Inclusion Strategy – Thistle Hill Academy

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

Strategy overview

Detail	Date
Academic year/years that our current Inclusion Strategy covers	2026-2027
Date this statement was published	Sept 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	Feb '27
Statement authorised by	Rebecca Handebeaux

Statement of intent

At Thistle Hill Academy, our STARS values guide a fully inclusive community where every child is welcomed, valued, supported and able to shine.

We remove barriers through high-quality teaching, adaptive practice and timely support so pupils can thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Our universal offer strengthens early identification, transition, assessment and staff expertise so teaching is ambitious, accessible and responsive.

Our SEMH Base and Cognition and Learning Base provide personalised support while maintaining strong links with mainstream classrooms and school life.

Therapeutic approaches, nurture, sensory regulation, Forest School and enrichment help pupils feel safe, build confidence and engage successfully.

We work closely with families, external agencies, trust colleagues and pupils so support is collaborative, person-centred and responsive.

Through Reading Squad, Forest School, clubs, visits, leadership roles and enrichment, every child can access wider experiences that build belonging and aspiration.

We review impact through provision mapping, monitoring, assessment and pupil and parent voice to ensure every child belongs, progresses and shines.

Barriers to learning and participation

This details the key barriers to learning and participation that we have identified amongst our pupils, necessitating inclusive universal approaches and targeted support.

	Detail of barrier to learning *(including notable trends or themes over time, such as a growing prevalence or increasing complexity)*
1	Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs can affect pupils' emotional regulation, resilience, confidence, attendance, behaviour and readiness to engage successfully in learning.
2	Cognition and Learning difficulties can create barriers to acquiring, retaining and applying new knowledge and skills, impacting progress in literacy, numeracy and the wider curriculum.
3	Learning behaviours and self-regulation difficulties can affect attention, organisation, independence, executive functioning and sustained engagement in learning activities.
4	Limited vocabulary and early language development can reduce pupils' ability to access age-related learning, reading comprehension, vocabulary-rich curriculum content and written expression.
5	Increasing complexity of SEND needs, particularly within the areas of SEMH and Cognition & Learning, can require highly personalised approaches to ensure successful inclusion and achievement.

Activity in this academic year

What activities will we prioritise this academic year to alleviate the above barriers to learning and participation faced by pupils with additional needs and SEND.

Description of activity	Activity type	Total budgeted cost
Implement a comprehensive early identification and staff development programme through collaboration with the Trust Reception Lead and Trust CPDL Lead. This includes robust transition processes, ongoing monitoring of pupils' needs, and a structured programme of professional development focused on inclusive practice, adaptive teaching and SEND awareness.	Targeted	£12150 (IMF)
Undertake the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) accreditation process to strengthen engagement with parents and carers, ensuring they are active partners in their children's education. This will involve reviewing current practice, gathering stakeholder voice, developing communication systems, increasing parental engagement opportunities, and embedding a culture of collaboration between home and school. Particular focus will be placed on engaging vulnerable families and ensuring all parents feel welcomed, valued and supported as part of the school community.	Targeted	£2700 (IMF)
Develop and embed a progressive Forest School programme that provides regular outdoor learning opportunities for pupils across the school. This will include	Targeted	£5000(IMF)

developing the school grounds and outdoor learning environment, training staff in Forest School principles, integrating outdoor learning into the curriculum, and creating opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, resilience, independence and teamwork through hands-on experiences in nature. Particular focus will be placed on supporting pupils' wellbeing, engagement, communication skills and inclusion through access to high-quality outdoor learning.		
Accessibility Tools and Assistive Technology	Universal	Core Budget
Inclusive Resources and Learning Environments	Universal	Core Budget
AAC Devices and Communication Support	Targeted	Core Budget
Supportive Therapies	Targeted	Core Budget
Teacher Led Interventions	Targeted	Core Budget
Develop the Inclusion Bases Further develop the SEMH Base and Cognition & Learning Base as specialist provisions that support pupils to access learning, develop independence and successfully participate in mainstream school life.	Targeted	Core Budget
Inclusive Enrichment and Educational Visits Ensure all pupils have equitable access to clubs, educational visits, leadership opportunities and enrichment activities	Universal	Core Budget

through appropriate adaptations and planning.		

