



# Inclusion Strategy

2026-2027

Inclusive. Adaptive. Aspirational.

## Our inclusion commitment

Every child is valued, included and supported to thrive. We are committed to a strong universal offer, early and effective support, ambitious teaching and a culture in which every pupil belongs and participates.



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## Inclusion Strategy - Cherry Tree Academy

This statement details our school's approach to delivering inclusive practice for all children, including those with SEND, funded through our core school budget (including the notional SEN budget) and the Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF).

| Detail                    | Date / information       |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Academic year covered     | 2026-2027                |
| Proposed publication date | December 2026            |
| Review date               | July 2027                |
| Statement authorised by   | Adam Dawson, Headteacher |

### Statement of intent

At Cherry Tree Academy, inclusion is not an additional programme or a separate pathway. It is the way we lead, teach, organise our environment and work with families so that every pupil can access ambitious learning, feel safe and valued, participate fully and develop independence.

Our strategy builds on the Cherry Tree Way of teaching and learning, our established adaptive teaching approach, our graduated response to need and our commitment to wellbeing, belonging and high expectations. We will strengthen the universal offer so that commonly occurring and predictable barriers are anticipated and removed through high-quality teaching, explicit instruction, responsive scaffolding, effective feedback, calm and predictable classrooms, accessible resources and positive relationships.

Where the universal offer alone is not sufficient, pupils will receive early, carefully matched and evidence-informed targeted support. This support will supplement rather than replace teacher-led classroom provision, will be linked closely to curriculum learning and will be reviewed for impact through the assess-plan-do-review cycle.

Our priorities are informed by school assessment, attendance and behaviour information, classroom observation, pupil and parent voice, SEND review processes and professional advice. We will focus on a small number of high-impact activities and implement them well, with clear expectations, sustained professional development, leadership oversight and regular evaluation.

The seven principles of inclusion are woven through this strategy: ambitious leadership and governance; early evidence-based support; high-quality adaptive teaching; accessible enrichment; a safe and respectful culture; strong partnerships; and inclusive environments. The strategy will be reviewed with pupils, families, staff, the Academy Standards Committee and trust leaders so that it remains responsive to the needs of our community.

### How this connects to existing school practice

This strategy brings together and strengthens work already established through the Cherry Tree Way, the SEND Policy and Information Report, the Pupil Premium Strategy, adaptive teaching guidance, quality-first provision and the school's wider inclusion overview.

## School context and inclusion profile

Cherry Tree Academy serves a community with significant and overlapping levels of need. The information below provides the context for the priorities selected within this strategy. Percentages and small-cohort outcomes are interpreted carefully and alongside pupil-level evidence, because pupil mobility and the complexity of individual needs can significantly affect headline measures.

| Context measure                                       | Cherry Tree Academy position                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pupils on roll                                        | 229                                                                                                                |
| Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium                     | 115 pupils (50%)                                                                                                   |
| Pupils identified with SEND                           | 58 pupils (25%)                                                                                                    |
| Pupils supported through a My Plan                    | 45 pupils (20%)                                                                                                    |
| Pupils with an EHCP                                   | 13 pupils (6%)                                                                                                     |
| SEND pupils also eligible for Pupil Premium           | 34 pupils (59% of the SEND cohort)                                                                                 |
| Pupil mobility during 2025-2026                       | 24 pupils joined the school and 13 pupils left                                                                     |
| Pupils with healthcare plans                          | 10 pupils                                                                                                          |
| Pupils receiving prescribed ADHD medication in school | 4 pupils                                                                                                           |
| EAL cohort at Summer 2026                             | 24 pupils                                                                                                          |
| Current inclusion staffing                            | Headteacher; Deputy Headteacher; SENDCO/Inclusion and Behaviour Lead; Learning Mentor; and six Teaching Assistants |

