



## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY**

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## **Introduction**

Inspire Multi Academy Trust is committed to providing an inclusive education in which every child and young person is able to achieve, participate, belong and thrive. We recognise that children and young people have different strengths, needs, experiences and starting points and that, for some pupils, additional provision or reasonable adjustments are required to enable them to access education successfully.

The Trust believes that special educational needs and disabilities should not be a barrier to high expectations, achievement or participation. We are committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND receive high-quality teaching, appropriate support and opportunities to develop academically, socially, emotionally and personally. We seek to understand the individual child, identify barriers to learning and provide support that enables children to become increasingly independent.

Inspire MAT believes that inclusion is everyone's responsibility. SEND provision is not the sole responsibility of the SENCO or inclusion team. It is embedded within teaching, curriculum design, assessment, pastoral care, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the wider life of each school.

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEND and reflects the current statutory framework in England. It also recognises that the SEND system is undergoing significant reform. The Trust will prepare for these changes while continuing to comply with the legislation and statutory guidance currently in force.

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to establish a consistent, inclusive and high-quality approach to SEND across Inspire Multi Academy Trust while allowing individual schools to respond appropriately to their own communities and pupils.

We aim to identify additional needs as early as possible and ensure that children receive the right support at the right time. We will provide high-quality adaptive teaching and remove barriers to learning wherever reasonably possible. Where a pupil requires provision that is additional to or different from that normally available, we will use a graduated approach to assess need, plan appropriate support, implement that support and review its impact.

The Trust is committed to working in genuine partnership with children, young people, parents and carers. We recognise the expertise that families bring and will ensure that their views, alongside the views of the child, are considered when decisions are made.

Our approach is designed to promote positive educational outcomes while also supporting communication, independence, confidence, emotional wellbeing, relationships and preparation for the next stage of education and adult life.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy has regard to the statutory framework and guidance governing special educational needs and disability in England, including the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.

The Trust will also have regard to relevant statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, admissions, accessibility, medical conditions and alternative provision. This includes Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The Trust will monitor changes to legislation and statutory guidance and will amend this policy when necessary. Where national reforms are proposed but have not yet become law, the Trust will distinguish clearly between current statutory requirements and future arrangements.

### **Definition of Special Educational Needs and Disability**

A child or young person has special educational needs where they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The SEND Code of Practice identifies four broad areas of need: communication and interaction; cognition and learning; social, emotional and mental health; and sensory and/or physical needs. These categories are intended to provide a framework for understanding need rather than to place children into fixed groups.

Children may have needs in one or more areas, and their needs may change over time. Inspire MAT recognises that individual children should be understood holistically and that a diagnosis is not, in itself, a requirement for SEN Support.

Similarly, having a diagnosis does not automatically mean that a child requires special educational provision. Schools will focus on the child's actual needs, barriers and outcomes and will consider what adjustments and provision are necessary to enable them to access education.

### **Inclusive Education**

Inspire MAT is committed to developing inclusive mainstream schools in which high-quality teaching is the foundation of SEND provision.

Teachers are expected to know their pupils well and to adapt teaching, resources, assessment and the learning environment where necessary. Adaptive teaching may include appropriate scaffolding, explicit instruction, modelling, repetition, pre-teaching, visual support, carefully structured instructions, assistive technology and alternative approaches to recording learning.

The Trust recognises the direction of national SEND reform towards a stronger universal offer within mainstream education. We will therefore continue to develop the capacity of all staff to identify barriers and respond effectively through classroom practice rather than relying unnecessarily on separate or individualised provision.

Inclusion does not mean that every child receives the same provision. Equity requires schools to make appropriate adjustments and provide additional support where this is necessary to enable pupils to participate and achieve.

### **Identification of SEND**

Inspire MAT recognises the importance of early identification. Schools will use a range of information to identify emerging or additional needs, including teacher assessment, progress information, observations, work scrutiny, reading and phonics assessments, communication and language development, attendance, behaviour, pupil voice and information provided by parents or carers.

Information from previous educational settings and relevant health, social care or specialist professionals will also be considered where available.

A child may be identified as requiring additional support even where there is no formal diagnosis. Schools will avoid waiting for a diagnosis before responding to an identified educational need.

Identification will be a continuing process. Schools will review pupils' needs as they develop and will consider whether the support currently in place remains appropriate and effective.

