Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School Inclusion Strategy

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	November 2026 – November 2027
Date this statement was published	2/11/2026
Date on which it will be reviewed	2/11/2027
Statement authorised by	K Prescott J Wright

Statement of intent

At Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School, we are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming and nurturing community in which every child is valued, respected and enabled to flourish. We believe that inclusion is the responsibility of everyone in our school community and that all pupils, including those with additional needs and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should have full access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.

Our ultimate objective is for every pupil to feel that they belong, are listened to and can participate meaningfully in all aspects of school life. We aim to remove barriers to learning, achievement and wellbeing so that pupils with additional needs and SEND are able to make progress from their individual starting points, develop independence and build confidence as learners and members of the community.

Through our whole-school approach, we will seek to ensure that:

- every pupil is welcomed, included and treated with dignity and respect;
- the individual strengths, interests, identities and reasonable adjustments, targeted support and specialist advice are used effectively to overcome barriers;
- pupils with additional needs and SEND are supported to develop communication, independence, resilience and positive relationships;
- progress and attainment are monitored carefully, while recognising that success may look different for each child;
- families are informed, listened to and involved as equal partners in decision-making; and
- staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to identify needs early and respond effectively.
- needs of each child are recognised and celebrated;
- all pupils have access to high-quality teaching, a rich curriculum and appropriate enrichment opportunities;

How the inclusion strategy will achieve these objectives

Inclusion will be embedded in our policies, curriculum, teaching, pastoral provision and everyday practice rather than treated as a separate initiative. Teachers will use a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review to identify barriers, plan appropriate provision, implement support and evaluate its impact. Information from families, pupils, staff and relevant professionals will inform this process.

High-quality teaching will be the first response for all pupils. Staff will use adaptive teaching, clear explanations, appropriate scaffolding, practical resources, visual supports and carefully considered classroom environments to make learning accessible. Where a pupil requires provision beyond ordinarily available classroom support, the school will provide targeted interventions and, where appropriate, seek advice from external agencies in partnership with the family.

The effectiveness of support will be reviewed regularly. We will use a range of evidence, including observations, work, progress information, attendance, pupil voice and family feedback, to evaluate whether provision is improving participation, learning, wellbeing and independence. Support will be adapted when it is not having the intended impact, and successful approaches will be shared across the school.

Staff development will be central to the strategy. Ongoing training, professional dialogue and collaboration will help staff understand a wide range of additional needs and SEND, including communication, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, sensory needs and physical development. Leaders will promote a culture in which staff seek solutions together and maintain high expectations for every pupil.

Addressing the seven principles of inclusion

1. Presence

We will seek to ensure that pupils with additional needs and SEND are able to attend school regularly and take part in lessons, assemblies, clubs, trips, celebrations and other school experiences alongside their peers. Where attendance or access is affected by an identified barrier, we will work with the pupil and family to agree supportive and proportionate solutions.

2. Participation

Being present is not enough: pupils must be able to engage, communicate and contribute. We will provide suitable adjustments, resources and adult support so that pupils can participate in learning, play and social opportunities. Pupil voice will be gathered in age-appropriate ways and used to shape provision.

3. Achievement

We will maintain ambitious expectations for all pupils and celebrate progress from individual starting points. Achievement will include academic development as well as communication, independence, emotional wellbeing, relationships, creativity and physical development. Assessment will be used to identify next steps rather than to limit opportunity.

4. Equality and equity

We will treat pupils fairly and provide the support they need to access the same opportunities. Equality does not mean that every pupil receives identical provision; it means that barriers are recognised and appropriate adjustments are made. We will challenge prejudice, discrimination and low expectations wherever they arise.

5. Valuing diversity

We will recognise and celebrate the diversity of our pupils, families and wider community. Our curriculum, books, displays and learning experiences will promote respect, belonging and an understanding that people have different strengths, experiences, cultures, identities and ways of learning.

6. Collaboration and partnership

Effective inclusion depends on shared responsibility. Teachers, support staff, leaders, governors, families, pupils and relevant professionals will work together to understand needs, agree priorities and review progress. Communication will be clear, respectful and timely, with families involved in decisions about their child's support.

