

2026-2027

Southwark Inclusion Guidance

for schools

Foreword

Every child and young person in Southwark is entitled to an education which is appropriate to their needs, which promotes high standards and the fulfilment of their potential, and which prepares them for a fulfilling adult life. These Inclusion Standards set out what Southwark expects of its schools and settings in meeting that entitlement.

They replace the Southwark SEND Standards. The change of name reflects a change of scope: the barriers which affect learning, attendance, participation and wellbeing are not confined to SEND, and these Standards apply to all children and young people who face them.

The Standards also arrive at a point of national change. Mainstream schools must publish an inclusion strategy by 31 December 2026 as a condition of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, alongside their SEN information report, and the Department for Education (DfE) has said it will develop national inclusion standards to support future iterations of those strategies. Southwark schools need something to work with now. These Standards are designed to help schools do the analysis their inclusion strategy will rest on, and will be reviewed once the national standards are published.

Southwark's vision for children and young people is supported by the overarching strategy of the council, Partnership Southwark and the Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan for Health and Social Care.

"We deserve a system that doesn't just tolerate us, but supports us.

Take my sixth form. They've done something more than simple, they've done it exceptionally well.

The support I received there wasn't just good, it was excellent. The teachers didn't just tolerate my struggles, they understood them.

They adapted. They innovated. And because of that, I wasn't left behind."

Southwark's Values

- Treat residents as if they were a valued member of our own family;
- Be open, honest and accountable;
- Work for everyone to realise their own potential;
- Spend money as if it were from our own pocket;
- Make Southwark a place to be proud of;
- Always work to make Southwark more equal and just;
- Stand against all forms of discrimination and racism.

This document has been coproduced by the Senior Adviser for SEND, SEN Team, SENCOs and wider Southwark SEND Service.

Related documents

These Standards sit alongside three related documents:

- Ordinarily Available Provision sets out the everyday adjustments and strategies expected in all mainstream settings, by phase and by area of need. Where staff want practical detail about what to do in a particular situation, this is the document to turn to. The Standards explain why; the Ordinarily Available Provision explains how.
- The Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool allows settings to evaluate their provision against each standard, identify priorities and record the actions arising. Schools should complete it annually and review progress termly in the areas identified for development.
- The Support Bases Guidance sets out what Southwark expects of schools running a support base, alongside the DfE's guidance on inclusion bases in schools.

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Southwark Inclusion Standards

Five standards for inclusive practice in mainstream schools

The Inclusion Standards set out what inclusive practice looks like in Southwark schools. They apply to every child and young person, not only those with SEND. Schools should use them alongside Southwark's self-evaluation audit tool to identify their strengths and the areas they want to develop.

1

Environment and Inclusive Setting

Providing a positive and supportive environment where every child and young person belongs

2

High Quality Teaching and Curriculum

Ensuring that ambitious, inclusive teaching is the entitlement of every child and young person

3

Understanding Need

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of every child and young person

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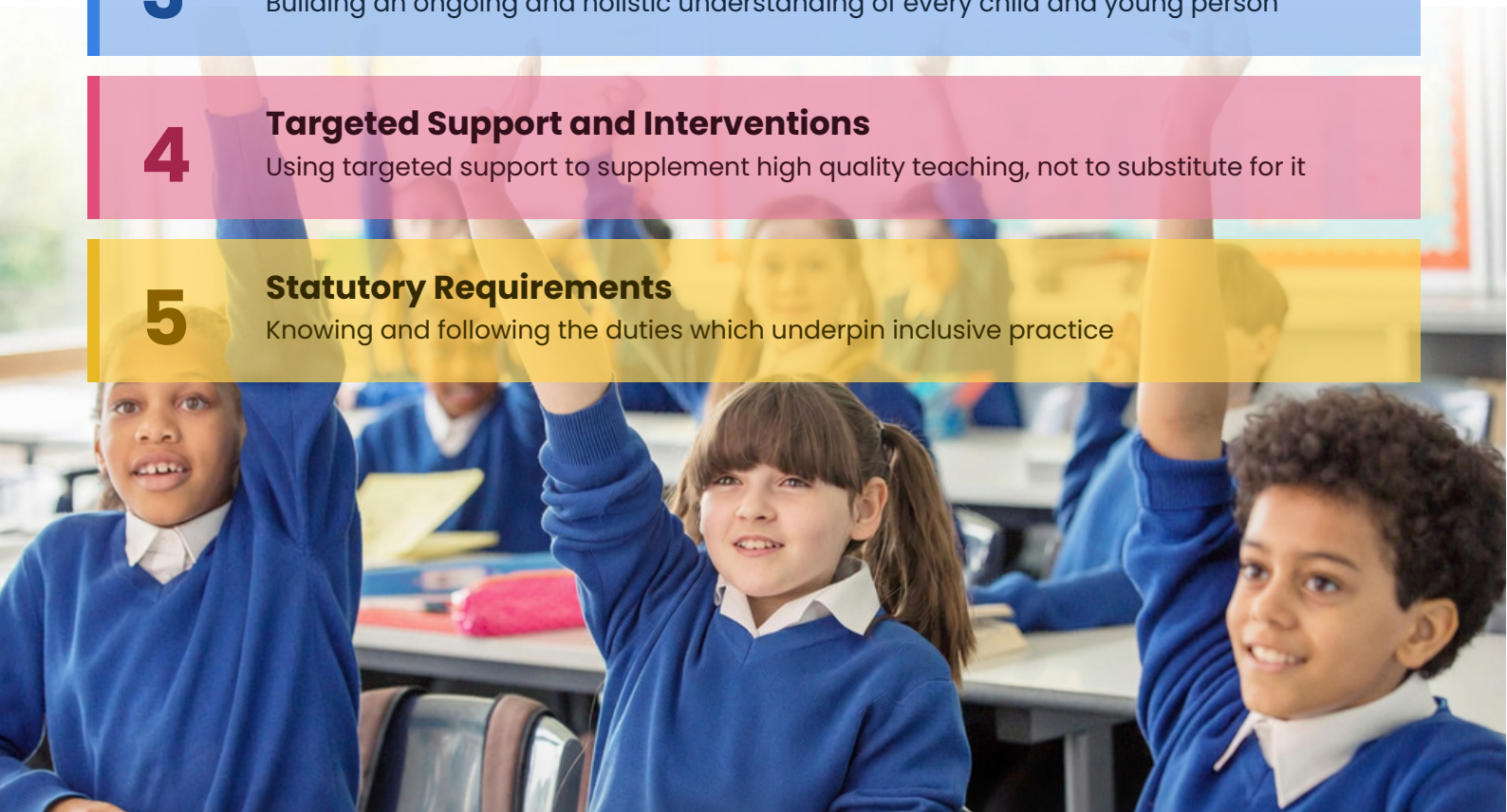
Targeted Support and Interventions

Using targeted support to supplement high quality teaching, not to substitute for it

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Statutory Requirements

Knowing and following the duties which underpin inclusive practice



Standard 1

Environment and Inclusive Setting

Providing a positive and supportive environment where every child and young person belongs

Who this standard is about

The Inclusion Standards apply to all children and young people, and in particular to those who may face barriers to their learning, participation, attendance or wellbeing. This includes children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, disadvantaged children and young people, those who speak English as an additional language, children in care and previously looked-after children, young carers, those with medical needs, and those whose circumstances place several of these vulnerabilities together at once.

The previous SEND Standards set out what Southwark expects of its educational settings in providing for children and young people (CYP) with SEND. These Inclusion Standards widen that lens. They do so not because SEND matters less, but because the conditions which allow a CYP with SEND to thrive are often the same conditions which allow every child to thrive. A school which has thought carefully about how a young person with a language need will follow an instruction has, in the same moment, made that instruction clearer for the child who is new to English, and for the child who simply finds the end of the afternoon difficult. Inclusion is not a separate strand of school improvement running alongside the real work. It is the measure of whether that work is succeeding.