## Key starting-point measures

| Measure                            | 2025-2026 baseline |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Whole-school attendance            | 96.2%              |
| Whole-school persistent absence    | 5.7%               |
| SEND K attendance                  | 96.3%              |
| SEND K persistent absence          | 9.8%               |
| EHCP attendance                    | 88.5%              |
| EHCP persistent absence            | 25.0%              |
| Recorded behaviour incidents       | 137                |
| Suspensions                        | 8                  |
| Restrictive physical interventions | 17                 |

| Measure                                      | 2025-2026 baseline |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Pupils participating in enrichment           | 86.8%              |
| Pupils with SEND participating in enrichment | 78.6%              |
| Parents reporting the right support to learn | 95.8%              |

## Key contextual evidence

- Communication and interaction is the largest area of SEND need. Communication and interaction, including speech, language and communication needs, accounts for 31% of the SEND cohort, with a further 24% having autism as their primary need.
- Safeguarding need is complex. During 2025-2026, 13 children were supported through a Child in Need plan at some point during the year, nine through a Child Protection plan and eight through Early Help. Forty-six social care assessments took place. The profile shifted towards a greater level of statutory safeguarding activity during the year.
- Mobility is a significant contextual factor. Twenty-four pupils joined and thirteen left during the academic year. New pupils often arrive with limited assessment information, interrupted learning, unmet needs or below age-related starting points, requiring rapid induction, assessment and responsive provision.
- EAL pupils generally make positive progress: by Summer 2026, 71% were working at or above age-related expectations in reading and 75% in writing and mathematics. Mobility within the EAL cohort remains an important consideration.
- Parent voice is strongly positive. In the Summer 2026 survey, 100% of respondents said their child was happy and felt safe, 95.8% said their child received the right support to learn and 95.8% would recommend the school. Communication and consistent follow-up remain areas to keep strengthening.
- The school achieved the IQM Inclusive School Award in May 2026. The external review recognised inclusion as the golden thread running through school life and highlighted strong relationships, adaptive practice, calm environments, partnership with families and ambitious opportunities for pupils.

## External validation

The May 2026 IQM assessment recommended that Cherry Tree Academy receive Inclusive School status. The report recognised a deeply embedded inclusive culture, strong leadership, calm and enabling classrooms, responsive adaptations and a community in which pupils and families feel known, safe and supported.

## Inclusion leadership and staff capacity

| Area                                    | Capacity and expertise                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strategic leadership                    | The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher provide whole-school strategic oversight. The SENDCO also leads inclusion and behaviour, coordinating the graduated response, provision monitoring and professional guidance. The DSL provides further strategic support. |
| Pastoral and targeted support           | A Learning Mentor provides pastoral, behavioural and family-facing support. The Learning Mentor is trained in Lego Therapy.                                                                                                                                      |
| Teaching assistant capacity             | The school employs a team of Teaching Assistants. One Teaching Assistant is ELSA trained and supports targeted emotional literacy provision.                                                                                                                     |
| Positive handling and de-escalation     | All teachers and the Learning Mentor are Team Teach trained. The SENDCO is a Team Teach trainer for Waterton Academy Trust.                                                                                                                                      |
| Specialist and multi-agency partnership | The school works with WISENDSS, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, CAMHS, School Nursing, Social Care and other relevant services according to pupil need.                                                                                     |

## Barriers to learning and participation

The following barriers are commonly occurring across the cohort. They are not limited to pupils with a diagnosis or those already identified as having SEND. They draw together themes from assessment, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and pastoral information, pupil mobility, medical needs, pupil and family engagement, classroom practice and the school's existing improvement work.