7. Removing barriers and promoting independence

We will identify and reduce barriers within the environment, curriculum, communication, relationships and school systems. Support will be carefully planned so that it develops pupils' skills and confidence rather than creating unnecessary dependence. We will prepare pupils for their next stage of learning by building self-advocacy, resilience and independence from the earliest years.

Working with families and the wider school community

Families are the people who know their children best, and their knowledge will be central to the development and review of our inclusion strategy. We will create regular opportunities for families to share information, discuss progress, raise concerns and contribute to decisions about provision. We will communicate in an accessible and sensitive manner and will make reasonable efforts to reduce barriers to engagement.

We will listen to pupils through conversations, observations, class activities and other age-appropriate approaches. Their views, preferences and experiences will help us understand what enables them to learn and feel included. We will also use feedback from families and pupils to evaluate the impact of our strategy and identify priorities for improvement.

Damson Wood Infant School will work collaboratively with the governing body, the local authority, early years settings, receiving schools, health professionals, education specialists and voluntary or community organisations where this benefits pupils and families. Information will be shared appropriately and sensitively, with due regard for confidentiality and safeguarding.

We will promote inclusion beyond the classroom by developing positive relationships with local partners and encouraging families to contribute their experiences, skills and perspectives to school life. Through this ongoing dialogue, the strategy will remain responsive to the changing needs of our pupils and community rather than becoming a static document.

Our commitment

Inclusion at Damson Wood Infant School is an ongoing commitment to equity, belonging and high expectations. We will review the strategy regularly, consider evidence about its impact and make changes where necessary. By working together, we aim to ensure that every child is known, valued, supported and empowered to achieve their potential.

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	Reading and Phonics: Phonics outcomes for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium are currently below national averages. Our aim is to strengthen pupils' phonics knowledge and ensure they can confidently apply these skills to develop reading fluency, comprehension, and secure vocabulary growth. We are committed to a 'keep up, not catch up' approach, ensuring that eligible pupils are consistently exposed to new phonics learning alongside their peers. Where children fall behind, they will access timely, evidence-based interventions designed to close gaps and support rapid progress.
2	School Readiness and Early Learning: Gaps We have identified gaps in some pupils' early learning and overall school readiness, including children entering Year 1 still working within Phase 1 phonics. Our aim is to close these gaps through carefully targeted, evidence-informed interventions. These will be closely monitored to ensure they have a measurable impact and support pupils in becoming fully 'school ready'.
3	Language and Vocabulary Development: We recognise that some pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium have lower language skills than their peers and are below national expectations. Our aim is to address these gaps by strengthening pupils' vocabulary and overall language development through a structured, evidence-based programme of intervention.
4	Early Years Communication, Language and Phonics Development: We know that some children entering Nursery and Reception have underdeveloped communication and language skills, limited vocabulary, and emerging early phonics knowledge. Our aim is to strengthen these foundational skills through

	high-quality Early Years provision and targeted support, ensuring pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their learning.
5	Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) and Self-Regulation: We recognise that some pupils require support with self-regulation, managing anxieties, and developing positive wellbeing. Our aim is to continue strengthening our provision for Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs by offering targeted wellbeing opportunities and accessing additional support from external agencies where appropriate.
6	Attendance and Punctuality: We know that the attendance of some pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium is lower than that of their peers and below national expectations. Our aim is to support and engage families whose children have persistently low attendance or poor punctuality, and to implement school-wide initiatives that encourage and sustain improved attendance.
7	Access to Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Opportunities: We are aware that pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium have not always accessed extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities as readily or as frequently as their peers. We aim to remove barriers to participation so that all pupils can benefit from a broad range of experiences beyond the classroom.