These Standards describe the ethos, the culture and the leadership which make a school inclusive. Where school staff want practical detail about what to do in a particular situation, Southwark's Ordinarily Available Provision guidance sets out the everyday adjustments and strategies expected in all mainstream settings. The Standards explain why; the Ordinarily Available Provision explains how.

Why this standard matters

The SEND Code of Practice is clear that inclusive practice and high quality teaching are the foundation of meeting additional needs, and Southwark expects all of its settings to be welcoming places which use the resources available to them to teach well and to support every CYP to achieve their very best. Every child is entitled to an education which is appropriate to their needs, which promotes high standards and the fulfilment of their potential, and which enables them to become confident individuals living fulfilling lives and to make a successful transition into adulthood.

What makes a setting inclusive is rarely a single intervention. It is the accumulation of hundreds of ordinary decisions: where a child sits, how a corridor sounds at changeover, whether the adult who greets them at the door knows their name and knows what kind of morning they are likely to be having. These everyday interactions with people, spaces and objects are what drive learning and development, which is why removing barriers has to be understood as whole school development reinforced in language, routines and relationships, rather than something which happens in the classroom alone or which is delegated to the SENCO.

All settings must comply with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have regard to the statutory guidance which promotes inclusive practice. But compliance is the floor rather than the ambition. The schools which do this best are those where inclusion has stopped being a policy and has become a habit of mind.



Inclusion begins with vision, values and leadership

A school's vision and values should state its commitment to inclusion explicitly. Where leaders return to that commitment often enough that staff can articulate it without prompting, it informs the decisions taken day to day. Where it appears only in a policy document, it tends to be recalled at points of crisis and overlooked in between.

Southwark expects meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and other vulnerabilities to be given a high priority by everyone connected to the school, including governors, leaders, staff, parents, carers and the children and young people themselves. This priority should be evident less in what is written down than in how people speak to and about each other day to day. Senior leaders should be knowledgeable about the needs within their own setting, able to talk with confidence about which groups of learners are and are not currently thriving, and clear about who holds responsibility for what. An inclusion development plan should be in place, either as a separate document or embedded within the whole school development plan, showing that leaders have correctly identified the priorities for continued improvement. Improving outcomes, participation and belonging for children and young people with SEND, for disadvantaged learners and for other underrepresented groups should be a central feature of school improvement, professional development, coaching and performance management for all staff, rather than the specialist concern of a few.

This work needs someone with the time to lead it. The SENCO, or inclusion leader, should have sufficient time, status and resource to fulfil their responsibilities, and enough strategic influence to shape policy, provision and practice rather than simply administer it. Where the role is squeezed into the margins of another job, schools should expect the quality of provision to reflect that.



The environment we create

The physical environment either invites a child in or asks them to cope. Schools should review the accessibility of their buildings and individual learning spaces at least annually, and as circumstances require, and should use sensory and environmental audits to inform how classrooms are organised, paying particular attention to lighting, acoustics and the level of background noise which has become normal enough that adults no longer hear it.

Displays, signage and information should be meaningful and visually accessible rather than crowded or decorative. CYP in Southwark have told us plainly that they value displays when they can read them from where they sit, and that they find bright light, glare and constant noise difficult to work through. Calm and quiet spaces should be available and accessible, including at unstructured times, which are frequently the hardest part of the day for the children who need them most.

The test of an environment is not whether it complies with a checklist but whether the physical, sensory, social and emotional experience of being in the building allows every child to access learning, participate fully, and feel safe, welcomed and valued. It is worth walking a corridor at changeover or sitting at the back of a classroom for a full lesson, before concluding that it does.

Belonging, relationships and the voice of children and young people

All children and young people should be equally valued and treated with respect by adults and by each other. That standard holds only if staff at every level feel able to challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory or inequitable practice when they encounter it, including in colleagues more senior than themselves. Cultures are set by what is tolerated rather than by what is stated. Diversity should be celebrated and represented throughout the school, with displays, resources and role models which reflect the community the school actually serves, and with a strengths-based approach which describes children by what they can do and what they bring rather than by what they lack. Children and young people notice very quickly whether people like them appear in the life of the school as a matter of course or only during a designated week.

CYP with SEND should be taught alongside their peers in the mainstream classroom for the majority of the school day. The largest observational research conducted on pupils with SEND in the UK found that this is frequently not what happens. In primary schools, pupils with EHC plans spent over a quarter of their time away from the mainstream class, their teacher and their peers, most often working with a teaching assistant alongside other pupils identified as low-attaining.

In secondary schools, the same researchers found a form of streaming, in which lower-attaining pupils and those with SEND were taught together and separately from their average and higher-attaining peers. Two consequences follow from these arrangements. The pupils who need the most skilled teaching receive a greater share of their instruction from the least qualified adults in the school, and streaming itself has a negative effect on the attainment of lower-attaining pupils and can have longer-term effects on their attitudes towards education. (Webster and Blatchford, *Making a Statement*, 2013, and the SENSE study, 2017, summarised in the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance report *Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*.) Where a school has a support base, staff should be proactive about including the children who attend it with their peers whenever appropriate opportunities arise and should treat the base as part of the school rather than as a place apart.



The voice of children and young people should be collected in a range of ways, acted upon, and, crucially, returned to them, so they hear what changed and why. Every child should know which adults they can go to if they are worried. And all CYP should have the same access to extracurricular activities, enrichment and educational visits as their peers, with reasonable adjustments planned from the outset.

Understanding behaviour and supporting wellbeing

Adults should take a proactive, positive and supportive approach to behaviour, and should understand behaviour as a form of communication. When a child's behaviour changes, the first question should be what has changed for that child, not what sanction applies. There is strong evidence that this approach benefits all pupils and reduces the amount of behaviour which challenges. The behaviour policy should be inclusive and flexible in its application, capable of taking account of individual need and circumstance, and should reflect the duty to make reasonable adjustments. This does not mean having lower expectations. Clear, predictable routines and boundaries matter enormously, particularly for children who find the world unpredictable. What matters is that those boundaries are held relationally and reinforced empathetically, and that consistency is understood as consistency of approach rather than identical treatment regardless of need.

Southwark supports trauma informed approaches to behaviour as part of its wider strategy, and for CYP with social, emotional and mental health needs, this practice supports their positive integration into mainstream schools and classrooms. Schools may find the six recommendations of the EEF's guidance report on improving behaviour in schools a useful framework for reviewing their own practice.

Staff should understand the factors which affect wellbeing, mental health, attendance and engagement, should be alert to the early signs that a child is struggling, and should know how to provide support and how to access further help when a situation exceeds what the school can hold alone. Underpinning all of this is a calm and purposeful climate for learning in which children and young people feel they belong and know that their contributions are valued.



Governance and accountability

Governors should understand their statutory responsibilities and hold leaders to account for promoting inclusion, meeting the needs of all learners and improving outcomes for vulnerable groups. Governors should receive regular information and engage in structured monitoring across inclusion, SEND, attendance, disadvantage, wellbeing and equality, and should meet directly with the SENCO and other leaders so that their understanding of provision is first-hand rather than mediated.

The questions governors ask shape what a school pays attention to. Where governance is confident and well informed, inclusion stays on the agenda between inspections.

Working in partnership with families

Parents, carers and families should be involved meaningfully in identifying need, planning support and evaluating whether that support is working. The difference between being consulted and being a partner is usually felt rather than documented: partners are brought in early, are told when something has not worked, and are asked what they think should happen next.

