

Leading Inclusion in Schools

Leadership reflection prompts

- How clearly is inclusion reflected in our school vision, values and priorities?
- How do senior leaders model inclusive behaviours in everyday interactions and decisions?
- Does the SENCo have the authority, time and influence needed to shape whole-school practice?
- How do leaders ensure inclusion is everyone's responsibility?
- How are SEND and inclusion discussed in leadership meetings, staff meetings and improvement planning?
- How do policies reflect inclusive values and practice?
- How do leaders work with families and professionals to identify and remove barriers?
- How does the SEND link governor or trustee understand and support inclusive practice?
- How do we contribute to wider local partnership working and learn from others?

What you might notice in practice

- Inclusion is visible in strategic plans, policies and everyday leadership decisions.
- The SENCo is part of strategic decision-making.
- Staff understand their role in supporting inclusion.
- Leaders talk about children's strengths, needs and barriers using respectful, solution-focused language.
- SEND is considered in curriculum, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, pastoral and staff development decisions.
- Governors ask thoughtful questions about experience, access, progress and belonging.
- Families and professionals are involved in identifying barriers and planning support.
- Staff feel supported, valued and equipped to meet diverse needs.



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Voices to listen to

Ask children and young people:

- Do adults understand what helps you feel included?
- Are there times when you feel left out or unable to join in?
- Do you know who you can speak to if something is difficult?

Ask families:

- Does the school feel welcoming and inclusive?
- Do you feel leaders listen and respond when there are barriers to your child participating?
- Is information about SEND and support easy to find and understand?
- Do you feel confident that inclusion is a whole-school priority?

Ask staff:

- Do leaders model inclusive practice?
- Do we understand our role in supporting children with SEND?
- Do we feel confident and supported to adapt practice?
- Are SEND and inclusion visible in whole-school decisions?

Useful leadership activities

- Use the prompt sheet in an SLT meeting to reflect on how inclusion is led across the school.
- Review the school improvement plan and identify where SEND and inclusion are explicitly reflected.
- Discuss with the SENCo whether they have sufficient leadership time, authority and influence.
- Use a governor meeting to explore how leaders know inclusion is making a difference.
- Review key policies through an inclusion lens.
- Use staff feedback to understand whether staff feel equipped and supported.

Possible next steps

Leaders may want to identify:

- one way inclusion is already strongly embedded in leadership practice;
- one area where inclusion needs to be more visible in whole-school systems;
- one leadership action that would strengthen staff confidence;
- one way governors can better understand and support inclusive practice.