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** (*whether it is universal or targeted)*	**Total budgeted cost** *(this should account for spend from IMF and core budget allocations)*	**Barrier Addressed**
Ongoing CPD for Staff – Phonics and Reading: Planned Actions / Implementation: • Further embed the Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme – Little Wandle across all classrooms, ensuring consistency and fidelity of delivery. • Ensure all relevant staff, including new staff and Early Career Teachers (ECTs), receive training to deliver effective phonics lessons in line with the Little Wandle programme. • Continue to deliver reading sessions three times per	Universal	Total allocated from notional funding: £47,629 Total from Inclusive Mainstream Funding: £6,841 Total funding: £54,470.	1-4

week in every classroom to develop reading fluency, comprehension, and engagement. • Continue to develop the Reading Leader role, with allocated time each week to carry out key responsibilities including: observations, coaching, assessment, analysis, and CPD for staff. • Deliver staff training by speech and language therapists from Talk Therapy to support pupils with language and communication needs. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Systematic synthetic phonics programmes are strongly evidenced to improve early reading outcomes, particularly for eligible pupils (Rose Review, 2006; EEF Phonics Guidance, 2022). Little Wandle is a validated, structured phonics programme shown to accelerate decoding and word recognition skills. • Regular CPD and coaching for staff increases teacher confidence and fidelity of phonics delivery, ensuring pupils make accelerated progress (EEF, 2020). • A dedicated Reading Leader can enhance teaching quality through coaching, monitoring, and			

moderation, which is linked to higher attainment in reading (EEF, 2020). • Regular reading sessions improve reading fluency and comprehension, both of which are key predictors of later academic success (EEF, 2021). • Support for ECTs and new staff ensures high expectations and consistency in phonics and reading instruction from the outset (Early Career Framework, DfE, 2021). • Speech and language support is highly effective for pupils with communication needs; targeted interventions improve vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language skills (EEF, 2018).			
Wider Communication and Language Approaches – Welcomm: Planned Actions / Implementation: • Implement Welcomm language assessments across EYFS and targeted KS1 pupils to identify children with language delays or communication needs. • Deliver targeted interventions using the Welcomm programme to strengthen vocabulary,	Targeted		1-4 6

comprehension, and listening skills. • Train staff to use Welcomm effectively, including TAs and new staff, to ensure accurate assessment and consistent delivery of interventions. • Monitor progress through regular assessments and feedback to ensure interventions are accelerating language development. • Collaborate with external specialists, including Speech and Language Therapists, to support pupils with complex needs. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Oral language interventions have a high impact on literacy and learning outcomes, particularly for eligible pupils (EEF, 2018). • Welcomm is an evidence-based programme shown to improve vocabulary, sentence structure, and listening comprehension, which supports later reading and writing success (Welcomm Toolkit, 2020). • Early language development is a strong predictor of later academic achievement, including reading comprehension and writing (Hart & Risley, 1995; EEF, 2020).			

• Training staff ensures fidelity in intervention delivery, which is critical for accelerating progress and narrowing attainment gaps.			
Supporting Teacher Knowledge on School Readiness: Planned Actions / Implementation: • Provide CPD for teachers and TAs on key school readiness skills, including early phonics, numeracy, self-regulation, and communication. • Identify children entering Reception with learning or developmental gaps and plan targeted interventions to support these areas. • Develop a school readiness programme that ensures pupils have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to access learning from the start of Year 1. • Work with families to support learning at home, including early literacy and communication activities. • Regularly assess and monitor progress to ensure interventions are closing gaps and preparing children for future learning. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Strong school readiness is linked to better academic	Universal		1-4

outcomes throughout primary school (Sylva et al., 2010; EEF, 2020). • Targeted support for gaps in early learning accelerates progress, reduces the need for later 'catch-up', and supports attainment in phonics, reading, and maths (EEF, 2020). • Teacher knowledge and understanding of developmental expectations ensures high-quality provision for all children, particularly those at risk of underachievement (Cambridge Primary Review, 2013). • Engaging families in early learning improves outcomes, particularly for eligible pupils (EEF, 2019).			
Support for Phonics and Reading Planned Actions / Implementation: • Purchase new decodable books linked to phonics phases. • Targeted interventions with adult support (e.g., 'keep up' programme). • Shared reading 3x per week to model prosody, extend vocabulary, and improve fluency and comprehension. Pre-reading / learning opportunities.	Universal and Targeted		1-4

• 1:1 reading to practise comprehension and phonics skills, including additional reading with volunteers. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Systematic Synthetic Phonics accelerates decoding and word recognition, particularly for eligible pupils (EEF, Phonics Guidance, 2022). • Shared and guided reading improves reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary development, supporting engagement with texts (EEF, Reading Comprehension Strategies, 2021). • Targeted 1:1 or small group reading interventions ensure pupils falling behind receive focused support, accelerating literacy progress (EEF, Small Group Tuition, 2021). • Pre-reading and learning opportunities help pupils consolidate prior knowledge and prepare for new concepts, supporting early literacy acquisition (EEF, 2021).			
Vocabulary and Language Enhancements Planned Actions / Implementation: • Embed Welcomm assessments in Nursery and Reception.	Targeted		1-4