The language a school uses matters from the very first contact. The inclusion strategy and admissions materials should actively welcome prospective families of CYP with SEND and other additional needs, and no setting should exclude a child with SEND at the point of entry. Families should understand the school's approach to inclusion, the support available, the Local Offer, and the routes to further advice and services, and should be able to find that information without having to ask for it repeatedly.

Evaluating provision against this standard

Schools should evaluate their provision against this standard annually using the Southwark Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool, recording the actions arising, and reviewing progress termly in the areas identified for development.

Standard 2

High Quality Teaching and Curriculum

Ensuring that ambitious, inclusive teaching is the entitlement of every child and young person

Why this standard matters

Nothing a school does for children who face barriers to learning matters as much as the quality of the teaching they receive in their everyday lessons, from their usual teacher(s), alongside their peers. High quality teaching (HQT) is the first and most important response to any concern about progress, and it is the single most effective way of reducing the number of CYP who go on to require targeted or specialist support. The EEF puts it plainly: to a great extent, good teaching for children and young people with SEND is good teaching for all.

Often the instinct when a child is struggling is to look for something additional: an intervention, a programme, an adult. Sometimes that is exactly right, and Standard 4 sets out how targeted support should work. But additional provision built on top of teaching which has not yet been adapted tends to compensate for a problem rather than resolve it, and it frequently costs the child time away from the classroom and from their peers. The first question when a child is not making progress should always be what is happening in their lessons.

The SEND Code of Practice is explicit that HQT, adapted and personalised, will meet the individual needs of the majority of CYP, and that the first response to a lack of progress should be HQT targeted at the area of difficulty. This is not an aspiration but a professional requirement. The Teachers' Standards already expect teachers to set goals which stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, to understand how a range of factors can inhibit a pupil's ability to learn and how to overcome them, and to have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND, those with high ability, those who speak English as an additional language and those with disabilities. A teacher who is not adapting their teaching is not meeting those standards.

There is no single prescribed way of delivering HQT. Ofsted is clear that each setting determines its own approaches, but equally clear that settings must be able to explain the decisions they have made and demonstrate that they work.

The five strategies which make the most difference

Southwark's expectations for adaptive teaching are built around the five pedagogical strategies which the EEF identified as most effective for CYP with SEND. Because these are strategies rather than diagnoses, they give teachers something they can act on immediately. Teachers frequently tell us they feel they need to know more about a particular condition before they can teach a child well, when what they actually need is confidence in a small number of approaches which they can apply flexibly in response to what they see in front of them.

The EEF's [practitioner tool on adaptive teaching](#) is a useful structure for teachers and leaders reviewing their own practice against these strategies, and works well as a focus for departmental or phase discussion.

EEF 5 Key strategies:

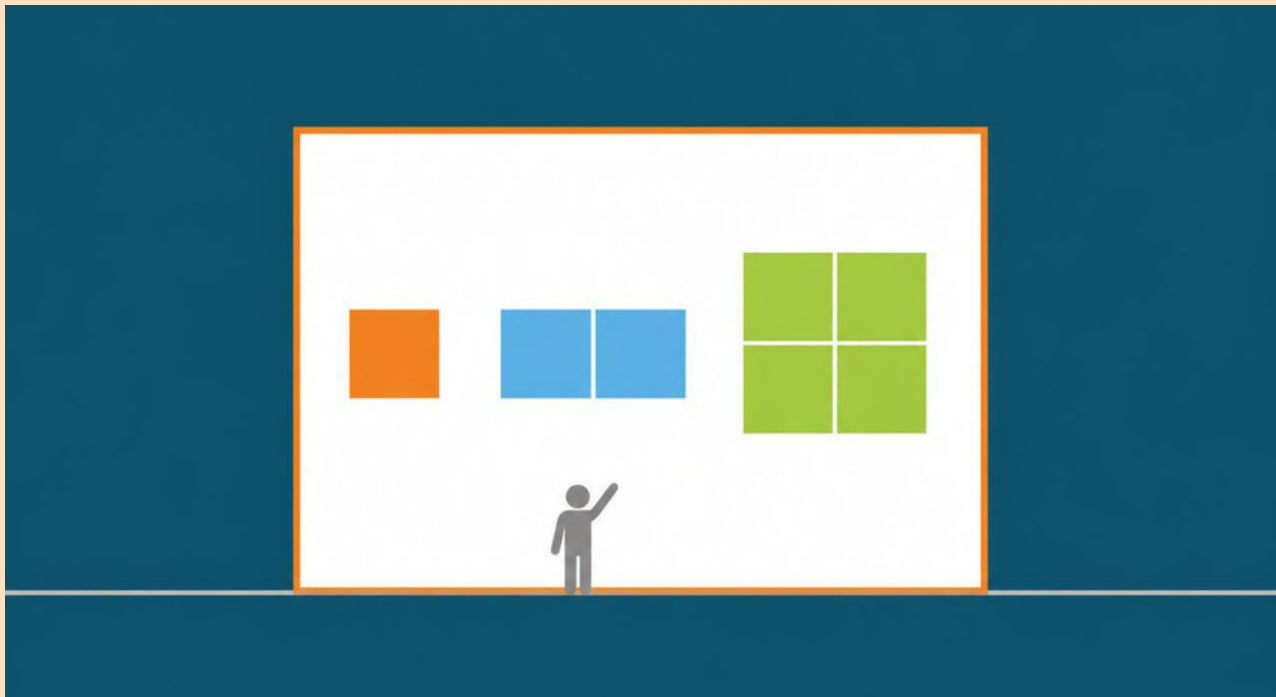
Scaffolding

Scaffolding is temporary support which allows a child to complete a task they could not yet complete alone. It might be written, visual or verbal: a writing frame, a task plan broken into small steps, a checklist for entering the classroom and settling to work, a bank of key vocabulary. The essential discipline is that scaffolding is designed to be removed. A teacher might give the whole class a writing frame, reduce it over time to headings on the board, and eventually replace it with questioning which prompts the child to structure the work themselves. CYP with SEND may need a scaffold in place for longer than their peers, and that is entirely appropriate. What is less effective is a scaffold which is never revisited and becomes a permanent way of working, limiting progress and independence.



Explicit instruction

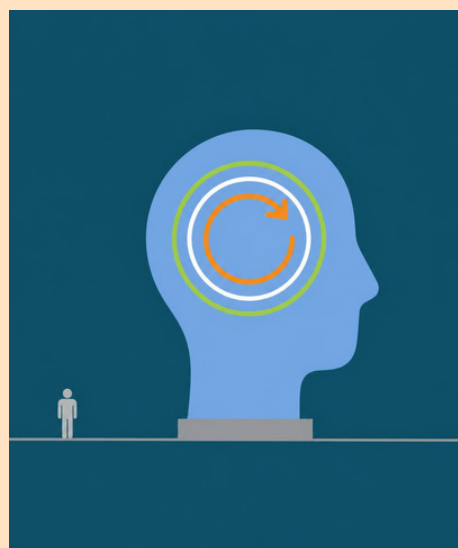
Explicit instruction is an adult led approach built on demonstration, supported practice and then independent work, often summarised as "I do, we do, you do". It means teaching in small steps, using examples and non-examples, using clear and unambiguous language, anticipating the misconceptions which are likely to arise, and stripping out the decorative detail which competes for attention with the thing being taught. Rosenshine's principles of instruction remain a helpful reference point.



