Inclusion Strategy – Bothal 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	2026-27
Date this statement was published	2nd November 2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	November 2026
Statement authorised by	Sophie Watkin

Statement of intent

Bothal Academy - WISE Academies Trust

Shaped by the diverse communities WISE Academies serve across the North East, our inclusion strategy directly addresses the regional inequalities that influence children's long-term outcomes, recognising that our pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) often face the greatest barriers to achievement. Our commitment is to overcome these challenges through a deliberate, evidence-based, and values-driven approach.

At the core of our strategy is the belief that consistent routines, clear expectations, and predictable structures form the bedrock of an inclusive school. By establishing these foundations, we provide the safety, clarity, and certainty all pupils need to feel secure, build confidence, and thrive in an environment where they truly belong. Building upon a foundation of existing strong practice, we continuously refine our methods to ensure every child regardless of background, starting point, or complexity of need benefits from high-quality teaching, tailored curriculum pathways, and timely early intervention.

School Context

Bothal Academy serves a community with above-national levels of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with 19.9% of pupils receiving SEN support or having

an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, compared with the national average of 18.2%.

Key areas of need across the academy include:

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN): Accounting for 51.9% of the identified SEND cohort.
- Complex and multi-agency needs: An increasing number of pupils require coordinated support involving health, social care and specialist educational services to meet their individual needs effectively.

Our inclusion strategy directly responds to these localised contextual factors.

Strategic Implementation & Leadership Framework

To deliver sustainable impact, our strategy relies on cohesive leadership thinking that is rigorously prioritised, clear, and systematically monitored at every level. Inclusion does not operate in isolation; it works in direct tandem with the Pupil Premium Strategy, the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and our ongoing Self-Evaluation, strengthening & refining the universal offer.

We believe that quality first teaching is the first line of inclusion. We continue to refine and elevate our school-wide universal offer by:

- **Adaptive Teaching (or differentiation as appropriate):** Refining responsive, scaffolded instruction to maintain ambition while ensuring full curriculum access.
- **Relational Practice:** Grounding behavior management in strong relationships, dignity, and respectful routines.
- **Language-Rich Environments:** Explicitly targeting speech and communication development in every classroom.
- **Early Identification:** Utilising reliable screening and assessment data to spot emerging needs before difficulties escalate.
- **Inclusive Pathways & Attendance:** Designing accessible curriculum routes and an attendance strategy rooted entirely in inclusion and belonging.

Targeted & Specialist Provision

Where universal practice requires supplement, we provide targeted, evidence-based support, including:

- Structured, small-group interventions with clear entry/exit criteria.
- Integrated specialist teaching input and targeted multi-agency plans.

- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets monitored continuously for measurable impact.

Co-Design: Authentic Community Partnership

Our strategy is informed and shaped by authentic dialogue with those who know our children best. Parent voice, pupil perspectives, staff feedback, and specialist guidance are actively gathered to ensure our provision remains meaningful, accessible, and responsive.

By working collaboratively with families, health services, social care, and specialist SEND providers, we build a supportive bridge between home and school.

The 7 Core Principles of Inclusion

Our strategy is anchored in seven core principles that guide operational decision-making and classroom practice:

1. **Belonging:** Central to WISE Academies' vision. Consistent routines, clear expectations, strong relationships, dignity, and respect underpin all practice.
2. **High Expectations:** We prioritise high-quality, ambitious adaptive teaching or differentiation as appropriate in every classroom, ensuring responsive scaffolding enables every child to access a broad and balanced curriculum.
3. **Early Identification:** We use robust evidence to spot needs early and intervene proactively before escalation where possible.
4. **Participation & Pupil Voice:** Children's lived experiences, perspectives, and needs directly shape curriculum pathways and support systems.
5. **Equity & Access:** Physical, sensory, social, and digital environments are intentionally designed so all pupils feel safe, respected, and fully included.
6. **Partnership Working:** We collaborate actively with families, health professionals, social care, and specialist providers to deliver joined-up support.
7. **Continuous Improvement:** Inclusion is strategic, routinely evaluated, evidence-informed, and transparently accountable at all leadership levels.

