

Preparing for SEND Reform 2026

Schools action checklist

A practical checklist for embedding inclusive practice across your school

We know many schools already have strong SEND systems and inclusive practice in place, doing thoughtful and committed work to support children with SEND. This checklist is designed to help you reflect on the new proposals, build on what is working in your setting, and strengthen provision in line with emerging national guidance, to create best outcomes for children.

Review your current SEND provision against the emerging national expectations

- Map existing provision across Universal, Targeted, Targeted Plus and Specialist levels
- Audit financial implications and capacity of staff and resources - Inclusive Mainstream Fund will be made available but identify constraints and opportunities
- Identify gaps in early identification, intervention and inclusion practice
- Analyse current SEND register, behaviour data, attendance data and intervention tracking methods
- Conduct a leadership review (Head, SENCo, DSL, pastoral lead)

Develop and publish a clear whole-school Inclusion Strategy by 31 December 2026

Detail how you plan to embed inclusive practice based on the commonly occurring needs within your cohort, including:

- Define how children's needs will be identified early
- Define the support to be delivered at each tier level
- Define how inclusion will be embedded in daily practice
- Detail how your strategy aligns with the SEND Code of Practice and emerging Inclusion Standards
- Use real school data and information (not generic statements)
- Involve SLT, SENCo and governors

Strengthen your universal offer, including adaptive teaching and inclusive classroom practice

- Ensure inclusive, adaptive teaching is consistent in every classroom
- Audit classroom practice (learning walks, book looks, pupil voice)
- Provide staff training on: Adaptive teaching, scaffolding and differentiation, regulation and behaviour as communication
- Create calm, supportive and inclusive learning environments

Embed early identification systems

- Ensure needs are identified early and consistently across the school
- Introduce/ensure clear referral pathways for staff
- Use screening tools, structured observation and staff insight
- Schedule regular pupil progress and wellbeing reviews

Embed the graduated approach

- Ensure the graduated approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) is embedded as a consistent, school-wide cycle to support flexible and responsive provision
- Train all staff so teachers are responsible for the daily monitoring and implementation of support, not just the SENCo
- Use simple, consistent templates
- Build into existing review cycles

Review current interventions for structure, consistency and impact

- Audit interventions to ensure they are structured, evidence-based and can be monitored for impact
- Remove or adapt any low-impact provision
- Introduce targeted and small-group intervention programmes within the new layers of support - Targeted and Targeted Plus





Plan for introducing Individual Support Plans (ISPs)

- Develop simple, collaborative digital ISP templates
- Define how impact and data will be captured and reviewed
- Establish clear processes for working collaboratively with parents, carers and children
- Consider how live ISPs will be implemented, reviewed and kept consistent in day-to-day practice
- Review emerging national expectations around digital systems to support ISPs, and plan how your school will respond

Strengthen SEMH provision

- Define a clear whole-school approach to SEMH
- Introduce structured small-group interventions using evidence-based programmes
- Develop dedicated nurture or inclusion spaces where appropriate
- Embed the explicit teaching of social and emotional skills across the curriculum
- Train staff in emotional regulation, relational and trauma-informed approaches

Audit and develop staff training (CPD)

- Audit staff skills and confidence, including support staff
- Create and implement a robust whole-school CPD plan and schedule, including SEND basics for all staff, adaptive teaching, SEMH and behaviour
- Engage with national, local authority and/or trust-led SEND training programmes - including funded DfE training on SEND and inclusive learning and teaching
- Build internal expertise by providing structured, accredited training for pastoral staff building understanding of emotional development, the impact of adversity, and how to translate this into effective, everyday practice in school

Experts at Hand Service

- Plan how your school will utilise access to specialist support without statutory processes
- Map current relationships with external professionals (educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, SEND teachers, occupational therapists and outreach services etc.) and identify gaps and referral pathways
- Establish clear and regular communication channels with external services

Build stronger, more collaborative relationships with parents and carers to create a sense of belonging, community and support

- Deliver parent and carer workshops, information sessions and informal engagement opportunities
- Establish regular, proactive communication beyond review points
- Embed parent and carer involvement in ISP development and review
- Review and strengthen feedback processes

Strengthen multi-agency working

- Strengthen partnerships with external professionals and local strategic partnerships/groups
- Establish regular communication channels
- Attend and contribute to joint planning meetings
- Share strategies, actions and outcomes consistently

Participate in local school groups

- Engage with local school groups to explore opportunities to pool funding, share resources and strengthen SEND support

Data

- Review your use of data to identify need early
- Audit how your school tracks attendance, behaviour, progress, intervention outcomes and pupil voice
- Implement or refine systems such as dashboards or tracking tools to monitor impact

Accountability and inspection

- Ensure SEND and inclusion are clearly evidenced across the school
- Align practice with emerging National Inclusion Standards, ensuring documentation reflects lived practice
- Prepare to demonstrate the impact of your SEND and inclusion provision for Ofsted, drawing on a range of evidence including data, classroom practice, and pupil and parent voice

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