• Ensure high-quality texts are available and integrated into curriculum planning. • Early identification of children needing language support. • Targeted Talk Therapy sessions for specific speech and language needs. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Oral language interventions have a high impact on literacy and learning outcomes, particularly for eligible pupils (EEF, Oral Language Interventions, 2018). • Welcomm is an evidence-based programme that improves vocabulary, sentence structure, and early literacy skills, supporting later reading and writing success (Welcomm Toolkit, 2020). • Targeted speech and language therapy (SALT) support improves literacy, comprehension, and language outcomes for children with communication needs (NHS / DfE Guidance, 2017).			
Reading, Writing and Maths Planned Actions / Implementation: • Small group interventions for eligible pupils falling behind age-related expectations.			1-4 3-4 1-4 8

• Pre-teaching, same-day interventions, and focused skills practice. • Adapted White Rose Maths scheme to revisit concepts regularly. • Mastering Number programme using Rekenrek 4x per week (Reception–Year 2). • Retrieval opportunities built into lessons. • Home learning opportunities shared via year group Padlets. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Small group tuition accelerates learning and supports pupils falling behind, with an average impact of +4 months (EEF, Small Group Tuition, 2021). • Retrieval practice and metacognition strategies improve long term retention and help pupils consolidate learning (EEF, Metacognition & Self-Regulated Learning, 2020). • Structured early maths programmes, such as Mastering Number, improve fluency, arithmetic skills, and confidence in number (NCETM, Mastering Number, 2020). • Spaced practice and revisiting mathematical concepts enhance retention and conceptual			

understanding, supporting progress across KS1 and KS2 (EEF, Improving Mathematics in KS1 & KS2, 2021).			
Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) / Self-Regulation Planned Actions / Implementation: • Implement wellbeing programmes, including Zones of Regulation and targeted social skills groups. • Provide pastoral support and counselling where needed. • Access external agencies for specialist SEMH support. • Staff CPD to embed strategies supporting self-regulation and emotional literacy. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions improve pupils' social, emotional, and academic outcomes, with an average impact of +4 months (EEF, Social and Emotional Learning, 2021). • Structured SEL programmes enhance behaviour, social skills, and engagement in learning (CASEL, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning).	Targeted		5-7

Attendance & Punctuality Planned Actions / Implementation: • Monitor attendance for pupils and identify persistent absentees. • Use school staff and CSAWS (Education Welfare Service) to engage with families whose children have consistently poor attendance and punctuality. • Implement school-wide initiatives to encourage attendance (e.g., 99 Club, certificates, rewards). • 1:1 time with an adult to help eligible pupils catch up on missed learning. • Use ClassDojo to communicate with families and share updates. • Share targets and achievements via books sent home, parents' evenings, and reports. • Maintain ongoing dialogue with families to support attendance. Access to Enrichment & Cultural Capital Family & Community Engagement Evidence Base / Rationale: • Multi-component strategies, including family engagement, monitoring, and targeted support, improve attendance for pupils, particularly those who	Targeted		5-7 9

are eligible (DfE, Improving School Attendance, 2026). • Proactive behaviour and engagement strategies reduce absenteeism and support pupils' learning and participation in school (EEF, Behaviour Interventions, 2019).			
Access to Enrichment & Cultural Capital Planned Actions / Implementation: • Ensure eligible pupils have access to extra-curricular clubs (morning and after school). • Provide opportunities for leadership roles: School Council, Eco Committee, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. • Support eligible pupils to participate in trips, visitors, and enrichment opportunities where cost is a barrier. • Track and monitor participation to ensure inclusivity. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Engagement in arts and cultural activities improves attainment, motivation, and pupils' confidence (EEF, Arts Participation, 2020). • Access to enrichment and cultural capital supports holistic development and helps narrow attainment gaps for eligible pupils (EEF)	Targeted		5-7

