

# Everyone Responsible

Creating a whole school,  
inclusive culture through  
effective strategic leadership

**Natalie Packer**



# NGA Annual Survey July 2025

## Top challenges

68%

Balancing the budget

63%

Support for pupils with SEND

23%

Staff wellbeing including workload

22%

Attendance

22%

Falling pupil numbers

## Top priorities

53%

Support for pupils with SEND

50%

Improving attainment

33%

Ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum

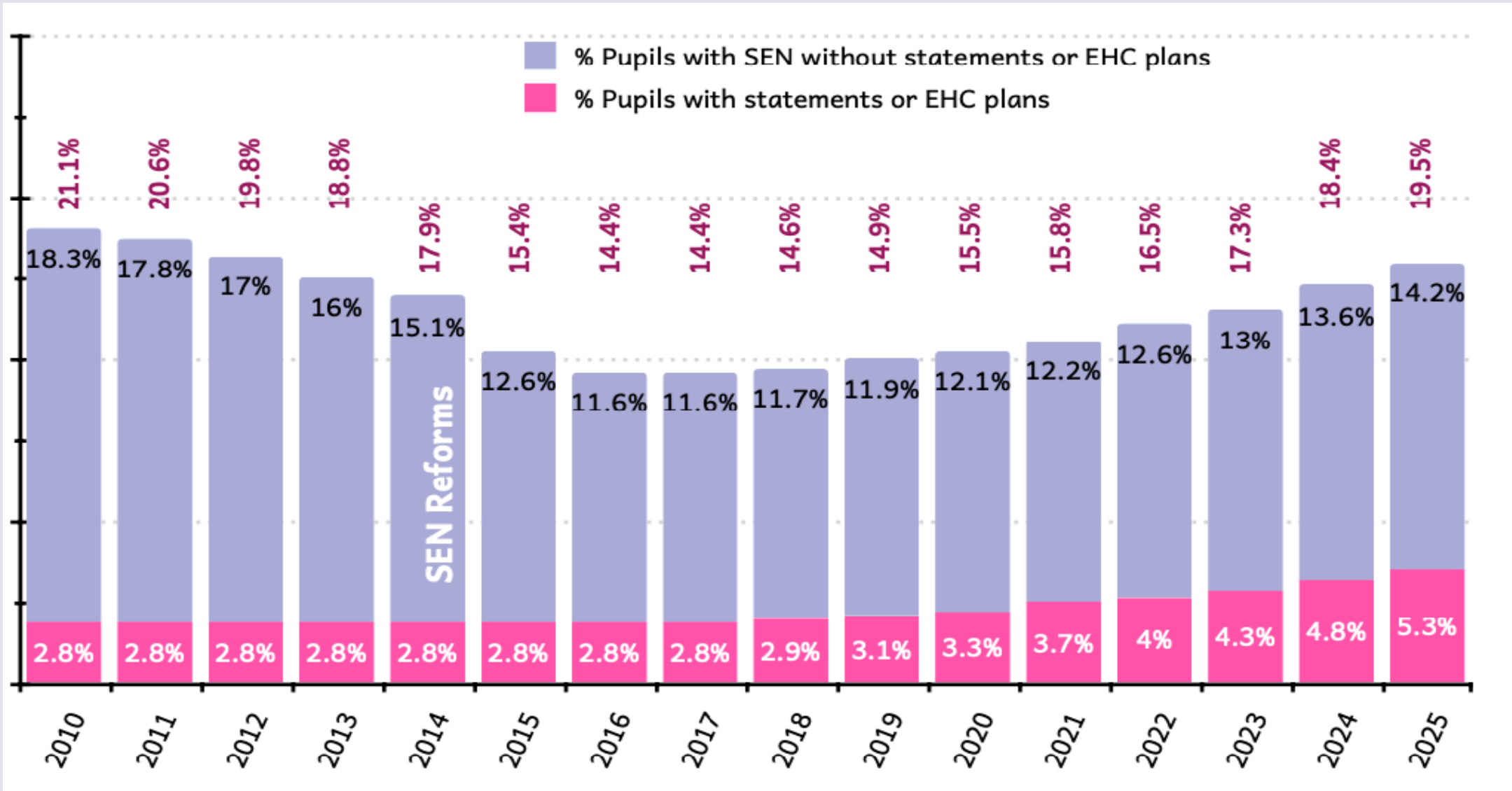
26%

Attendance

26%

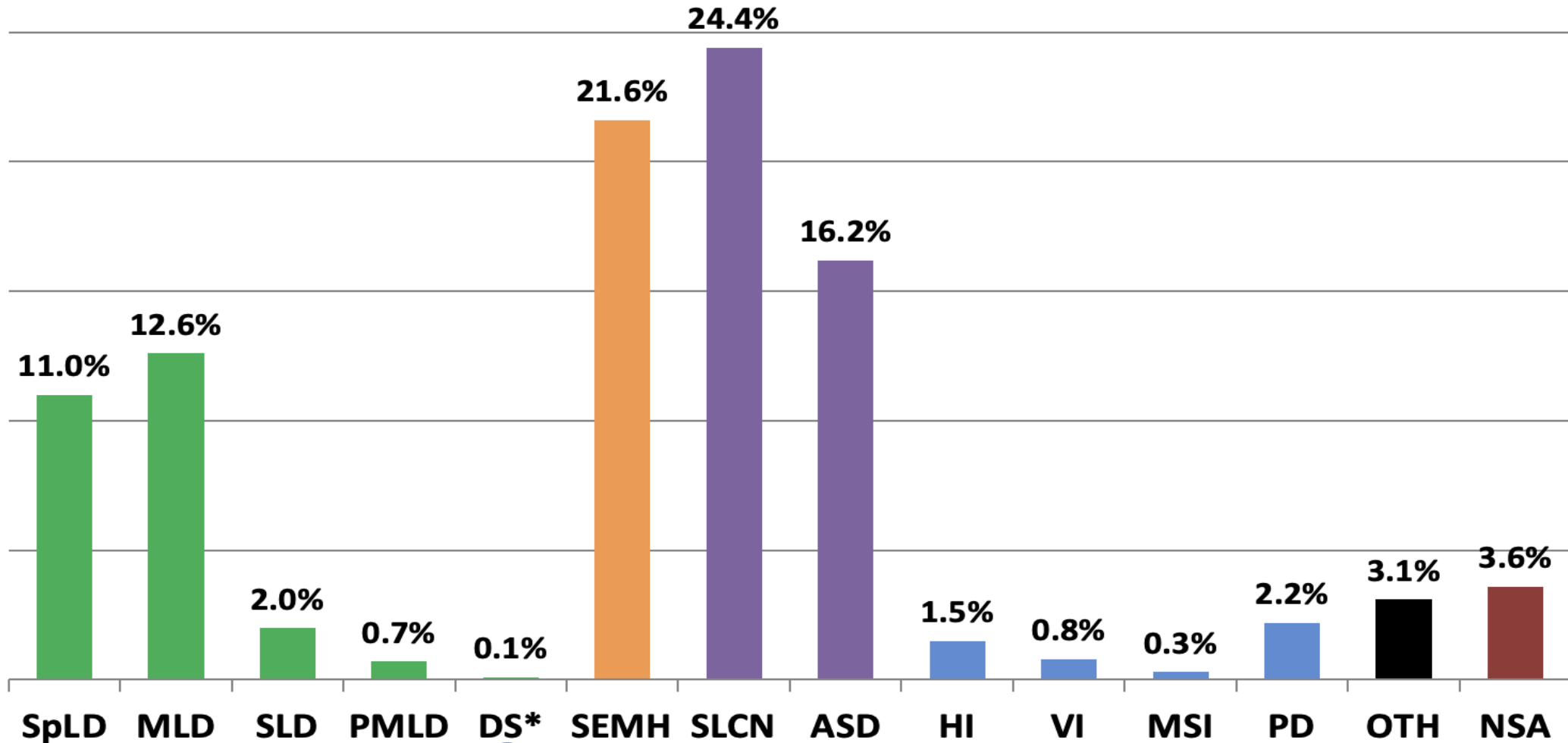
Ensuring best use of resources

# SEN in England 2010 - 2025



# Primary Category of Need 2025 (All Phases)

*\*Down Syndrome recorded as a primary need for the first time in the school census in 2024/25*

