specialists and wider services our nurturing approach helps children feel safe, happy and ready to learn.

Our inclusion strategy is built on the belief that every child deserves fair access to experiences that enrich their lives and raise their aspirations. The effectiveness of our decision making relies on strong leadership accountability, strategic SENCo oversight, and governance scrutiny. We are committed to expanding opportunities in leadership, enrichment, communication, and personal development for all pupils.

Our approach to inclusion is shaped by the children, families and staff who make up the Herne community.

We listen to children through pupil voice, Time to Talk conversations, individual reviews and everyday relational interactions. We seek the views of parents and carers through our *Parents as Partners* approach, meetings, consultations and individual conversations. Staff contribute through professional dialogue, CPD, monitoring, pupil progress discussions and our ongoing review of provision.

We also work closely with SEND professionals, health and social care colleagues, the local authority and other partner agencies where this helps us better understand and support individual children.

In 2026-2027, we will focus on:

• Improving attendance and engagement for vulnerable learners.

- Speech and Language
    - Outcomes for pupils with SEND
    - Social, emotional regulation

We will measure the impact of our inclusion strategy by tracking pupil progress, attendance, wellbeing, pupil voice, family feedback, provision reviews and quality assurance.

By providing a nurturing, ambitious and inclusive provision every child will feel a sense of belonging and is known, valued and supported to reach their full potential.

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 and participation *(including notable trends or themes over time, such as a growing prevalence or increasing complexity)*
1	**Early Identification:** Enhancing early identification, assessment, and tailored provision, particularly for children with communication and interaction needs.
2	**Inclusive environments and provision:** We are thoughtfully shaping our school environment—from our classroom spaces to our daily routines and resources—to ensure every child feels supported to communicate, regulate, grow in independence, and take an active part in school life.
3	**Adaptive teaching**: Through adaptive teaching and ambitious learning, we remove or reduce barriers without lowering expectations so every pupil can access a rich curriculum and succeed."
4	**Belonging and Relational Practice:** Strengthening and further embedding a trauma-informed, relational approach that fosters an inclusive culture where positive relationships enable every child to feel safe, valued, understood, and connected.
5	**Time to Talk and Communication:** Embedding structured, meaningful opportunities for dialogue across the setting so every child can develop rich vocabulary, expressive language, and self-assurance through inclusive, high-quality adult and peer interactions.
6	**Attendance and Engagement:** Working alongside children and families to understand the root causes of absence, building trust to strengthen every child's sense of belonging, connection, and readiness to thrive in learning.

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.

Description of activity *(noting evidence)*	**Barrier addressed**	**Activity type** *(universal or targeted)*	**Total budgeted cost** *(IMF and core budget allocations)*
Evidence-based small-group interventions. Run short, frequent sessions—such as Bucket Time (Attention Autism), Little Link Language Interventions , or Lego-based therapy—for children identified through screening.	*1, 2, 3,*	*Targeted*	
Calm, low-arousal spaces. Create defined quiet zones indoors and outdoors where overwhelmed children can regulate before attempting social interaction.	2, 3, 4, 5,	Targeted	
Universal baseline screening. Screen all incoming Reception pupils within their first half-term using a standardised speech and language tool (Little Link and Language Link) to spot subtle receptive or expressive delays	1, 2,	Universal	
Create inclusive learning environments that enable all pupils, including those with SEND and other vulnerabilities, to access learning, participate fully and develop a strong sense of belonging. • Sensory room to support regulation • Flexible seating • Low arousal classrooms and soft lighting • Visual support including visual timetables, now and next boards and communication aids • Transition plans for individuals and cohorts	1, 2, 4, 5	Targeted	
Dual coding and visual scaffolding. Pair spoken instructions with consistent visual cues (such as Widgit symbols, Makaton signs, or	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Targeted and Universal	

