

Shaping your inclusion strategy

As part of the conditions of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF), schools must publish an inclusion strategy by 31 December 2026 that aligns with the 7 principles of inclusion set out by the Department for Education (DfE):

- ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion
- evidence-based support prioritising early intervention
- high quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners
- enriching provision beyond the classroom that all children can access
- a safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance, and participation in learning
- strong partnerships with families and wider services
- inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility

If your school is using a nurturing approach, it's likely that these principles are already reflected in your school culture and practice. Combining this practice with data from the [Boxall Profile® Online](#) will get you most of the way there in completing your strategy - it's largely about writing it down and costing it up.

This guide refers to the [inclusion strategy template](#) from the DfE, which can also be found at the end of this document. Whether your school is using the DfE template, or developing your own, you must include the following four areas in your strategy:

- commonly occurring barriers to learning and participation identified across your cohort
- activities invested in to alleviate these barriers
- intended outcomes
- a review of the previous academic year

We know that **nurture is the foundation of inclusion**, so nurture will also form the foundation of your inclusion strategy.

We've reviewed the DfE guidance, evidence recommendations, and strategy template to help you highlight how your great nurture practice is already delivering on inclusion.



Statement of intent

This section of your strategy should cover:

- overall aims for whole-school inclusion
- summary of the most common barriers to learning and participation across the school
- reflections on existing inclusive and nurturing practice (for the first year, afterwards they can go in a later section)
- information on how the 7 principles of inclusion are being addressed

For schools using the Boxall Profile® Online and a nurturing approach, you could include some of the following statements:

"We use the Boxall Profile® to identify and monitor social, emotional and mental health needs before they escalate. Our most recent assessments show that _____ are the most common barriers to learning across our cohort."

"Our staff are trained in the Six Principles of Nurture to provide high-quality adaptive teaching, which includes _____."

We have tracked pupil progress over time using the Boxall Profile®, and have found that by _____, we have seen an increase pupil engagement and a decrease in dysregulated incidents."

Top tip: make your strategy family-friendly

The DfE want to know how you've worked with families and the wider school community to develop your strategy. It should also be written in a way that is accessible for pupils and families.

Barriers to learning and participation

This section of the strategy is where data from the Boxall Profile® Online can write the answers for you. Using your whole-school reports or your class data and targets, you can simply start listing the most commonly occurring barriers to learning. You can also include information from your SEND, attendance, behaviour and attainment data, as well as national data trends from the DfE.

Top tip: make sure to include additional comments from families, pupils and external professionals to complement your Boxall Profile® data.



Activity

In the DfE guidance, it's clear that the focus is on doing fewer things well, so schools should start with a small number of impactful activities.

For many schools using a nurturing approach, the examples of inclusive practice provided in the DfE guidance may already be common place. For example, the [EEF universal approaches](#) include positive relationships, calm classroom environments, and scaffolding, which will be familiar to educators following the Six Principles of Nurture.

Whilst you can highlight your current practice in the earlier sections of your strategy, this section should be used to outline new activities that will be funded by the IMF. This could include staff training, increasing staff capacity, or resources for your targeted support. Whatever activities you include, they need to align with at least one of the 7 principles of inclusion, and demonstrate how they will support you to remove the previously identified barriers to learning and participation.

Good to know: Whilst the funding cannot be spent on *subsidising pre-existing activity* (for example, an active Boxall Profile® Online subscription), it can be used to expand inclusion bases to ensure they *provide evidence-based and effective targeted support*.



Transitions: If one of your most common barriers is pupils struggling to transition from one year group to another, your activity could be investing in the [Boxall Profile® Online Transition Passport](#). This add-on tool captures a pupil's developmental journey, strengths, and areas for support, ensuring continuity of care as they progress. It supports early intervention and enables adaptive teaching, and helps schools to create safe environments that encourage attendance and participation.



Parental engagement: If developing strong relationships with parents and families is something your school is keen to improve, then investing in staff training may be the activity for you. Our [Parental Engagement CPD course](#) equips educators with a nurturing approach to parental engagement that builds the relational skills needed to create meaningful family partnerships that support pupil outcomes.



Additional needs: If you're looking to develop your targeted support using the IMF and don't already have a small group intervention, you could create an [inclusion base](#). Inclusion bases are provisions within mainstream schools for pupils with additional needs. Nurture groups are the original inclusion base and are highlighted in several of the DfE's evidence recommendations. Using the IMF funding to develop a nurture group could include staff training like the [Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups](#), which equips staff with the practical tools and expertise needed to set up and run an inclusion base.

The final few sections of the strategy can also be heavily informed by your Boxall Profile® Online data and nurture practice. Your intended outcomes can be written using your whole-school or class targets from the Boxall Profile® Online, which enable you to track progress over time. You can include comments about your whole-school nurture practice in the 'review of the year' sections from year two onwards, and use the further information section to link to your pupil premium strategy or additional nurture information as needed.

Inclusion Strategy Template

Before completing this template, read DfE's [Developing an inclusion strategy using the IMF for school leaders](#).

Schools can use this template to help them develop their inclusion strategy, which must be published on their school website by 31 December every academic year.

Before publishing your completed statement, delete the instructions (text in italics) in this template, and this text box.

Inclusion Strategy – [insert school name]

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	
Date this statement was published	
Date on which it will be reviewed	
Statement authorised by	

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.

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 <i>(including notable trends or themes over time, such as a growing prevalence or increasing complexity)</i>
1	<i>Add or delete rows as needed</i>
2	

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 <i>(noting evidence and barrier numbers addressed)</i>	Activity type <i>(whether it is universal or targeted)</i>	Total budgeted cost <i>(this should account for spend from IMF and core budget allocations)</i>
<i>Add or delete rows as needed</i>		

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
<i>Add or delete rows as needed</i>	

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.*

Further information (optional)

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