Impact & Commitment

Through this cohesive strategy, Bothal Academy delivers an ambitious, sustainable framework that strengthens participation, deepens a sense of belonging, and raises educational outcomes for every learner. Our commitment is simple: every child deserves to flourish, and we will systematically identify and remove barriers, predictable or emerging to make that possible

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	**Increasing numbers of pupils presenting with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).** Increasing numbers of pupils are presenting with SLCN, with needs becoming more complex and varied. These include limited vocabulary, difficulties understanding and using language, and co-occurring challenges with social interaction, attention and concentration, which can significantly impact learning, engagement and participation in school life.
2	**Increasing numbers of children are entering EYFS with significant SEND needs** and developmental delays, often without formal assessment or involvement from support services. Over the past three years, there has been a 31% increase in the number of nursery-aged children identified with SEND . This pattern reflects national trends in areas of moderate/high deprivation and is intensified locally by limited specialist places and the Local Authority cap on top up funding, resulting in more complex learners entering or maintaining in mainstream provision.
3	**Limited access to enrichment and wider opportunities, particularly for children with SEND.** Stakeholder feedback indicates that an increasing number of families cannot afford enrichment activities, while many local opportunities are not suitable or accessible for children with SEND. Pupil voice and observations of behaviour outside school suggest that many children have limited access to enrichment experiences beyond the home. This restricts opportunities to develop confidence, independence and cultural capital. Limited access to these experiences presents a significant barrier to social mobility, particularly for pupils with SEND, who already face additional challenges in accessing community resources
4	**Increasing numbers of families are seeking additional support from Bothal leaders to navigate the often complex SEND systems.** This includes understanding their child's rights, accessing assessments and specialist provision, completing referrals and applications, and liaising with external agencies and professionals. Families also require support to manage challenges within the home, access financial assistance for school-related activities and uniform, and connect with relevant community resources.
5	**The school's physical environment requires further adaptations to meet pupils' increasing sensory and emotional regulation needs.** This is particularly

	evident among pupils in EYFS and KS1 with neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism and ADHD.
6	**The growing complexity and diversity of pupils' SEND needs outpaces existing staff training.** This creates a clear operational barrier that requires enhanced access to high-quality, ongoing professional development.

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.

In this context, 'activity' is a reporting term to help understand where funding has been allocated to build an inclusive core offer and does not indicate only targeted provision. Activity may address multiple barriers identified, particularly for improvements to your universal offer.

Description of activity *(noting evidence and barrier numbers addressed)*	**Activity type** *Universal (U) Targeted (T)*	**Total budgeted cost** *(this should account for spend from IMF and core budget allocations)*
Implement Trust-wide accredited SLCN training Upskill identified staff through Elklan Level 3 SLCN training to identify pupils' language barriers and implement effective communication strategies that support listening, sustained attention and participation across the curriculum. Strengthen existing communication-friendly practice across Bothal Academy by working towards Elklan Communication Friendly School status, embedding consistent strategies to support pupils' speech,	U U	**£13,279**

language and communication needs across the curriculum and daily routines, while strengthening partnerships with parents to support communication development at home and school. Train a member of staff to Higher Level Communication Practitioner status to expand SaLT expertise within school, strengthen early identification of speech, language and communication needs, deliver targeted interventions and work collaboratively with external services to support pupils' language development and functional communication. **Evidence:** **EEF Oral language Interventions** **Elkan - Communication Friendly Setting (EEF Research))** **EEF - Communication and Language Approaches** **Barrier Numbers:** 1, 2, 6	T	
Implement a Trust-wide 'Experts at Hand' model through strengthening partnerships with the specialist sector Co-design bespoke, accredited training with specialist partners to upskill teachers and support staff in neurodiversity, including autism and ADHD, strengthening understanding of individual needs and embedding effective, evidence-informed strategies to improve inclusion, engagement and outcomes for learners across the Trust. Develop a responsive, rapid-deployment approach that strengthens specialist advice and co-produces individual learner plans to support learners with the most complex needs, particularly where	U	**£5,187**