visual timetables) to reduce cognitive load and support working memory.			
Speech, Language and Communication support. Allocated member of staff to support speech and language interventions both within the early years and across KS1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Targeted	
Pre-teaching key vocabulary and concepts. Introduce tier-two vocabulary, story hooks, or mathematical concepts to targeted pupils in a 5-minute session before the main lesson so they can participate alongside peers with confidence.	1, 2, 3, 5	Targeted	
Readily available toolkit stations. Keep "grab-and-go" scaffolds—such as phonics mats, number lines, wobble cushions, pencil grips, and ear defenders—accessible for children to self-select, removing stigma.	1, 2, 3, 5	Targeted	
Same-day "keep-up" phonics and maths. Run short, 10-minute afternoon catch-up sessions based on morning hinge questions or formative checks to address misconceptions immediately before the next day's lesson.	1, 3, 6	Targeted	
Co-regulation support. Use emotion coaching scripts, personalised "calm boxes," and scheduled movement breaks for pupils with sensory processing or attachment needs.	1, 3, 4, 6	Targeted and Universal	
Flexible, fluid grouping. Group children dynamically based on real-time formative assessment rather than static labels, allowing teachers and teaching assistants to deliver immediate "in-the-moment" support.	2, 3	Universal	
Alternative ways to record. Separate the core learning objective from physical barriers; for example, allow a child to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding verbally.	3, 6	Universal	

Playful Connection (PACE). Encourage staff to use Dan Hughes' PACE approach (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) during everyday interactions to build trust and diffuse low-level anxiety.	1, 4, 5, 6	Universal	
ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) Supporting children experiencing anxiety, bereavement, self-esteem, or trauma. Weekly 1:1 sessions led by a trained ELSA using a range of appropriate resources including puppets, stories and games	1, 4, 5, 6	Targeted	
Collaborative "barrier mapping" meetings. Meet with parents using a structured, non-judgemental tool (such as a "Team Around the Family" or attendance support plan) to uncover hidden drivers like sensory overwhelm, undiagnosed speech/language needs, housing/transport instability, or parental mental health.	1, 4, 6	Targeted	
Capturing the child's voice. Use age-appropriate visual tools—such as "Three Houses," emotion cards, or drawing and talking activities—with a trusted adult to find out what makes the child feel safe, worried, or left out at school.	1, 4, 6	Targeted	
Dedicated Family Liaison / Pastoral Lead. Protect time for a non-teaching staff member to build relationships with families, make supportive home visits, and signpost to local early help services, food banks, or parenting support.	1, 4, 6	Targeted	
Whole school training for staff in the THRIVE programme	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Universal and targeted	

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
Children with emerging needs—particularly in speech, language, communication, and interaction—are identified swiftly upon entry and receive high-quality, tailored universal and targeted provision, enabling them to communicate effectively, regulate emotions, and thrive alongside their peers.	**1. Swift Screening & Accurate Assessment** ➢ Universal baseline screening: 100% of Reception pupils (and any mid-year in-year admissions) complete a structured speech, language, and communication screen (Language Link) within their first 6 weeks of starting school. ➢ Prompt graduated response: Children flagged with emerging needs are placed on a targeted intervention or classroom support plan within 2 weeks of screening, with clear, baseline-measured targets. ➢ Timely specialist referrals: Referrals to external agencies (e.g., Speech and Language Therapy, Paediatricians, or Specialist Teaching Services) are submitted promptly with rich school-based evidence, avoiding unnecessary delays. **2. High-Quality Classroom & Targeted Provision (Practice & Environment)** ➢ Communication-friendly classrooms: Learning walks confirm that 100% of EYFS and KS1 classrooms consistently embed universal total-communication strategies (e.g., visual timetables, Makaton/signing, Widget/symbols, and reduced teacher talk). ➢ Fidelity of targeted interventions: Trained staff deliver evidence-based small-group or 1:1 interventions (such as Attention Autism, Lego-based therapy, Language interventions or Language Through Colour) with fidelity, recorded via termly provision maps. ➢ Confident staff workforce: Staff voice and audits show that at least 90% of teachers and TAs feel confident spotting early signs of speech, language, and neurodivergent communication needs and adapting their scaffolding accordingly. **3. Pupil Progress, Interaction & Engagement (Impact on Children)** ➢ Measurable communication gains: At least 85% of pupils receiving targeted C&I interventions make accelerated progress against their baseline assessment scores (e.g., moving up age-bandings on Language Link or achieving Assess-Plan-Do-Review targets).