Cognitive and Metacognitive

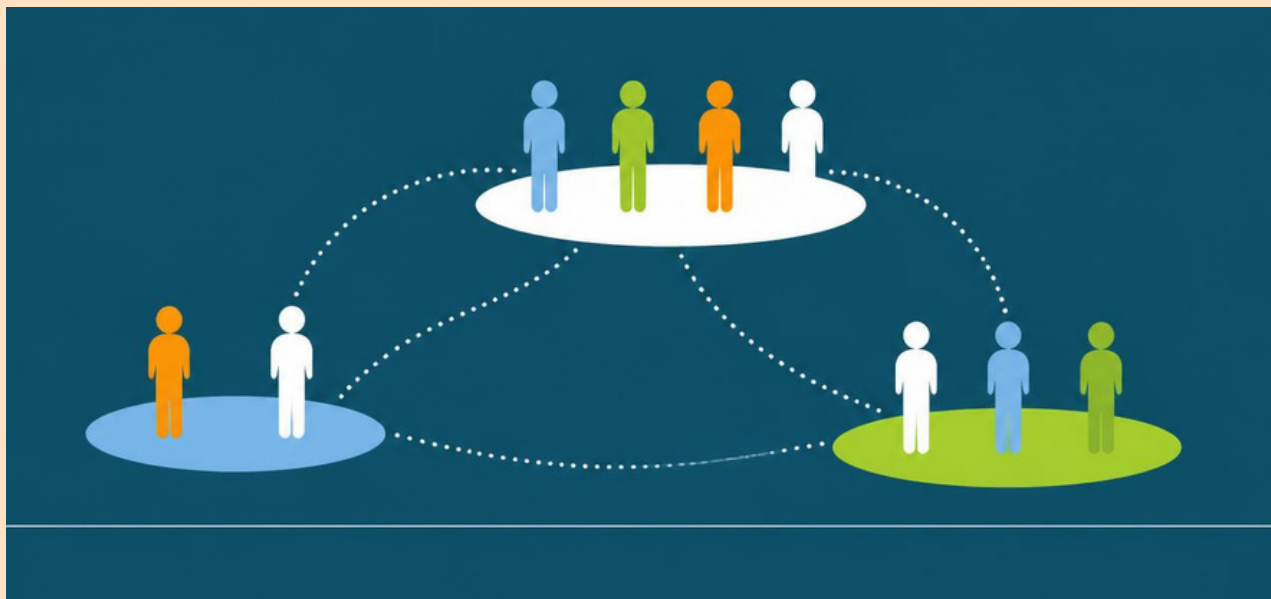
Cognitive and metacognitive strategies address both what children are learning and how they are learning it. Cognitive strategies are the tools of effective teaching: memorisation techniques, graphic organisers, retrieval practice.

Metacognitive strategies are about children directing and monitoring their own thinking, such as checking whether the method they used worked, or planning how to approach a piece of writing before beginning it. This must be taught rather than assumed. Teachers should model their own thinking aloud, promote metacognitive talk, and explicitly teach children how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning, which for many children with SEND is the difference between having a strategy and hoping for the best.



Flexible Grouping

Flexible grouping means forming groups for an explicit purpose and disbanding them once that purpose has been met. It stands in deliberate contrast to the pattern research keeps finding, in which children with SEND and those identified as low-attaining are grouped together more or less permanently and taught apart from their peers. That arrangement amounts to streaming, and the evidence is that streaming often has a negative effect on lower-attaining pupils and can do longer-term damage to their attitudes towards education. Grouping should follow a shared, current learning need rather than a general impression of overall ability, and children in Southwark have told us clearly that they want to be asked about where and with whom they sit.



Technology

Technology should be used where it genuinely removes a barrier rather than because it is available. Text-to-speech and speech-to-text, magnification and screen readers, accessibility features already built into standard software, visualisers for modelling, and dyslexia-friendly formatting options can each transform a child's access to the curriculum. However, for technology to make a difference it has to become the CYP's normal way of working. A device or software introduced shortly before examinations is too late and does not reflect an established normal way of working. The CYP will also have spent years without a tool which could have helped them achieve. The same applies to communication aids when not used consistently throughout the school day. Teachers should encourage the use of technology as everyday practice, and CYP, particularly in secondary and FE settings, should be consulted on whether they find a piece of technology is beneficial to them.

While these five strategies serve the great majority of learners well, some children and young people will require specialist approaches, equipment or curriculum delivered by a trained professional. Those decisions should be made together, involving the SENCO, the class or subject teacher, a senior leader, the family, and the child or young person themselves.

Designing a curriculum which includes

An inclusive curriculum is ambitious, coherently sequenced and flexible enough that every CYP can access it, engage with it and succeed in it, whatever their starting point. In most cases CYP with SEND will study the full national curriculum, and expectations should not narrow as a pupil moves through the school. Where a CYP is working significantly below age-related expectations, schools should develop genuine alternative pathways rather than allowing those children to experience a diminished version of the national curriculum. Curriculum planning should be built with cognitive load in mind, chunking tasks, presenting material accessibly, and building in deliberate revisiting so that retrieval is designed into the sequence rather than left to chance.

Teachers need to know the starting points of the pupils in front of them, including the gaps, so they may plan from those starting points rather than from the scheme of work alone. Homework and resources should be adapted where needed, whether that means the time allowed, the format, the font, the paper, or the amount of scaffolding provided. Clear, consistently implemented routines matter here too, because a child who is using their working memory to work out what is expected of them has less available for the learning itself. Social and emotional learning should be embedded in the curriculum rather than bolted on, teaching self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making, alongside explicit teaching of emotional regulation. The PSHE and RSHE curriculum and wider personal development offer are where much of this work belongs.

Where children are working within the engagement model, it should be fully embedded across the curriculum and supported by an assessment system which can accurately capture the progress being made. This is one of the areas where schools most often tell us they lack confidence, and it is a reasonable subject for external advice and support.



Language, communication and children who use English as an additional language

Access to the curriculum is mediated almost entirely through language, which means that staff need the knowledge and expertise to support language development and to adapt their teaching so that children who speak English as an additional language (EAL) can participate fully in lessons and in the wider life of the school.

The principles which underpin effective practice here are worth stating, because they run counter to some long-standing habits. Multilingualism is an asset rather than a deficit, and children should be encouraged to use and develop their full linguistic repertoire. Expectations should remain high while the language support required is provided, rather than expectations being lowered in place of support. Attention to language should be integrated into subject teaching rather than separated from it. Assessment should build a broad picture of the learner, including, where possible, assessment in the child's home language, since without it a language need and a learning need are easily confused. And social inclusion is part of the work, not a by-product of it.

Knowing whether it is working

Robust target setting, tracking and monitoring should apply to all children, with sufficient sensitivity to capture the progress of those working well below age-related expectations or within the engagement model. Marking and assessment systems should take full account of the diverse learning needs in the setting, including access arrangements for formal assessments, and formative assessment should be genuinely formative, used by teachers to notice gaps and adjust their planning rather than to record what has already happened.

Leaders should evaluate the quality of education regularly and specifically, asking whether the children most at risk of underachievement or exclusion are experiencing ambitious, inclusive and effective teaching. Whole school averages will not answer that question. It requires looking at the experience of particular groups and, often, particular pupils.

Building the confidence of every teacher

Teachers cannot use strategies they have not been helped to develop. Initial teacher training provides limited grounding in SEND, and experienced teachers may have taught many children with one kind of need and very few with another. Taking on a new class with a diverse range of needs and feeling confident that every child is being taught well is genuinely demanding. Leaders therefore carry responsibility for ensuring that all teachers can use these strategies confidently and flexibly, which requires more than a single training day. It means a planned programme of professional development for the whole setting, for departments and teams and for individual staff; opportunities to observe colleagues who are experts in a particular approach; monitoring the consistency of planning across the curriculum; learning from other schools; and drawing on external professional advice, including the training available through Southwark's Education Inclusion teams, the Educational Psychology Service and other specialist teacher teams. Auditing staff skills is a sensible starting point, since it turns a general sense that people need training into a focused plan.

