

Additional Needs

Leadership reflection prompts

- How well do we understand the diverse needs and lived experiences within our school community?
- How do leaders use local context, family voice and community knowledge to inform provision?
- How do staff build trusting relationships so emerging needs are noticed early?
- How do we recognise and respond to needs that may not be SEND but still affect learning, attendance, wellbeing or participation?
- How do staff understand the impact of trauma, disadvantage, caring responsibilities, migration, health or family circumstances?
- How do we support learners who use English as an Additional Language?
- How are Early Help, safeguarding and multi-agency processes embedded in school systems?
- How do policies and decision-making reflect the changing needs of the community?
- How is Pupil Premium and other contextual funding used strategically to remove barriers?

What you might notice in practice

- Staff know children well and notice changes in presentation, attendance, engagement or wellbeing.
- Families are approached with curiosity, respect and without blame.
- Staff understand that barriers to learning may be linked to wider circumstances.
- EAL learners receive structured support for language development and vocabulary learning.
- Early Help and safeguarding processes are understood and used appropriately.
- Leaders use contextual information to shape provision and priorities.
- Funding is targeted to improve access, engagement, wellbeing and participation.
- Partnerships with community, health, social care and voluntary organisations support early help.



Additional Needs

Voices to listen to

Ask children and young people:

- Are there things outside school that make learning or attending harder?
- Do adults understand what helps you feel ready to learn?
- Do you feel included in school life?

Ask families:

- Do you feel school understands your family's circumstances?
- Are conversations respectful and supportive?
- Do you know where to go for help?
- Are there barriers that make attendance, learning or participation harder?
- Does the school help you access support early?

Ask staff:

- Do we understand the wider factors that may affect children's learning and wellbeing?
- Are we confident knowing what to do when needs emerge?
- Do we know how to access Early Help or wider support?
- Are there community needs we need to understand better?

Useful leadership activities

- Use local context and school data to identify barriers affecting attendance, wellbeing, learning and participation.
- Review how staff identify and respond to emerging additional needs.
- Discuss a case where needs were not SEND but still affected access to education.
- Review support for EAL learners, including vocabulary and language development.
- Map community partners, Family Hubs, Early Help routes and local support.
- Review the use of Pupil Premium and other funding against barriers experienced by children and families.

Possible next steps

Leaders may want to identify:

- one additional need or contextual barrier that is well understood;
- one area where staff need greater confidence or training;
- one way to strengthen early identification and support;
- one way to use community partnerships or funding more strategically.