	➢ Reduced frustration and dysregulation: Behaviour logs show a measurable reduction in frustration-led incidents among pupils with identified C&I needs, as alternative communication tools give them a functional voice. ➢ Active peer and learning engagement: Classroom observations show that children with C&I needs increasingly initiate interactions with adults and peers, access continuous provision independently, and achieve in line with their starting points across the EYFS and KS1 curriculum.
Every learning space, resource, and daily routine across the school is thoughtfully designed to be sensory-considerate, communication-friendly, and predictable—empowering all children to self-regulate, navigate school life independently, and participate actively alongside their peers.	**1. Sensory-Considerate & Communication-Friendly Spaces (Environment & Resources)** ➢ Consistent environmental audits: Termly learning environment walks confirm that 100% of classrooms and shared spaces (halls, corridors, outdoor areas) meet the school's sensory and communication checklist (e.g., clutter-free displays, clear signage with Widgit/symbols, and defined quiet/regulation zones). ➢ Accessible resources: Continuous provision and classroom equipment are clearly labelled with photos/symbols at child height, enabling all pupils to select, use, and tidy resources without adult prompting. ➢ Effective regulation spaces: Calm corners or sensory safe spaces are embedded in every year group and used proactively by children as a positive regulation tool rather than a reactive consequence. **2. Predictable Routines & Smooth Transitions (Daily Practice)** ➢ Universal visual scaffolding: Learning walks show that 100% of classes actively use consistent visual timetables, "Now and Next" boards, and countdown timers to support transitions between carpet time, learning times, COOL time and playtimes. ➢ Inclusive whole-school routines: High-sensory times—such as lunchtimes, worship, and wet play—have clear, structured alternatives or reasonable adjustments (e.g., ear defenders, quiet dining tables, structured playground zones) so that no child is excluded due to sensory overload. ➢ Consistent adult co-regulation: Staff observations confirm that teachers and TAs use calm, relational co-regulation strategies and consistent emotional literacy language (e.g., The Colour Monster, scripted language) across every phase of the school day. **3. Child Independence, Regulation & Active Participation (Impact on Pupils)** ➢ Increased pupil independence: Classroom observations and Early Learning Goal / KS1 tracking show a measurable increase in children independently initiating learning, following classroom routines, and using self-help strategies.

	➢ Reduced sensory overload: Observations and behaviour records show a decrease in transition-related anxiety, lunchtime incidents, or sensory overwhelm among neurodivergent pupils and those with SEND. ➢ Full participation in school life: Monitoring of enrichment, clubs, trips, and school responsibilities (e.g., school council, classroom helpers) confirms that pupils with SEND and vulnerable learners participate at rates equal to their peers.
High-quality, responsive adaptive teaching is embedded in every classroom—removing barriers through smart scaffolding rather than lowered expectations—so that every pupil accesses the full, ambitious curriculum, develops strong foundational skills, and achieves their full potential.	**1. Responsive Adaptive Pedagogy (Classroom Practice)** ➢ Scaffolding over differentiation: Lesson observations and planning reviews confirm that 100% of teachers plan for the same ambitious learning intentions for all pupils, using flexible scaffolds (e.g., dual coding, sentence stems, manipulatives, pre-teaching, and chunked instructions) rather than separate, lower-expectation tasks. ➢ Strategic adult deployment: Learning walks demonstrate that Teaching Assistants are deployed effectively to foster pupil independence—supporting small-group guided work, scaffolding peer talk, and rotating support rather than creating over-reliance on 1:1 velcro support. ➢ Live formative assessment: Teachers routinely check for understanding during carpet inputs and continuous provision, adapting explanations, pacing, and resources in the moment to address misconceptions before pupils fall behind. **2. Ambitious Curriculum Access & Early Foundations (Curriculum & Equity)** ➢ Full curriculum breadth: Curriculum monitoring and book looks confirm that pupils with SEND, EAL, and disadvantaged backgrounds access the full breadth of subjects (including phonics, early maths, science, and foundation subjects) without being routinely withdrawn from core teaching. ➢ Early literacy and numeracy mastery: Targeted keep-up approaches (such as daily phonics keep-up sessions and concrete-pictorial-abstract maths scaffolds) ensure vulnerable learners build secure foundational knowledge at pace with their cohort. ➢ Alternative ways to show understanding: Pupils who face barriers with fine motor skills, writing, or expressive speech are routinely offered accessible ways to demonstrate their learning (e.g., oral recording, symbol boards, practical models, or scribed responses). **3. Pupil Progress, Confidence & Attainment (Impact on Learners)** ➢ Strong progress from starting points: Termly pupil progress data and EYFS/KS1 assessments show that at least 85% of pupils with SEND or additional barriers make expected or accelerated progress against their individual baselines and statutory milestones (e.g., GLD, Phonics Screening Check). ➢ High academic self-efficacy: Pupil voice and classroom observations show that learners with additional needs demonstrate pride in their work, willingly attempt challenging tasks, and see themselves as capable learners alongside their peers. ➢ Reduced attainment gaps: Over time, the progress and attainment gap between disadvantaged/SEND pupils and their peers narrows across reading, writing, and mathematics.