### **The Graduated Approach**

Where a pupil has or may have SEND, Inspire MAT will use the graduated approach of **Assess, Plan, Do and Review**.

Assessment will consider the pupil's strengths, current attainment, progress, barriers to learning and the factors that may be affecting their ability to access education. Where appropriate, this assessment will draw upon the views of the pupil and their family and advice from other professionals.

Where additional provision is required, the school will agree the intended outcomes and identify the adjustments, teaching approaches or interventions that will be used. Responsibility for the pupil's progress remains with the class or subject teacher, supported by the SENCO and other professionals where appropriate.

Provision will then be implemented consistently and reviewed at appropriate intervals. Reviews will consider whether the pupil has made progress, whether the intended outcomes have been achieved and whether the provision has had sufficient impact. Where it has not, the school will adapt its approach.

The purpose of the graduated approach is to ensure that support is purposeful, responsive and focused on outcomes.

### **SEN Support**

Where a pupil requires provision that is additional to or different from the provision normally available through high-quality teaching, the school will consider whether SEN Support is appropriate.

Support may be delivered through classroom adaptations, targeted teaching, small-group or individual intervention, specialist programmes, communication support, sensory adaptations, assistive technology or other appropriate approaches.

The type and level of support will be determined by the pupil's individual needs rather than by their SEND category or diagnosis. Schools will seek to avoid creating unnecessary dependency on adult support and will consider how provision can build independence and self-regulation.

The effectiveness of SEN Support will be evaluated through evidence of pupil progress and wider outcomes.

### **Individual Support**

Schools will maintain clear information about pupils' identified needs, reasonable adjustments, provision and intended outcomes. The format used may vary between schools and may include a pupil passport, provision map, individual support plan or other appropriate record.

Inspire MAT recognises the Government's proposal to introduce Individual Support Plans as part of the future SEND system. Until the relevant legislation and statutory guidance are in force, schools will continue to operate within the existing SEN Support framework.

The Trust will ensure that existing approaches are sufficiently clear, child-centred and outcome-focused to enable a smooth transition should the proposed arrangements become statutory.

## **Education, Health and Care Plans**

Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan, the school will use its best endeavours to secure the special educational provision specified in the plan and will work closely with the child, parents or carers, the local authority and relevant professionals.

Schools will contribute fully to the assessment and annual review process and will monitor progress towards the outcomes identified within the EHCP. Where a child's needs or circumstances change significantly, the school will work with the local authority to consider whether amendments to the plan are required.

The Trust recognises that EHCP arrangements are expected to change as part of the national SEND reforms. Existing statutory protections will continue to be followed unless and until new legislation and statutory guidance provide otherwise.

## **Working with Parents and Carers**

Inspire MAT recognises parents and carers as key partners in supporting children with SEND. Schools will seek to establish positive relationships with families based on openness, respect and shared responsibility.

Parents and carers will be involved in discussions about their child's needs, provision and progress and will have opportunities to share information and raise concerns. Schools will communicate in a way that is accessible and appropriate to individual families.

Where there is disagreement, schools will seek to resolve concerns through constructive discussion wherever possible and will provide information about the Trust's complaints process and relevant statutory disagreement resolution arrangements.

## **Pupil Voice**

Children and young people will be supported to participate in decisions about their education and SEND provision.

Schools will seek to understand what pupils believe they are good at, what they find difficult, what helps them to learn and what they would like to achieve. Where communication difficulties make this challenging, staff will use appropriate communication methods and reasonable adjustments.

The views of children and young people will be considered alongside information from parents, teachers and professionals.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Inspire MAT Board of Trustees has overall strategic responsibility for ensuring that the Trust fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to SEND. Trustees will receive appropriate assurance about SEND provision, outcomes, inclusion, funding and compliance.

Trust leaders are responsible for establishing a coherent Trust-wide approach to SEND, supporting schools to develop inclusive practice and monitoring the quality and impact of provision. The Trust will seek to share expertise and effective practice across its schools.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that their school has an inclusive culture, appropriate SEND provision and effective systems for identifying and responding to need. They are also responsible for ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities and that SEND provision is appropriately resourced and monitored.

The SENCO is responsible for coordinating the day-to-day implementation of SEND provision, advising colleagues, overseeing the graduated approach, coordinating specialist support, supporting families and monitoring the effectiveness of provision. The SENCO will work closely with school leaders and the Trust Lead Headteacher for SEND.