The teaching and learning policy should articulate the school's inclusive approach explicitly, making clear that adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments and the removal of barriers are expected features of universal classroom practice rather than exceptions to it. And all staff should recognise their own responsibility for the progress, participation, wellbeing and achievement of every learner. Where responsibility for some children is understood to sit elsewhere, with the SENCO, with the intervention lead, with the support staff, those children tend to receive less of the thing which would help them most.



The role of support staff

Support staff are a substantial part of the workforce and can make a real difference, but the evidence on their impact is mixed, and the pattern which produces poor outcomes is well documented: a child receives most of their instruction from the least qualified adult in the room, becomes dependent on that adult, and spends a large part of the day separated from their teacher and their peers.

The principle Southwark expects schools to work from is that CYP with SEND, EAL and those who are low-attaining should receive HQT from their teacher, and support staff should add value to that teaching rather than substitute for it. Where support staff do take an instructional role, they must be trained and supported properly so that what they deliver has impact. Deployment should be defined deliberately, with a clear view of how it contributes to outcomes, and reviewed as the child's needs change. Standard 4 sets out the expectations for the deployment, training and supervision of support staff in more detail.



Evaluating provision against this standard

Schools should evaluate their provision against this standard at least once a year using the Southwark Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool. This standard is one where lesson-level evidence matters more than documentation. A policy which describes adaptive teaching is straightforward to write; adaptive teaching which is visible in every classroom and in every subject demonstrates the standard in practice.

Standard 3

Understanding Need

Building an ongoing and holistic understanding of every child and young person

Why this standard matters

Support is only as good as the understanding it is built on. Where need is identified early and accurately, and where that understanding is revisited as the pupil changes, provision tends to be proportionate and effective. Where it is not, schools find themselves either providing support which does not address the actual barrier, or noticing a difficulty only once it has become entrenched. Attainment, attendance, participation and wellbeing are affected by a wide range of circumstances, and only some of them constitute special educational needs. Socio-economic disadvantage, including eligibility for free school meals and pupil premium, has a well-established relationship with attainment. So does the experience of being a child in care or a previously looked-after child, involvement with social care, caring responsibilities at home, and, for some pupils, the way that race and other protected characteristics shape how they are perceived and responded to in school. Pupils who use English as an additional language may need substantial language support while having no learning difficulty at all. Many pupils experience more than one of these at once, and the effect is rarely the sum of the parts.

Understanding need therefore means understanding the whole picture for a pupil, not determining which category they belong to. The purpose of the work described in this standard is to establish what is getting in the way, for this pupil, in this setting, at this point in their education, and to act on it.

Within that wider picture, identification of special educational needs has its own particular complexity. The definitions of SEN and disability in the SEND Code of Practice rest on notions of progress and intervention, and are contextual by design. Therefore, a pupil may require additional input in one setting and not in another, sometimes for reasons as ordinary as the design of the building. A diagnosis is not in itself the criterion for identifying SEN. What matters is the impact on learning and development, and the adaptations and provision required as a result.

Every school therefore needs a clear rationale for when and why it determines that a pupil has SEN, and for what follows from that determination. That decision making should be robust, evidence based and transparent, and should involve the pupil and their family. Identification is not an administrative act. It should lead to actions which improve outcomes.

The Inclusion Strategy

From December 2026 the way schools describe this work to families changes. Mainstream schools are required to publish an inclusion strategy on their website by 31st December 2026, as a condition of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund. The inclusion strategy does not replace the SEN information report. The SEN information report remains a statutory requirement, and schools must continue to publish and review it alongside the inclusion strategy.

The two documents do different jobs. Where the SEN information report describes a school's SEND arrangements in general terms, the inclusion strategy sets out the commonly occurring barriers to learning and participation within the school's own cohort, the evidence-informed approaches being used to address them, the activity the school is investing in, and the budgeted costs of that activity. It is a statement of analysis and intent rather than a description of provision, and Ofsted will assess how far leaders have embedded the strategy in practice and how well staff are equipped to deliver it.

The Department for Education's (DfE) guidance [Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund](#) sets out a five-step approach and should be the starting point. A DfE [template](#) is available, and schools which choose not to use it must still cover the barriers identified across their cohort, the activities invested in to alleviate those barriers, the intended outcomes, and a review of the previous academic year. Activity funded through the Inclusive Mainstream Fund must fall under one of the seven principles of inclusion set out in the guidance. Where a school publishes a multi-year strategy, it must be reviewed annually and the review noted on the cover page.

This is a significant shift, and it rests directly on the quality of the work described in this standard. A school cannot identify the barriers commonly occurring across its cohort without accurate identification, reliable data and an understanding of the patterns within its own population. The guidance is explicit that this work should not be led by diagnoses, nor limited to the pupils currently on SEN support or with EHC plans.

Southwark's Inclusion and SEND team can support schools with the analysis which underpins the strategy, and schools should contact their consultant if they would like that support.

Identifying need early and accurately

Schools should have robust screening and assessment arrangements in place which identify need early and give staff confidence in their understanding of a pupil. These should include literacy and numeracy screeners and screeners for wellbeing, and should be used alongside teacher assessment, observation and information from families and previous settings rather than in place of them. Identification should extend beyond special educational needs. Schools should know which of their pupils are eligible for free school meals or pupil premium, which are in care or previously looked after, which have social care involvement, which have caring responsibilities, and which are at an early stage of learning English, and should understand what each of those circumstances may mean for the pupil's experience of school. Holding that information centrally is only the first step. It becomes useful when the adults who teach a pupil know what it means for their teaching.

Where a pupil uses English as an additional language, assessment should where possible include assessment in their home language. Without it, a developing command of English and an underlying learning need are readily confused, in either direction, and both over-identification and under-identification carry consequences for the pupil.

Schools should be alert to the ways in which need presents differently across groups. National evidence shows that some CYP are identified later than others, and that Black CYP with SEND face systemic barriers to receiving adequate support despite being more likely to be identified as having SEND. Where identification patterns in a school differ markedly from what would be expected, that is a matter for leaders to examine rather than explain.

The strengths and needs of every pupil with SEND should be clearly documented in a written profile or baseline, and shared with the staff who work with them.

The graduated approach

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, the school should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place, through the four-part cycle of assess, plan, do and review. Although the graduated approach originates in the SEND Code of Practice and carries statutory weight for pupils with SEN, the cycle itself is an effective structure for responding to any barrier which affects a pupil's learning, attendance, participation or wellbeing, and Southwark encourages schools to use it in that wider way. A pupil whose attendance is declining, or whose circumstances at home have changed, benefits from the same process of assessment, planning, action and review as a pupil with a language need. Each cycle revisits, refines and revises earlier decisions in the light of a growing understanding of the CYP's needs, drawing on more detailed approaches, more frequent review and more specialist expertise as required.

The graduated approach places the early cycles with the class or subject teacher, who seeks support from the SENCO and others after first reviewing their own actions. SENCOs should ensure the process in their own school is clear, recorded, shared and followed by all staff. The approach used should be robust, equitable and grounded in evidence-informed practice. The specific criteria a school uses will vary, since every setting and every CYP is different, but every school must be able to demonstrate that it identifies, assesses, plans and makes provision appropriately, and that it promotes good outcomes.

The graduated approach

Review

Review at least termly. Is the provision happening, is it consistent, is the assessment still accurate, what has worked and why, and what do the CYP and their family think?

Assess

Consider the pupil, the learning environment, the task and the teaching. Use data from other professionals, observation, assessment and progress data.