A trauma-informed, relational approach is deeply embedded across the whole school community—ensuring every adult responds with empathy and curiosity, and every child feels emotionally safe, valued, understood, and connected.	**1. Consistent Trauma-Informed Adult Practice (Staff Culture & Pedagogy)** ➢ Shared relational language and routines: Learning walks and playground observations confirm that 100% of staff (including teachers, TAs, lunchtime supervisors, and office staff) use consistent, calm, trauma-informed approaches (such as Ready, Respectful, Safe, PACE—Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy—and Emotion Coaching) during everyday interactions and moments of distress. ➢ Relational behaviour policy in action: The school's Relationships and Behaviour Policy is fully implemented without punitive or shaming practices (e.g., removing public behaviour charts/traffic lights), focusing instead on co-regulation, natural consequences, and restorative repair. ➢ Ongoing staff CPD and reflective supervision: 100% of staff receive annual training in attachment and trauma-informed practice, and staff working closely with high-need pupils access regular reflective supervision or peer coaching to maintain emotional resilience. **2. Targeted Relational & Emotional Support (Early Help & Intervention)** ➢ Trusted adult connections: Every child identified as vulnerable, attachment-aware, or experiencing adversity has a named, consistent key team of adults who provide predictable daily check-ins and "time-in" support. ➢ Evidence-based emotional interventions: Trained staff (such as an ELSA or Nurture Lead) deliver targeted nurture groups, Drawing and Talking, or therapeutic play interventions for pupils needing extra support to process feelings and build trust. ➢ Restorative repair after conflict: Following any peer conflict or dysregulated incident, adults facilitate age-appropriate restorative conversations (using visuals or puppets in EYFS/KS1) so relationships are repaired and the child feels welcomed back into the group. **3. Child Belonging, Emotional Safety & Connection (Impact on Pupils)** ➢ High sense of belonging and safety: Pupil voice activities (such as emotion check-ins, "Three Houses," or school-wide belonging surveys) show that at least 95% of pupils feel safe at school, feel listened to by adults, and can name at least one trusted adult they can turn to for help. ➢ Reduction in distressed behaviours and suspensions: Pastoral and behaviour logs show a measurable term-on-term reduction in dysregulated incidents, internal removals, and zero suspensions or permanent exclusions, particularly for pupils with SEND, CIC (Children in Care), or disadvantaged backgrounds.