access to external specialist services is delayed. Work in partnership with the specialist sector to co-create a bespoke assessment model, drawing on Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Psychology to refine existing practice, train staff in assessing learners with increasingly complex needs, moderate professional judgements and ensure accurate, consistent measurement of progress **Evidence:** **Dfe - Best Practice for School (Securing securing specialist advice to support improvement)** **EEF - Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions.** **Barrier Numbers:** 1, 2, 6	T T	
Invest in additional SEND leadership to strengthen early identification and family support Strengthen SEND leadership capacity across the Trust to improve early identification of emerging needs, coordinate timely intervention and provide proactive support for families, empowering parents and carers to understand their child's needs, access appropriate services and work in partnership with schools to support learning and progress. **Evidence:** **Rise - Inclusion in Action (Professional Qualifications)** **The Stronger Practice Hub - Unlocking Potential: The Vital Role of Early Identification and Action for SEND**	U/T	**£75,153**

Barrier Numbers: 2, 3, 4		
Enhance learning environments and staff expertise to support sensory and neurodiverse needs Develop sensory-friendly learning environments, including a dedicated sensory room, alongside staff training in ADHD, sensory processing and neurodiversity to strengthen understanding, adapt classroom practice and support pupils' emotional regulation, attention, engagement and access to learning. **Evidence:** **Dfe - Improving inclusion and accessibility of your education estate** **Barrier Numbers:** 2, 5, 6	U/T	**£23,295**
Expand enrichment opportunities to improve access, inclusion and cultural capital Develop and deliver a targeted enrichment programme at Bothal Academy that removes financial and accessibility barriers for pupils with SEND and those experiencing disadvantage. Introduce inclusive extracurricular activities and wider experiences that build confidence, independence and social skills, broaden horizons and strengthen cultural capital. **Evidence:** **Dfe - SEND inclusion in enrichment activities** **Barrier Numbers:** 3	T	**£25,913** *Including Leadership time to plan and implement
Develop a targeted Teaching Assistant (TA) training programme to strengthen SEND provision		**£9,756**

Design and deliver a structured TA training programme at Bothal Academy to develop staff expertise in supporting pupils with SEND and increasingly complex needs. Focus on evidence-informed strategies, scaffolding learning, promoting independence and effective deployment of support to improve classroom participation, pupil progress and outcomes. **Evidence:** **EEF - Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools** **EEF - Guide to Inclusive Teaching** **EEF - Deployment of Teaching Assistants** **Barrier Numbers:** 1,2,6	U	**£214,648** *TA costs attributed to Notional Budget
Develop teacher expertise in adaptive teaching to improve access and outcomes for all learners *Deliver targeted professional development at Bothal Academy to strengthen teachers' use of adaptive teaching strategies, enabling them to identify and remove barriers to learning, respond effectively to pupils' diverse needs and adapt teaching, resources and assessment to support learners with SEND and increasingly complex needs. Embed evidence-informed practice across the curriculum to improve engagement, independence and pupil progress.* **Evidence:** **EEF - Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools** **EEF - Guide to Inclusive Teaching** **Barrier Numbers:** 1, 2, 6	U	**£124,952** *Including leadership time for planning and monitoring
	Notional Funding	**£465,383**

	Inclusion Grant	**£26,800**
	Total Spend	**£492,183**

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
Strengthen and enhance existing SLCN provision at Bothal Academy through accredited staff training, consistent communication-friendly practice and increased specialist expertise, improving early identification, targeted support and outcomes for pupils.	● Identified staff achieve Elklan Level 3 SLCN accreditation, with evidence of strategies embedded in classroom practice. ● Bothal Academy meets agreed milestones towards Elklan Communication Friendly School accreditation. ● One member of staff achieves Higher Level Communication Practitioner status. ● Learning walks and staff audits demonstrate consistent use of communication-friendly strategies across the Trust. ● Intervention records and pupil progress data demonstrate improved speech, language, communication and classroom participation. ● Evidence of parent engagement and collaborative working with SaLT and external services demonstrates a coordinated approach to supporting pupils' communication needs.
Strengthen existing specialist partnerships to build staff expertise, improve access to timely specialist advice and ensure effective assessment and targeted support for learners with complex needs.	● Bespoke, accredited neurodiversity training is co-developed and delivered in partnership with specialist providers. ● A clear referral model is established to facilitate access to specialist advice and co-produced individual learner plans. ● A collaborative assessment model is developed with specialist partners, trialled and quality assured.