| No. | Barrier                              | Detail and school context                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Communication, language and literacy | Some pupils enter school with underdeveloped speech, language and communication. Receptive language, vocabulary, decoding, fluency and comprehension difficulties can restrict access across the curriculum and reduce confidence in discussion, reading and writing. |

| No. | Barrier                                                             | Detail and school context                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2   | <b>Regulation, wellbeing, belonging and attendance</b>              | Barriers 1, 2, 3 and 6. Refine assessment and pupil-progress systems so that academic, communication, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing and relevant medical indicators are considered together. Staff will use diagnostic assessment, WellComm and other appropriate tools, one-page profiles and the assess-plan-do-review cycle to identify needs early and adapt teaching before needs escalate. A consistent induction and baseline-assessment process will be used for pupils joining in-year, including rapid transfer of safeguarding, SEND, attendance and curriculum information.       |
| 3   | <b>Gaps in prior learning and working-memory demands</b>            | Barriers 1, 3 and 4. Review the intervention offer against specific barriers and evidence. Initial priorities will include precision phonics, reading fluency and comprehension, oral language, and sentence construction and independent writing, based on current assessment evidence. Provide training and structured resources for staff delivering interventions. Ensure targeted sessions are brief, regular, carefully timetabled, linked to classroom learning and evaluated. TAs will support pupil thinking and independence and will supplement, not substitute, teacher instruction. |
| 4   | <b>Inconsistent independence and over-reliance on adult support</b> | Some pupils need scaffolds, technology, targeted practice or adult support, but support is not always equally effective. There is a risk that excessive prompting, task completion by adults or long-term scaffolding can reduce thinking and independence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5   | <b>Participation in the wider life of school</b>                    | Financial, social, communication, sensory or emotional barriers can limit access to clubs, trips, residential, performances, leadership roles and other enrichment, reducing belonging, cultural capital and aspiration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 6   | <b>Family partnership and transition</b>                            | Some families need clearer, more accessible information, earlier involvement and practical support to engage with learning, SEND processes, attendance and transitions. High pupil mobility means that pupils joining in-year may require rapid induction, baseline assessment and swift transfer of safeguarding, SEND, attendance and curriculum information. Pupils with additional needs may require enhanced transition within school and between settings.                                                                                                                                 |

## Activity in this academic year

The activities below have been selected to strengthen the universal offer first, while maintaining early targeted support where pupils need more than ordinarily available provision. Costs must be finalised once the school's IMF allocation and associated core-budget commitments are confirmed.

| Description of activity                                                        | Activity type                            | Evidence, focus and barriers addressed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Budgeted cost |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>1. Embed adaptive teaching through the Cherry Tree Way</b>                  | <b>Universal</b>                         | Barriers 1, 3 and 4. A sustained CPD and coaching cycle will strengthen explicit instruction, small-step sequencing, modelling, examples and non-examples, vocabulary teaching, checks for understanding, responsive scaffolding, feedback and planned removal of support. Subject and phase leaders will use shared expectations, planning reviews, learning walks and pupil work to support consistency. | £             |
| <b>2. Strengthen early identification and responsive classroom provision</b>   | <b>Universal with targeted follow-up</b> | Barriers 1, 2 and 3. Refine assessment and pupil-progress systems so that academic, communication, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing indicators are considered together. Staff will use diagnostic assessment, WellComm and other appropriate tools, one-page profiles and the assess-plan-do-review cycle to identify needs early and adapt teaching before needs escalate.                             | £             |
| <b>3. Improve the quality and impact of targeted support and TA deployment</b> | <b>Targeted</b>                          | Barriers 1, 3 and 4. Review the intervention offer against specific barriers and evidence. Provide training and structured resources for staff delivering interventions. Ensure targeted sessions are brief, regular, carefully timetabled, linked to classroom learning and evaluated. TAs will support pupil thinking and independence and will supplement, not substitute, teacher instruction.         | £             |