Family & Community Engagement Planned Actions / Implementation: • Parental workshops and information evenings to support learning at home. • Provide guidance and resources to support early literacy, numeracy, and social skills at home. • Support families with home learning resources and access to technology where needed. • Maintain regular communication to share targets, achievements, and progress. Evidence Base / Rationale: • Parental involvement in learning improves pupil outcomes, with an average impact of +3 months, and has an even greater effect for eligible pupils (EEF, Parental Engagement, 2019). • Engagement with families, including workshops, communication, and guidance, supports attendance, learning, and wider outcomes for pupils (DfE, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2026).	Targeted		5-7

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
Teaching To be in line with national average progress scores in KS1 Reading, Writing, Maths, Science and Phonics.	• KS1 Outcomes • Progress of eligible pupils in Year 2 (End of KS1): Reading: 80% achieve expected progress (96% all); 20% achieve better than expected progress (26% all). Writing: 50% achieve expected progress (71% all); 5% achieve better than expected progress (26% all). Maths: 80% achieve expected progress (85% all); 40% achieve better than expected progress (44% all). • Phonics: Successful implementation of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Phonics Programme with improving results. Y1 Phonics Screening Check: 66% of eligible pupils achieve expected standard (93% all). Y2 Phonics Screening Check: 100% of eligible pupils achieve expected standard (97% all).
To be in line with EYFS GLD national average.	• EYFS GLD: 45% for eligible pupils (All = 50%), noting that many eligible pupils also had additional vulnerabilities (e.g., SEND, persistent absence). • Interventions prioritised for eligible pupils and those in the bottom 20% of readers.
High quality teaching in all classrooms	• Half-termly pupil progress meetings between Phase Director and teachers ensured monitoring of eligible groups.

	• Pre-teaching and retrieval of key skills and knowledge were embedded to consolidate learning. • Reading improvement for eligible pupils prioritised, supported by the purchase of new decodable books for synthetic phonics. • Language and Communication: WellComm was used in Nursery and Reception to develop speech and language skills, and Talk Therapy commissioned for children with identified difficulties. • Home Learning: A range of home learning opportunities was provided, with strong engagement from parents of eligible pupils, particularly in Reception. • Whole-school CPD, lesson observations with feedback, and coaching deep dives implemented to improve teaching quality across the curriculum, with a focus on inclusion for eligible pupils. • Writing Development: Literacy Tree introduced in Reception and being embedded in KS1 to accelerate writing progress, particularly for eligible pupils.
Targeted Strategies To maintain good levels of attendance and reduce number of children persistently absent.	• Overall attendance: 92.5% (All pupils); 86.25% (eligible pupils). • Persistent absenteeism: 19% (All pupils); 46% (eligible pupils). • School staff, in collaboration with CSAWS (Education Welfare Service), actively engaged with families of pupils with consistently poor attendance and punctuality. Support from CSAWS, including letters, meetings, and home visits, known to be particularly effective.

	• School initiatives to encourage regular attendance—such as the 99 Club, certificates, and reward schemes—remain in place and continue to support improvements. • Eligible pupils are provided with 1:1 support in school to catch up on missed learning when absent. • Communication between class teachers and families has improved through ClassDojo, enhancing engagement, sharing learning progress, and providing reminders about upcoming events and learning activities.
Wider Strategies To offer wider curriculum enrichment opportunities in order to boost our cultural capital. Including children being part of School Council/Eco Committee/Anti-bullying Ambassadors, etc. To ensure all our pupil premium children are invited to clubs e.g. morning clubs, after school clubs.	• Eligible children are supported to catch up on missed learning due to absence, with additional help for home learning and reading in school. Focus is given to building key vocabulary, knowledge, and skills through pre-teaching, sharing information (including knowledge organisers) with parents and carers, and clearly structured learning. • Learning is reinforced through retrieval activities and checks to ensure key knowledge and skills are retained in long-term memory. • Representation of eligible pupils in school leadership and ambassador roles: 33% of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are eligible pupils. 33% of School Council members are eligible pupils. • Participation in clubs and extracurricular activities: 30% of eligible children in KS1 attend at least one school-led club or have a funded place at a club.

Review of the previous academic year (to be reviewed November 2027)

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.*