Teachers remain responsible for the progress and development of pupils in their classes. They are expected to provide high-quality adaptive teaching, implement agreed provision, monitor progress and work closely with the SENCO and families.

All staff have a responsibility to contribute to an inclusive culture and to recognise and respond appropriately to emerging needs.

### **Specialist Support**

Where appropriate, schools will seek advice and support from external professionals and specialist services. This may include educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, specialist teaching services, health professionals, social care and other appropriate agencies.

Inspire MAT recognises the Government's development of the Experts at Hand programme, which is intended to improve access to specialist expertise within mainstream schools. As local arrangements develop, schools will make appropriate use of available specialist support.

### **SEND, Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour**

SEND will be considered as part of the Trust's wider safeguarding, attendance and behaviour systems.

Children with SEND may experience additional barriers to regular attendance, positive behaviour or communication about safeguarding concerns. Schools will therefore consider whether an unmet or changing need may be contributing to a difficulty and whether reasonable adjustments or additional support are required.

SEND does not remove expectations around attendance or behaviour. However, schools will seek to understand the underlying reasons for difficulties and respond appropriately within the statutory framework.

Children with SEND will receive appropriate support to communicate concerns and access safeguarding processes.

### **Accessibility**

Inspire MAT is committed to ensuring that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Schools will consider accessibility in relation to the curriculum, physical environment and information. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required, and each school will maintain an Accessibility Plan in accordance with statutory requirements.

Accessibility will be considered when planning educational visits, enrichment activities, extracurricular opportunities and wider school events so that pupils with SEND are able to participate as fully as possible.

### **Transition**

Effective transition is particularly important for pupils with SEND. Schools will plan transition arrangements according to individual need and will share appropriate information with receiving settings.

This may involve additional visits, meetings between staff, parent meetings, pupil voice, visual resources, social stories and enhanced transition programmes.

### **Alternative Provision**

Where alternative provision is considered necessary, the school will ensure that the provision is appropriate to the pupil's needs and that educational outcomes are clear.

Schools will maintain oversight of attendance, safeguarding, progress and wellbeing and will review placements regularly. Parents and pupils will be involved in decisions wherever appropriate.

The Trust will continue to monitor national developments relating to Education Otherwise Than At School and alternative provision and will update its procedures where statutory requirements change.

### **SEND Funding**

Inspire MAT recognises that effective SEND provision requires the strategic use of available resources. Schools will deploy staffing, funding, specialist resources and equipment according to identified need and educational impact.

The Trust will monitor SEND expenditure and consider whether resources are being used effectively to improve outcomes. Where high-needs funding is available, schools will follow the relevant local authority and national funding arrangements.

Funding will not be viewed simply as a mechanism for providing additional adult support. Decisions will consider the most appropriate combination of teaching, intervention, specialist advice, environmental adaptation and resources for the individual pupil.

### **Staff Development**

The Trust recognises that inclusive practice depends upon the knowledge, confidence and expertise of its workforce.

SEND professional development will form part of the Trust's wider approach to staff development. Training will be informed by the needs of pupils, school priorities, national developments and evidence of effective practice.

The Trust will support staff to develop expertise in areas such as adaptive teaching, communication and language, autism, literacy difficulties, sensory needs, emotional regulation, neurodiversity and assistive technology.

The Trust will also engage with relevant national SEND training and development opportunities as they become available.

### **National SEND Reform**

The Government is undertaking significant reform of the SEND system in England. The 2026 proposals are intended to create a stronger mainstream system, improve early identification and intervention, increase access to specialist expertise and reduce variation in the support available to children and families.

The proposals include a stronger universal offer, Individual Support Plans for children receiving targeted or specialist support, greater access to specialist expertise through initiatives such as Experts at Hand, increased investment in inclusive mainstream provision and changes to the relationship between mainstream, specialist and alternative provision.

The Government's consultation on SEND reform closed in May 2026. At the time of adoption of this policy, the proposed reforms have not replaced the existing statutory SEND framework. Inspire MAT will therefore continue to comply with the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and other current statutory requirements.

The Trust will use the 2026–27 academic year to strengthen inclusive practice, early identification, specialist collaboration, workforce expertise and family engagement so that schools are well placed to respond to the new system as it develops.

Where future legislation introduces new statutory duties, Inspire MAT will update this policy and its operational procedures accordingly.