| Description of activity                                 | Activity type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Evidence, focus and barriers addressed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Budgeted cost |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 4. Develop regulation, belonging and attendance support | <p>SEND K attendance is sustained at or above 95%, and persistent absence remains below 13%. EHCP attendance improves from the 2025-2026 baseline of 91.1%, with pupil-level analysis used because of the small and complex cohort. Overall behaviour incidents, suspensions and restrictive physical interventions remain below the 2025-2026 baselines of 137 incidents, 8 suspensions and 17 interventions. Pupil voice shows sustained safety, belonging and confidence. More pupils remain successfully engaged in classroom learning and return to learning promptly after regulation support.</p> | <p>Barriers 2 and 6. Sustain calm, predictable environments, classroom regulation stations, meet-and-greet routines, learning mentor and ELSA support, structured social and emotional interventions, attendance monitoring and personalised family support. Quiet and breakout spaces will be reviewed to ensure they support regulation and timely return to learning.</p> | £             |

| Description of activity                                            | Activity type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Evidence, focus and barriers addressed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Budgeted cost |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 5. Remove barriers to participation, enrichment and transition     | Universal with targeted reasonable adjustments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Barriers 5 and 6. Audit participation in trips, clubs, sport, music, leadership and residential opportunities. Provide reasonable adjustments, equipment, staffing and financial support where needed. Strengthen transition planning between year groups and settings, including additional visits, visual information, pupil profiles and family meetings.                | £             |
| 6. Strengthen partnership with pupils, families and wider services | Whole-school enrichment participation is sustained at or above 86.8%, and participation for pupils with SEND improves from the 2025-2026 baseline of 78.6%. Transition feedback is positive. At least 95.8% of parents continue to report that their child receives the right support to learn, while communication and follow-up improve through the annual feedback cycle. Pupil and family feedback informs review and refinement of the strategy. | Barriers 2 and 6. Establish a regular inclusion feedback cycle through pupil voice, parent/carers consultation and accessible information sessions. Continue open-door communication, termly My Plan reviews and coordinated work with WISENDSS, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language, CAMHS and other services. Feedback will inform annual review of the strategy. | £             |
| Total budgeted cost: £                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |

## Evidence informing the activities

- DfE Inclusive Mainstream Fund guidance: the seven principles of inclusion, a strong universal offer, early targeted support and a focus on a small number of well-implemented priorities.
- EEF inclusive teaching: explicit instruction, effective feedback, temporary task-specific scaffolding, positive relationships and calm classroom environments as universal approaches especially important for pupils with additional needs.
- EEF inclusive teaching: adaptations should enhance high-quality teaching, be proportionate and time-limited where appropriate, promote independence and be planned as part of whole-class teaching.
- EEF inclusive teaching: teaching assistants have the greatest impact when trained to deliver structured support, when they support thinking rather than task completion and when intervention is connected to classroom learning.
- Cherry Tree Academy evidence and existing practice: adaptive teaching, the Cherry Tree Way, regulation stations, visual supports, Communicate in Print, pre-teaching, flexible scaffolding, planned transition and the graduated approach.

## Intended outcomes

| Intended outcome                                                 | Success criteria and measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A consistently strong universal offer</b>                     | Learning walks, planning and work scrutiny show consistent use of explicit instruction, modelling, vocabulary teaching, checks for understanding, responsive scaffolding and feedback. Staff confidence surveys and coaching records show improved knowledge and application. Pupils with additional needs participate in whole-class learning with high expectations maintained. |
| <b>Earlier identification and more responsive support</b>        | Concerns are identified and acted upon promptly using a wider range of evidence. Assess-plan-do-review records are timely and purposeful. Pupils receive appropriate support without unnecessary delay or reliance on diagnosis. Provision maps and My Plans show clear needs, outcomes, strategies and review evidence.                                                          |
| <b>Improved communication, literacy and curriculum access</b>    | Assessment, classroom observation and pupil work show improved oral language, vocabulary, reading fluency, comprehension and ability to explain learning. More pupils access age-appropriate curriculum content and demonstrate retention and application of key knowledge.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Improved regulation, belonging, attendance and engagement</b> | Attendance and persistent absence improve for pupils with additional needs. Behaviour and dysregulation incidents reduce. Pupil voice shows increased safety, belonging and confidence. More pupils remain successfully engaged in classroom learning and return to learning promptly after regulation support.                                                                   |

