

Developing your targeted support

Schools can now use the Department for Education's (DfE) new [Inclusive Mainstream Fund \(IME\)](#) to develop high quality targeted support for pupils with additional needs. But what could this targeted support look like?

The DfE defines targeted support as early, evidence-based interventions for pupils whose needs cannot be met through the universal inclusive provision alone, in order for them to be able to achieve and thrive.¹

Inclusion bases are small group provisions that support pupils with additional needs, including those with SEND or those needing behavioural or pastoral support, without the need for formal diagnosis.² They are a relationship-based intervention that helps pupils to develop social and emotional skills and remove barriers to learning. Pupils can access this targeted support whilst remaining connected to the wider school community.

So how can schools set up this targeted support? We've included some next steps below:

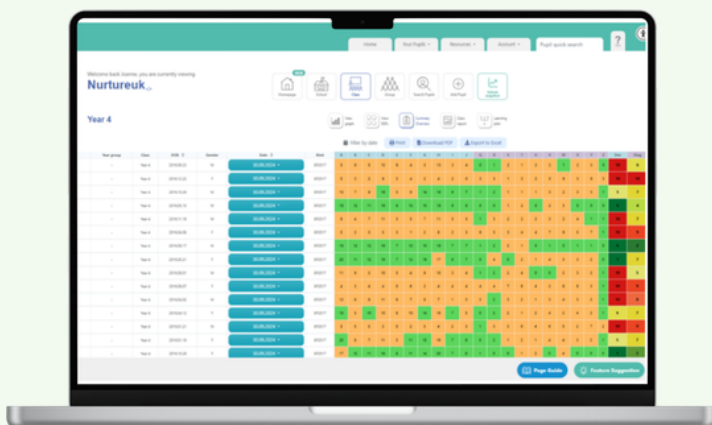
Inclusion bases are sometimes referred to as [nurture groups](#), which have existed for over 50 years!



Step 1: identifying pupils with additional needs

Many of you will already have a strong whole-school inclusion offer, utilising relational practice and the Six Principles of Nurture to support pupils across the whole school environment. The next step is to identify pupils with additional needs who would benefit from further support.

The DfE guidance is clear that this support should be available for pupils who do not have an EHCP or formal diagnosis, so schools need to pair staff observation with data to determine which pupils would benefit, and the type of support they would benefit from. Tools like the [Boxall Profile® Online](#) provide this data, helping you to identify pupil needs and giving you a roadmap for every child.



Many of you will already be using the Boxall Profile® Online in your setting. By using the group overviews, you can see at a glance all the pupils within each cohort who require additional support.

1. [Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund](#), DfE
2. [Inclusion bases in schools](#), DfE

Step 2: setting up a nurture group

Once you've identified the pupils who would benefit from a nurture group, there are four key elements to consider next: staff, space, tracking progress, and curriculum. These are essential for meeting the DfE best practice guidance, and foundational for ensuring pupils get the support they need, when they need it.

Space

- Inclusive and accessible
- Sensory-aware design
- Purposeful regulation space

Curriculum

- Short-term intervention
- Adapt the route into the curriculum, not the ambition of the curriculum.

Staff

- All staff understand the Six Principles of Nurture
- Trained nurture practitioners leading the nurture group
- Strong relationship with mainstream class teachers
- Strong support from SLT
- Strong partnership working

Tracking progress

- Assess, plan, do, review
- Set appropriate targets
- Track progress over time

Step 3: using your IMF funding

You can use your IMF allocation in addition to your core budget to develop or expand your inclusion base or nurture group. This could look like wider staff training on relational practice to support pupils' transition back to the mainstream classroom, CPD training to become a qualified nurture practitioner, or resourcing your nurture group.

Our qualified nurture practitioner training gives you everything you need to know about setting up and running a successful inclusion base. It is designed to help you master the Six Principles of Nurture, gain a strong understanding of the science of attachment, and give you practical, trauma-informed strategies you can use in every lesson.

Find out more about our nurture group training



Case study: secondary school inclusion base

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre is a large secondary school in Kent which operates two inclusion bases on their site. The Life Centre is their behaviour-focused inclusion base.

The young people accessing this provision consistently display behaviours that negatively impact their learning, and the learning of others around them. Staff understand that the behaviour presented on the surface is only a small portion of what is going on; their targeted support aims to understand the root causes of the challenging behaviour. Crucially, The Life Centre is not a sanction. It is an extra layer of support.

Homewood engage with parents from the start, encouraging them to see the Centre and meet the staff. For many families, there is a long and traumatic history with accessing education. The Centre works to repair this relationship and set them up to have a successful life beyond school. In another setting, many pupils accessing the inclusion base might have been persistently absent or permanently excluded, instead of getting the support they need.

Pupils in The Life Centre have all their developmental needs assessed: learning, language, social and emotional, using tools such as the Boxall Profile®. From this data, specific barriers to success are uncovered, such as time-management, literacy, self-efficacy, and targeted interventions are planned from there. Weekly staff reviews reflect on each pupil's progress and next steps.

When pupils are nearing the time to return to mainstream classes, a 'ready to learn' process is put in place, where a staff member works closely with the young person to unpick how they're feeling, what they might be worried about, and mitigating against that. This is a gradual transition process where mainstream lessons will be attended more and more, but Life Centre staff still check-in with the pupil frequently and provide that scaffolding.

This provision has transformed the life paths of many pupils at Homewood. The Life Centre provides a safety net for young people and, for many, forms the most successful phase of their school life.



For one of our year 11s, it's been the difference between him taking a full range of GCSEs to him in another setting, being permanently excluded."



All behaviour is communication. That's exactly why we have The Life Centre because whatever behaviour there is, there is unmet need. And therefore we need to figure out what that is and then meet the need. Our young people are never going to be successful in learning if the rest of their needs, whatever they are, are not met first." - Lucy Stephen, Assistant Vice Principal Inclusion