**SEN
Support**

Do

Implement the plan. The class or subject teacher remains responsible for progress, including where support is delivered by another adult.

Plan

Agree adjustments, interventions and expected outcomes. Record the plan, share it with everyone involved, and set targets which are specific, measurable and ambitious.

Assess

Assessment should consider four things:

- the pupil
- the learning environment, including classroom organisation and the quality of relationships
- the task, including how it is designed and the materials used
- the teaching

A barrier may sit in any of these, so all four belong within the assessment rather than outside it.

Schools should draw on information from the previous setting or class, from the CYP and their family, and from other agencies and professionals, alongside school based observation, curriculum based assessment, progress records, tracking data compared to external benchmarks, and analysis of how the CYP has responded to arrangements and interventions already in place. The purpose of gathering this material is to clarify the nature of the need and its impact, identify the barriers to participation, agree the outcomes sought, and inform the provision which follows.

Plan

Planning should begin with the range of arrangements, reasonable adjustments and interventions available to the school, and then consider how these combine into a coherent package for the individual CYP. It should include curricular adaptation, teaching approaches and strategies, the deployment of resources available in school or through partner services, and, where appropriate, actions and support at home. Plans should be recorded and shared with staff, families, the CYP and other professionals involved. Targets should be specific and measurable, and ambitious and stretching over time, and support plans should be reviewed at least termly.

Do

Provision should not remove the pupil from high quality teaching by their class or subject teacher. Where an intervention requires time away from the main teaching, the impact should be considered and mitigated through careful timetabling, minimising the time involved, or using the session to catch up on classwork. The class or subject teacher remains responsible for the pupil's progress, including where support is delivered by another adult.

Review

Monitoring should be ongoing, with more formal review at least termly. Review should establish whether the planned provision is actually happening, whether it is being implemented consistently, whether the assessment of need remains accurate, which strategies have worked and why, what progress has been made towards the agreed outcomes, and what the CYP and their family think about the provision and the progress. Where a strategy is working, schools should consider where else it could be used. Where it is not, the cycle begins again with increased focus, intensity and frequency.

Classrooms which support understanding

Some of what makes need visible, or invisible, sits in the everyday organisation of the classroom. Classrooms should be communication friendly, using visual supports and accessible communication approaches, with staff allowing appropriate processing time before expecting a response. Sensory audits should inform classroom practice, with sensory resources and reasonable adjustments available as needed and movement opportunities built into the day.

Southwark supports trauma informed practice and positive behaviour support as approaches to understanding need. Both treat behaviour as communication, and both place the emphasis on how the adult responds rather than on what the pupil should stop doing. These approaches have proved helpful across a range of needs, and particularly where a pupil is experiencing mental health difficulties or has experienced trauma associated with family circumstances or social care involvement. Where a pupil's presentation changes, the question for staff is what has changed for that pupil and what response would help, rather than what the behaviour policy prescribes.

Emotional regulation should be taught universally rather than reserved for the pupils who are already struggling, and wellbeing should be promoted through the curriculum. Where a pupil has health needs, these should be managed through an individual healthcare plan developed with the family and, where appropriate, the school nursing or health team.

Attendance barriers should be explored and addressed in collaboration with the pupil and their parents and carers. Emotionally based school non-attendance in particular requires an understanding of what is making school feel difficult and what is making home feel safer, and a plan built from that understanding rather than from an assumption about motivation.



The voice of CYP and their families

Decisions should be informed by the views, aspirations and experiences of CYP and their families. CYP should be helped to understand their own barriers to learning and the strategies which support them, and should be asked directly what would help. Schools should use structured tools where they are useful, including one-page profiles, all about me sheets, visual scales and digital surveys, and should offer more than one format so that CYP who find talking difficult are not excluded from the conversation.

Families should be involved in identifying need, planning provision and evaluating whether it is working, and should understand the school's approach to inclusion, the support available, the Local Offer and the routes to further advice and services.

Using data to understand patterns

Understanding need operates at the level of the school as well as the individual. Inclusion leaders and senior leaders should analyse patterns in attainment, attendance, behaviour, suspension and exclusion, vulnerability and identification, and use what they find to strengthen inclusive practice. This includes examining disproportionality where CYP's needs intersect with race, medical need, social care involvement or disadvantage, so that the school's response is equitable rather than uniform.

Leaders should monitor outcomes beyond academic achievement, including personal development, attendance, wellbeing, independence and participation. Where leaders identify that CYP face multiple or intersecting vulnerabilities, including children in care and previously looked-after children, CYP with SEND, young carers and disadvantaged CYP, they should ensure that support is coordinated rather than delivered in parallel by different people.

Provision mapping is a useful tool for this work, and Southwark recommends a provision management approach which serves strategic purposes as well as individual planning. A well-designed map should be able to answer what the school offers in total, how well that matches its intake, whether it is equitable across groups and areas of need, where the gaps are, and how outcomes are identified and measured. Maps should include entry and exit criteria, monitoring information and the evidence base, and can be costed to support judgements about value for money.

Working with other professionals

External advice should be sought appropriately, integrated into planning and reviewed regularly to ensure it contributes to improved outcomes. Advice which arrives, is filed and does not change practice represents a cost to the CYP as well as to the system. Where several professionals are involved, schools should work towards a shared understanding and a single coordinated plan rather than a set of separate recommendations.

Teachers and support staff should have regular opportunities for collaborative planning and reflective practice, since much of what one adult knows about a CYP is not written down anywhere.



Transitions and preparation for adulthood

Transitions should be planned carefully, within the school day, from year to year, and between settings. Information should be actively sought and shared, including recent assess, plan, do, review cycles, current provision and interventions, one-page profiles, classroom strategies, healthcare plans, CYP voice, current targets and any professional reports. This information should be available to families, to colleagues within the setting, and to receiving or previous settings as required.

Preparation for adulthood should begin early rather than at the end of Key Stage 4. Schools should prepare all CYP for their next stage of education, employment and adult life, developing independence, communication, self-advocacy, resilience and participation in the community, and should ensure that CYP with SEND receive high quality careers guidance alongside their peers.

Evaluating provision against this standard

Schools should evaluate their provision against this standard annually using the Southwark Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool, recording the actions arising, and reviewing progress termly in the areas identified for development.

Standard 4

Targeted Support and Interventions

Using targeted support to supplement high quality teaching, not to substitute for it

Why this standard matters

Most CYP, including those with SEND, will have their needs met through high quality teaching and the everyday adjustments set out in Southwark's Ordinarily Available Provision. Some will need something additional or different for a period of time, and this standard sets out how that support should be selected, delivered, staffed and reviewed.

The relationship between targeted support and classroom teaching matters more than the choice of any individual programme. Targeted support supplements high quality teaching. It does not replace it, and it should not be the school's first response to a difficulty which has not yet been addressed in the classroom. The aim of any intervention should be to complement the overall teaching and learning objectives and to minimise the time a CYP spends away from their class.

Targeted support is not only for CYP with SEND. A CYP who has experienced a bereavement may benefit from a period of additional pastoral support without that indicating a special educational need. The same principle applies to CYP whose attendance has become fragile, who are new to English, or whose circumstances have changed at home.

Selecting and reviewing interventions

Interventions should be selected using evidence-informed approaches, matched to an identified need, and delivered by staff who have been trained and supported to deliver them. A well-evidenced programme delivered without fidelity by an adult who has not been trained is unlikely to produce the outcome the evidence suggests.

Each intervention should have a clear purpose and clear entry and exit criteria, so that it is understood from the outset what it is intended to achieve and what would indicate that it is no longer needed. Impact should be reviewed regularly, and reviewed against outcomes which matter: learning, participation, attendance, wellbeing and achievement, rather than completion of the programme.