	● Staff voice surveys demonstrate increased knowledge, confidence and ability to apply effective strategies to support learners with SEND. ● Support plans demonstrate measurable improvements in learners' engagement, progress and access to learning.
Strengthen SEND leadership capacity through additional trained staff, improving early identification, coordination of support and partnership with families to enhance outcomes for pupils with SEND.	● Two additional members of staff complete the NPQ in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination (NPQ for SENCOs). ● Both staff members actively support the SENDCo team to strengthen early identification, provision planning and coordination of interventions. ● Improved processes for identifying emerging needs and monitoring interventions are embedded across the school. ● Parent feedback demonstrates improved communication and access to support. ● Pupil progress data demonstrates the impact of strengthened SEND leadership and coordinated support.
Learning environments have been enhanced and staff expertise developed to better meet pupils' sensory and neurodiverse needs, improving emotional regulation, engagement and access to learning.	● A dedicated sensory room is established and available to pupils who require sensory support. ● Existing sensory circuits are further developed to meet pupils' individual sensory needs and support readiness to learn. ● Staff complete training in ADHD, sensory processing and neurodiversity. ● Learning walks demonstrate increased use of sensory-friendly strategies and adapted classroom environments. ● Pupil feedback and individual progress measures demonstrate improved emotional regulation, engagement and participation in learning.

Enrichment opportunities have been expanded at Bothal Academy, with barriers to participation reduced	● Parent voice is gathered to identify barriers to enrichment participation and inform programme development. ● A targeted enrichment programme is established, prioritising pupils with SEND and those experiencing disadvantage. ● Financial and accessibility barriers identified through parent feedback are addressed. ● Participation data demonstrates increased engagement in extracurricular activities and wider experiences. ● Pupil feedback demonstrates increased confidence, independence and social interaction. ● By the end of the academic year, pupils have participated in at least one new enrichment activity or wider experience, with participation monitored by SEND and disadvantage status.
By the end of the academic year, TAs demonstrate improved confidence and competence in supporting pupils with SEND through consistent use of evidence-informed strategies, effective scaffolding and approaches that promote independence, leading to measurable improvements in classroom participation and pupil progress.	● A structured SEND training programme is delivered throughout the academic year, with TA participation and completion monitored. ● Pre- and post-training evaluations demonstrate improved TA confidence and knowledge in supporting pupils with SEND. ● Follow-up classroom observations demonstrate that TAs consistently apply strategies from the training to scaffold learning, check understanding and promote pupil independence.
Teachers' expertise and confidence in adaptive teaching have been strengthened through targeted professional development, with engagement tracked through Steplab. Consistent use of evidence-informed strategies improves	● A targeted professional development programme is delivered through Steplab, focusing on evidence-informed adaptive teaching strategies to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and increasingly complex needs.

access to learning, engagement and independence for pupils with SEND, supporting improved progress and outcomes across the curriculum.	● Steplab engagement and completion data are monitored to track staff participation in professional development throughout the academic year. ● Staff evaluations demonstrate increased confidence and knowledge in adapting teaching to meet diverse learner needs. ● Learning walks and lesson observations demonstrate increased use of adaptive teaching strategies ● Work scrutiny demonstrates that teaching and learning activities are appropriately adapted to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and make progress. ● Pupil voice indicates that pupils feel supported, engaged in learning and increasingly able to work independently. ● Termly reviews of outcomes for pupils with SEND identify progress towards individual targets