	➢ Strong peer connections: Playground and classroom observations show increased pro-social play, empathy, and peer inclusion, with fewer children isolated during unstructured times.
Structured, meaningful opportunities for talk and dialogue are woven into every part of the school day—empowering every child, regardless of starting point or communication need, to develop rich vocabulary, expressive language, and the self-assurance to share their ideas with adults and peers.	**1. High-Quality Adult-Child Interactions (Pedagogy & Environment)** ➢ Intentional interaction strategies: Learning walks confirm that 100% of teachers and TAs consistently apply evidence-based communication techniques during carpet sessions and continuous provision—such as using the "10-second rule" (extended wait time), commenting rather than over-questioning, modelling expanded sentences, and building back-and-forth "serve and return" conversations. ➢ Explicit vocabulary teaching: Curriculum planning and classroom displays show that ambitious, tiered vocabulary (Tier 2 and Tier 3 words) is explicitly taught, visually represented with symbols/images, and revisited regularly across EYFS and KS1 subjects. ➢ Communication-friendly routines: Daily timetables protect dedicated "Time to Talk" moments (such as snack-and-chat, daily story time discussions, circle times, and end-of-day reflections) where adults prioritise unhurried dialogue over rushing through tasks. **2. Structured Peer Dialogue & Inclusive Oracy (Classroom Practice)** ➢ Scaffolded peer talk: Observations show that teachers routinely use structured partner-talk routines (e.g., Talk Partners, "Think-Pair-Share," and sentence stems) so every child rehearses ideas aloud before whole-class sharing, preventing confident speakers from dominating. ➢ Inclusive access for non-speaking and EAL learners: Children who are pre-verbal, use AAC/communication boards, or speak English as an Additional Language are actively included in classroom dialogue through visual scaffolds, Makaton, home-language celebration, and peer-buddying. ➢ Language-rich continuous provision: Role-play areas, small-world setups, and outdoor zones are intentionally resourced with prompts, story props, and open-ended materials that spark imaginative collaborative talk among peers. **3. Expressive Language, Vocabulary & Self-Assurance (Impact on Pupils)** ➢ Accelerated language and vocabulary progress: Assessment data (such as EYFS Communication & Language ELGs, Language Link re-screens, and KS1 speaking/listening checks) shows that at least 85% of pupils—including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND—make expected or accelerated progress in expressive language and vocabulary. ➢ Increased pupil confidence and participation: Classroom observations and pupil voice demonstrate that reluctant speakers, quiet learners, and pupils with SLCN increasingly initiate conversations, ask questions, and contribute confidently in group discussions. ➢ Stronger reading and writing foundations: Book looks and phonics/literacy assessments reflect pupils transferring their rich spoken vocabulary and oral sentence structures into their early reading comprehension and independent writing.

Through a compassionate, partnership-first approach with children and families, the root causes of absence are understood and addressed early—building deep mutual trust that strengthens every child's sense of belonging, connection, and readiness to thrive in learning.	**1. Proactive Discovery & Early Support (Systems & Family Partnership)** ➢ Curiosity-led communication: 100% of first-day absences and emerging attendance dips (below 95%) are followed up with supportive, non-judgemental phone calls or informal gate conversations focused on listening and problem-solving rather than punitive warnings. ➢ Co-produced barrier mapping: Every family experiencing persistent or emotionally based attendance barriers participates in a collaborative "barrier-mapping" conversation, resulting in a tailored, co-produced Attendance & Belonging Support Plan. ➢ Practical barrier removal: Targeted support—such as funded Breakfast Club places, flexible "soft landing" morning handovers, uniform/transport assistance, and Early Help signposting—is rapidly deployed and reviewed every 6 weeks for impact. **2. High Family Trust & Active Engagement (Relationships & Culture)** ➢ Visible, welcoming school leadership: Gate observations confirm that SLT and pastoral staff provide a warm, predictable welcome every morning, actively building rapport with families before concerns escalate. ➢ Low-threat engagement opportunities: Attendance at informal, relationship-building events (such as Stay and Play sessions, coffee drop-ins, and curriculum workshops) increases steadily, particularly among harder-to-reach families and those of SEND or disadvantaged pupils. ➢ Positive family voice: Parent feedback surveys show that at least 90% of parents and carers feel listened to, respected as equal partners, and confident that the school understands their child's individual needs. **3. Improved Attendance, Belonging & Readiness to Learn (Impact on Pupils)** ➢ Sustained attendance improvements: Whole-school attendance rises toward or above national benchmarks, and persistent absence (<90%) reduces term-on-term, particularly among disadvantaged and SEND cohorts. ➢ Reduced morning anxiety and lateness: Morning late arrivals (L/U codes) decrease, and observations confirm that targeted pupils transition smoothly from home to classroom using agreed key-adult check-ins. ➢ Child voice and emotional readiness: Age-appropriate child voice tools (e.g., emotion check-ins, "Three Houses") confirm that pupils feel missed when absent, feel connected to their class community, and arrive ready to engage in morning learning.

Review of the previous academic year

- *N/A*