Schools should also ensure that CYP can connect what happens in an intervention with what happens in their classroom. Where the two are unconnected, the CYP is required to do the work of transfer alone, which is often the part they find most difficult.

Time spent away from peers should be kept under regular review and justified by improved outcomes. Where a CYP is spending substantial time outside their class, leaders should be able to explain what that time is achieving and when it is expected to reduce.

The deployment of support staff

Support staff make up a significant proportion of the workforce in most schools and can have a considerable impact on outcomes. The evidence is clear about the conditions in which that impact is positive, and equally clear about the pattern which produces poor outcomes: a CYP receives most of their instruction from the least qualified adult in the room, spends much of the day separated from their teacher and their peers, and becomes dependent on adult support rather than more independent over time.

Support staff should therefore be deployed strategically to promote independence, confidence, participation and achievement. Deployment should be planned deliberately with a clear view of how it contributes to outcomes, rather than allocated by habit or by hours attached to an individual CYP.

Support staff should add value to the teacher's practice rather than substitute for it. Offering floating support to the class after a task has been set, so that the teacher can concentrate their attention on those who need it most, is one example of deployment which strengthens rather than replaces teaching.

The quality of the interactions between support staff and CYP is central to this. The EEF's scaffolding framework for teaching assistant and pupil interactions provides a practical structure for developing this, moving adults away from prompting and correcting and towards the least intrusive level of support which allows a CYP to succeed. It works well as a focus for training and for observation and feedback. Where support staff take an instructional role, they need the same clarity about the learning as the teacher, which requires time for liaison and planning rather than briefing at the classroom door.

Professional development and staff expertise

The quality of targeted support depends on the expertise of the people delivering it. Developing inclusive, high quality teaching which enables all CYP to participate, achieve and thrive should be a central focus of professional development for teaching and support staff alike, and that development should equip staff to understand and respond to the range of strengths, needs and experiences across the school community.

Schools should audit staff skills and CPD alongside interventions and outcomes, so that professional development is planned in response to identified gaps.

Southwark's Inclusion and SEND team, the Educational Psychology Service, the specialist teams for hearing and visual impairment, autism support, speech and language therapy and school nursing all contribute to the local training offer.

The SENCO role requires specific expertise. The National Professional Qualification for SENCOs is the mandatory qualification for those new to the role and must be completed within three years of appointment. Beyond qualification, SENCOs need ongoing access to networks, supervision and time to develop, and they play a central role in facilitating professional development for colleagues so that high quality teaching is delivered consistently.

Working together around the CYP

Teachers, support staff and specialist practitioners should work collaboratively to remove barriers, promote participation and secure positive outcomes.

Collaboration requires structure: shared planning time, agreed points of contact, and clarity about who is responsible for what. Where a CYP has several adults involved, a team around the child approach helps to ensure that the CYP experiences one coherent plan rather than several.

All CYP should have equitable access to subject expertise, enrichment and specialist support regardless of need or background. Where interventions are timetabled, schools should check what CYP are missing in order to attend them, and avoid a pattern in which the same CYP are repeatedly withdrawn from the same subject or from enrichment activities.

Support bases

Some Southwark schools host a support base: a designated provision within a mainstream setting for a small number of CYP who need specialist teaching and support for part of the week while remaining part of their mainstream school. These arrangements were previously described in Southwark as gathered provisions, and are referred to here, and in the DfE's guidance, as support bases.

A support base is a form of targeted support rather than a separate setting, and the same expectations apply to it: a clear purpose, a defined relationship to high quality teaching, and regular review of whether the arrangement is producing better outcomes than the alternatives.

Support bases are funded by the school from the resources available to it, including its notional SEND budget and the funding attached to the CYP who attend. Schools should be clear about this when planning a base and when explaining the provision to families.

Schools with a support base should be able to state explicitly where their base sits on the continuum of provision. What the base offers, which CYP it is intended for, and how it differs from what is available in mainstream classes and from specialist provision should be set out clearly rather than left to be inferred from practice.

Decisions about a CYP attending a base should be made with their parents and carers, not just communicated to them. Families should be part of the decision making about entry, and should agree to the arrangement. Schools should be able to explain to a family why their child is being educated in the base, and why for the particular amount of time proposed, in terms of the CYP's needs and the outcomes being sought. Where a school cannot answer that second question specifically, the timetable is likely to reflect the organisation of the provision rather than the needs of the CYP.



The CYP's time in the base should be kept under review in the same way as any other time spent away from peers. CYP should spend as much time as is appropriate in mainstream classes and in the wider life of the school, timetables should be built with that intention from the outset, and opportunities for social interaction with mainstream peers should be planned rather than left to unstructured times. Entry and exit criteria should be clear, and reintegration planning should form part of the ongoing review cycle rather than being raised only when a placement is ending.

Responsibility for CYP who attend a base sits with the school as a whole.

Mainstream teachers remain their teachers for the time they spend in mainstream classes and need the information and support to teach them well, and the specialist strategies developed in the base should be shared as whole-school approaches where they are useful. Where a CYP has an EHC plan, the provision specified in Section F must be delivered, and the support base provision should be described in all annual review paperwork.

Southwark's support base guidance sets out the full expectations, including curriculum, staffing, environment, assessment and safeguarding, and should be read alongside the DfE's guidance on inclusion bases in schools. Schools which are considering opening a support base should contact their Inclusion and SEND consultant at an early stage, before decisions about staffing, accommodation or admissions are made.

Strategic oversight

The inclusion leader should have a strategic overview of inclusion, vulnerability and additional needs across the school, and sufficient influence to shape policy, provision and practice. This includes maintaining an overview of which interventions are running, who is delivering them, what they cost, and what they achieve.

Provision mapping supports this oversight, and allows leaders to answer questions about balance and equity: whether the school's offer matches its intake, whether it is distributed fairly across groups and areas of need, whether there are gaps, and whether the provision represents value for money.

Evaluating provision against this standard

Schools should evaluate their provision against this standard annually using the Southwark Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool, recording the actions arising, and reviewing progress termly in the areas identified for development.

Standard 5

Statutory Requirements

Knowing and following the duties which underpin inclusive practice

Why this standard matters

The statutory requirements are the things every educational setting must do, or must have in place, for CYP with SEND and other additional needs who currently attend the setting or who may attend it in the future. They are not a separate compliance exercise sitting alongside the work of inclusion.

The duties described here apply to all settings, including academies and free schools, and governing boards and trustees hold ultimate responsibility for them.

The legislation and guidance which applies

The core statutory framework consists of the Children and Families Act 2014 Part 3, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years and its accompanying regulations, the Equality Act 2010, and the statutory guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions. Keeping Children Safe in Education, the guidance on behaviour in schools, suspension and permanent exclusion, working together to improve school attendance, and the guidance on arranging alternative provision all carry duties which bear directly on inclusion.

The Equality Act 2010 duties are the ones most often engaged in day to day decisions. Schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled CYP, must make reasonable adjustments, and must have regard to the public sector equality duty. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory, which means schools should consider in advance what adjustments CYP may need rather than responding only once a difficulty arises.

Documentation which must be published and reviewed

Schools must publish and maintain a small number of documents which set out how they meet their duties. Most of these should be reviewed and updated annually, with any changes made during the year reflected as soon as possible.

Inclusion Strategy

Mainstream schools must publish their first inclusion strategy on their website by 31st December 2026 as a condition of the Inclusive Mainstream Fund. It should set out the commonly occurring and predictable needs within the school's cohort, the evidence-based approaches used to meet them, the activity invested in to remove barriers to learning and participation, and the budgeted costs of that activity. The DfE has published [guidance](#) and a template which schools may use. Where a school publishes a multi-year strategy, it must be reviewed annually and the review noted on the cover page. Standard 3 sets out what underpins a credible strategy.