Intended outcomes

This explains the clear, realistic outcomes we want our inclusive approaches to achieve **by the end of our inclusion strategy**, and how we will measure whether they have been achieved.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Children's needs are identified early, staff deliver confident adaptive teaching, and all pupils access an ambitious curriculum, make strong progress and succeed in an inclusive environment.	• Robust transition and baseline assessment processes are consistently implemented across Early Years. • Pupils requiring additional support are identified promptly and appropriate actions are put in place without delay. • Staff participate in high-quality CPDL focused on inclusion, SEND and adaptive teaching. • Learning walks, pupil voice and book scrutiny demonstrate consistent inclusive practice across classrooms. • Teachers confidently adapt teaching to meet the needs of all learners, including SEND and disadvantaged pupils. • Pupils with additional needs demonstrate positive engagement, improved attendance (where appropriate), strong progress from their starting points and increased participation in all aspects of school life.
School and families work in strong partnership so parents feel valued, communication improves, and pupils are better supported to attend, engage, achieve and feel included.	• The school successfully achieves LPPA accreditation. • Parent and carer engagement in school events, workshops and consultations increases over the academic year. • Communication systems are reviewed and strengthened, resulting in parents reporting that they feel well-informed and involved in school life. • Parent voice surveys demonstrate increased satisfaction with the school's

	communication, support and responsiveness. • Vulnerable and hard-to-reach families engage more regularly with school staff and support services. • Attendance at parents' evenings, review meetings and school events shows a measurable increase. • Evidence demonstrates that parents are actively involved in supporting learning at home. • Staff demonstrate a consistent approach to working collaboratively with parents and carers. • School leaders can evidence the impact of parental engagement on pupil wellbeing, attendance and outcomes. • The principles of effective parent partnership are embedded within the school's inclusion strategy and wider school improvement priorities.
Ensuring all classrooms provide high-quality, inclusive teaching through personalised approaches, flexible learning environments, visual supports and child-centred learning.	• Adaptive teaching strategies are evident in all classrooms. • Curriculum learning is accessible to all pupils through appropriate scaffolding and challenge. • Teachers demonstrate confident use of inclusive teaching approaches. • Learning walks and book scrutiny show effective adaptation for SEND and disadvantaged pupils. • Pupils are able to explain how classroom adaptations support their learning. • Gaps in attainment and participation continue to narrow.
Ensure classrooms provide visual, sensory and communication supports alongside flexible learning environments.	• Inclusive resources available and used consistently. • Pupils independently access support resources. • Improved self-regulation and learning behaviours. • Increased readiness to learn.
Develop access to supportive therapeutic approaches that promote emotional	• Pupils access therapeutic interventions matched to need.

wellbeing, communication, regulation and engagement. Examples may include Drawing and Talking, Lego Therapy and sensory-based approaches.	• Improvements seen in wellbeing and emotional regulation. • Pupil voice reflects increased confidence and resilience. • Reduced barriers to engagement and participation.
Pupils with complex SEMH and Cognition & Learning needs receive high-quality support whilst maintaining a strong sense of belonging and access to the wider curriculum and school community. Every pupil participates fully in the wider curriculum and develops a sense of belonging, achievement and aspiration.	• Individual targets are met or exceeded. • Increased successful participation in mainstream lessons. • Improved attendance and engagement. • Positive parent and pupil feedback. • Evidence of successful integration and transition opportunities. • Increased SEND participation in enrichment activities. • No pupil excluded due to identified barriers. • Positive pupil voice. • Adaptations routinely evident in planning.

Review of the previous academic year

From year two, you should outline the progress you made towards your intended outcomes during the previous academic year and explain how this was assessed. In doing this, you should note the impact that your strategy had on pupils' engagement, participation, attendance, sense of belonging, and attainment. This should include a reflection on the positive outcomes achieved for children and young people with additional needs and SEND.

You should critically review what aspects of your strategy worked well / did not have the intended impact and explain how this has informed your drafting of this year's strategy.

To support this, you should use:

- *Data from the previous academic year's national assessments and qualifications, once published (a note of caution can be added to signal that pupils included in the performance data will have experienced some disruption due to Covid-19 earlier in their schooling, which will have affected individual pupils and schools differently).*

- *Information from summative and formative assessments the school has undertaken.*
- *School data and observations used to assess wider issues impacting inclusion, including access to learning, attendance, engagement, and early identification.*

Further information (optional)

Use this space to provide any additional information you think necessary to help others understand your strategy.