| Intended outcome                                              | Success criteria and measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Greater pupil independence and effective adult support</b> | Observations show adults prompting thinking rather than completing tasks. Scaffolds are selected responsively and removed when no longer needed. Pupils increasingly use strategies, resources and technology independently. Targeted interventions demonstrate measurable impact and are stopped, adapted or intensified in response to evidence. |
| <b>Fuller participation and stronger partnership</b>          | Participation gaps in clubs, trips, music, sport, leadership and enrichment narrow. Transition feedback is positive. Parents report clearer communication and greater involvement in decisions. Pupil and family feedback informs annual review and refinement of the strategy.                                                                    |

## Delivery, monitoring and evaluation

- SLT and SENDCO oversight, with termly reporting to the Academy Standards Committee and trust leaders.
- Termly review through pupil progress meetings, provision mapping, attendance and behaviour analysis, intervention impact and SEND review information.
- Monitoring will include a specific focus on the quality of education, participation and progress of pupils with high needs, rather than relying solely on compliance, provision records or intervention attendance.
- Implementation checks through staff CPD records, coaching, learning walks, planning scrutiny, work scrutiny and pupil discussions.
- Pupil and parent/carer feedback, including the experiences of pupils with SEND and those receiving early support without formal identification.
- Annual evaluation against outcomes for attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, belonging, participation and independence.
- Activities that are not implemented with fidelity or do not show sufficient impact will be adapted, replaced or discontinued.

## Review of the previous academic year

### First-year strategy

This is Cherry Tree Academy's first Inclusion Strategy under the Inclusive Mainstream Fund requirements. A full review of progress against the intended outcomes will be added in the 2027-2028 strategy.

The starting position for this strategy is informed by existing school evaluation. The 2024-2027 Pupil Premium Strategy identifies persistent absence, social and emotional needs, low aspiration, receptive language and fluency, attainment gaps and parental engagement as significant barriers. During 2024-2025, the school reported improved attendance and reduced persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils, a marked reduction in behaviour incidents, a calmer culture, expanded

enrichment and leadership opportunities, and the embedding of adaptive teaching. These strengths provide a foundation for the next phase of inclusion work.

The review also indicates areas requiring continued attention: communication and literacy remain significant barriers for some pupils; attendance and wellbeing support must be sustained; targeted support needs to be consistently linked to classroom teaching; and the impact of adaptations, interventions and adult deployment should be evaluated more systematically. Leaders need to continue to monitor the quality of education for pupils with SEND, particularly those with high needs, closely and to assess the impact of provision. These themes have directly shaped the activities, monitoring arrangements and success measures in this strategy.

## Implementation milestones

| Term        | Key actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Autumn 2026 | Confirm IMF allocation and final costs; complete baseline audit of universal provision, interventions, participation, mobility, healthcare needs and family feedback; agree core components of adaptive teaching and TA deployment; launch staff CPD and coaching. |
| Spring 2027 | Review implementation fidelity and early pupil indicators; refine intervention timetables and assessment; complete pupil and parent voice; address barriers in environment, transition and enrichment participation.                                               |
| Summer 2027 | Evaluate outcomes and spending; compare against baseline; identify practices to sustain, adapt or stop; report to governors and trust; publish review within the 2027-2028 strategy.                                                                               |

## Further information

This strategy should be read alongside:

- Cherry Tree Academy SEND Information Report (August 2026)
- Waterton Academy Trust SEND Policy 2026-2027
- Cherry Tree Academy Pupil Premium Strategy 2024-2027
- The Cherry Tree Way of Teaching and Learning
- Adaptive Teaching - The Cherry Tree Way
- Inclusion at Cherry Tree Academy overview
- Cherry Tree Academy Behaviour, Attendance, Accessibility and Teaching and Learning policies.

## External evidence and guidance

- Department for Education (2026), Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools.
- Department for Education (2026), Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2026), Guide to Inclusive Teaching.