The strategy should be easy to find on the website, clearly dated, and written in clear language which avoids jargon and uses visuals where these aid understanding. It is a public document read by families as well as by inspectors, and the language should be welcoming and should encourage families to be involved. Schools should continue to direct families to Southwark's Local Offer and to the school's accessibility plan.

SEN Information Report

The SEN information report is a statutory requirement for all schools and academies under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Regulations 2014. It is written for families rather than for staff, and sets out how the school identifies and supports CYP with SEND: how needs are identified and assessed, the provision and adaptations available, how progress towards outcomes is reviewed, how families and CYP are involved, the arrangements for transition, and who to contact, including the SENCO. It must be published on the school website and reviewed at least annually, with any changes made during the year reflected as soon as possible. It sits alongside the inclusion strategy and the SEN policy.

School SEN Policy

The SEN policy is written for staff and other professionals rather than for families, and remains in place alongside the inclusion strategy. It should set out the setting's vision, values and aims for CYP with SEND, describe the graduated approach to identification, assessment and provision, and explain how teaching staff are supported to deliver high quality teaching for CYP with SEND in their own classes.

Accessibility plan

The accessibility plan must meet the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and should support improved access, participation and achievement, covering the physical environment, the curriculum and the accessibility of information. The plan covers a period of up to three years, with progress against it reported annually.

The policy on meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions should be in place and supported by individual healthcare plans developed with families and health colleagues. Because the arrangements for publication are changing as the SEND reforms are implemented, schools should check the current position on gov.uk before finalising their documents, and Southwark will update this guidance as new DfE guidance is published.

Alongside these, schools should ensure that admission arrangements provide equitable, transparent and inclusive access. EHC plans must be considered carefully through the consultation process, and CYP with SEND, medical needs or other vulnerabilities must not be treated less favourably at the point of admission.

Governing body duties

Governing boards have legal duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice. The DfE's governance guides for maintained schools and for academy trusts, which replaced the Governance Handbook in 2024, set these out in full. In summary, governing boards must use their best endeavours to ensure CYP with SEND get the support they need; ensure CYP with SEND take part in the activities of the school alongside CYP who do not have SEND; inform parents when special educational provision is being made for their child; ensure arrangements are in place to support CYP with medical conditions; provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum; ensure independent careers guidance is available from Year 7 to Year 13; have a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND; report annually to parents on their child's progress; keep accurate and current records of the provision made; publish the SEN information report and the inclusion strategy, along with information about admission arrangements for disabled CYP; ensure a qualified teacher is designated as SENCO; determine how resources are used to support progress; appoint a link governor for SEND; and co-operate with the local authority in reviewing local provision and developing the Local Offer.

Governors should understand these responsibilities and hold leaders accountable for inclusive practice and improved outcomes for CYP who are vulnerable, which requires regular, structured information rather than an annual report alone.

Statutory processes for CYP with SEND

Schools should fulfil their duties in relation to the assess, plan, do, review cycle, engagement with families, education, health and care needs assessments, and annual reviews. Annual review paperwork should be completed and submitted within statutory timescales, and should describe accurately the provision the CYP is receiving, including whether they attend a support base.

Where a CYP has an EHC plan, the provision specified in Section F must be delivered. This is a legal requirement rather than a statement of intent, and schools should be able to evidence delivery.

The SENCO must be a qualified teacher, and the National Professional Qualification for SENCOs is the mandatory qualification for those new to the role. Schools should ensure the SENCO has the leadership capacity, expertise and time to drive inclusive practice.

Attendance, suspension, exclusion and alternative provision

Schools must inform the local authority of suspensions and exclusions so that support can be provided in time to prevent further loss of education.

Suspensions and exclusions should be reported to earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk. Parents and carers must be notified of a suspension or exclusion and it is good practice to involve any professionals already working with the CYP in the discussions which follow.

Reintegration should be planned rather than assumed. Settings should design a reintegration strategy which offers the CYP a fresh start, identifies the learning that has been missed and how it will be caught up, and ensures that in any reintegration meeting the CYP hears that they are valued and that what has happened is not an obstacle to their success.

Alternative provision and off-site direction should be used only when other strategies have been exhausted, should be time bound, and should be reviewed regularly with the family. Off-site direction does not require parental consent, but parents must be given written notice of the placement, normally at least two school days beforehand, and the local authority must also be notified where the CYP has an EHC plan. The statutory guidance in force from 26 July 2026 applies this framework to academies and pupil referral units as well as maintained schools. Schools remain responsible for quality assurance of provision where an off-site direction has been made.

Part-time timetables should be used only in very exceptional circumstances, must be temporary and must not be used to manage a CYP's behaviour.

Southwark's guidance sets an expected maximum of six weeks, with regular incremental increases towards full-time attendance, reviewed with parents and carers. Schools should flag CYP at risk of suspension or exclusion to the local authority early, and can access support through Southwark's Education Inclusion Team.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements should identify and respond to the additional vulnerabilities of CYP who face multiple barriers. Designated safeguarding leads require specific training to understand the additional risks associated with SEND, a history of trauma, adverse childhood experiences, current or previous social care involvement, socioeconomic disadvantage, and race and ethnicity, and to guard against unconscious bias in how concerns are recognised and acted upon.

Person-centred systems including risk assessment, healthcare arrangements and intimate care arrangements should be in place to enable full participation in school life. Risk assessments should be used as a systematic process to identify hazards, evaluate the associated risks and put measures in place to control them, and should sit alongside effective safety planning developed with the CYP where appropriate, their family and the agencies involved.

Funding and resources

Funding, resources and strategic investment, including the notional SEND budget, pupil premium funding and the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, should be used to strengthen inclusive provision, reduce disadvantage and improve outcomes. The Inclusive Mainstream Fund is not attached to individual pupils. It is intended to help settings become more inclusive by design, and the DfE is clear that inclusion activity should draw on core funding and notional SEND budgets as well as the fund itself. Schools should be able to explain how the resources available to them are deployed, and provision mapping which is costed supports both that explanation and the school's own judgements about value for money.

Working with the local authority and wider services

Schools should co-operate with Southwark in reviewing local provision and developing the Local Offer, and should be familiar enough with the Local Offer to direct families to appropriate services.

Effective joint working with health, social care and the local authority's specialist teams improves outcomes for CYP with SEND, and is expected rather than optional.

Evaluating provision against this standard

Schools should evaluate their provision against this standard annually using the Southwark Inclusion Self-Evaluation Audit Tool, recording the actions arising, and reviewing progress termly in the areas identified for development.

Relevant legislation

This LA guidance is in accordance with, and guided by, current statutory frameworks and guidance, in particular those below.

SEND legislation and guidance

- [Children and Families Act 2014 \(Part 3\) and associated regulations:](#)
 1. [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 \(as amended\)](#).
 2. [The Special Educational Needs \(Personal Budgets\) Regulations 2014 \(as amended\)](#).
 3. [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Detained Persons\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage](#)
- [The Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions \(2014, updated December 2017\)](#).
- [SEND Code of Practice \(January 2015\)](#).
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 \(September 2026\)](#).
- [DfE: Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future: \(2016\)](#).

Social care legislation and guidance

- [Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children 2011](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Care and Support for Deafblind Children and Adults Policy Guidance 2014](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970](#)

Health legislation and guidance

- [Health and Social Care Act](#)

SEND Ofsted inspection

- [Area SEND Framework and Handbook January 2023 \(Updated July 2025\)](#).
- [Local Area SEND Inspections information for Families \(2016, updated June 2025\)](#).