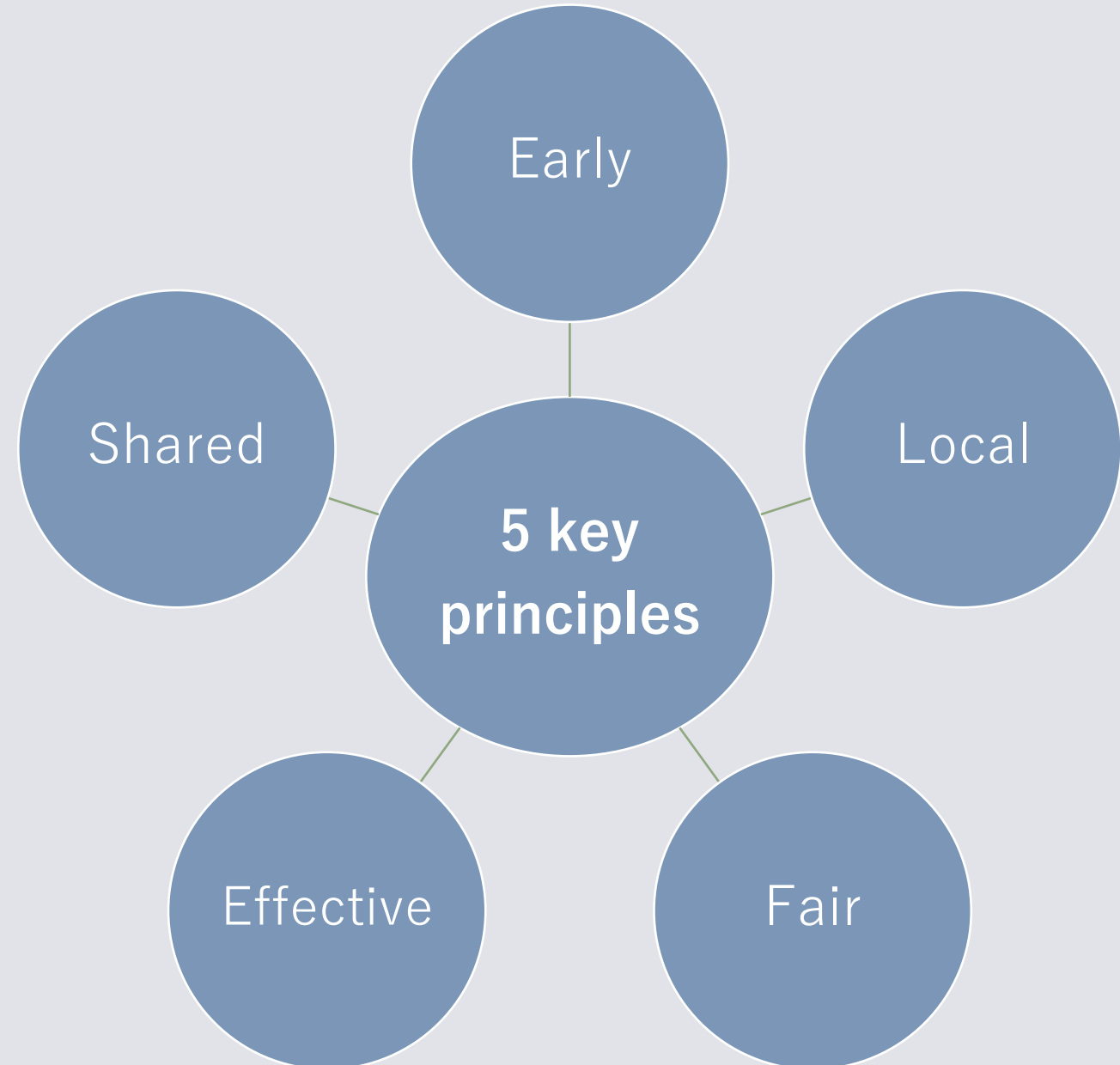


Data Source: DfE, June 2025 - Malcolm Reeve, Whole School SEND, June 2025

# Schools White Paper

*We will bring forward a full schools white paper early in the new year, underpinned by our belief that high standards and inclusion are two sides of the same coin.*

**Bridget Phillipson,  
Oct 2025**



# Themes from consultation events and 'leaks'

- White Paper due 'soon' (end of Feb?)
- EHCPs: *"There will always be a legal basis of additional support for children with special educational needs."*
- Focus on inclusion in mainstream and establishment of enhanced provisions
- 'Ladder of support' with every school set up for 4 'tiers of support'?
- Partnerships between special and mainstream schools
- Teacher training to be prioritised: £200m investment into 'expected' online and face-to-face training for teachers, TAs and EY staff.

# Inclusion in Practice

<https://inclusioninpractice.org.uk>

Emerging insights:

1. Knowing children well, early and often
2. High-quality and evidence-informed teaching practice
3. Coherent and expert targeted support
4. Strengthening inclusion through relationships and partnerships
5. Inclusion as a strategic and shared responsibility



# Ofsted Inspection Framework

*If you get it right for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, you get it right for everyone.*

Sir Martyn Oliver,  
Ofsted's Chief Inspector



# Inspectors will consider the extent to which:

- A qualified SENCO is empowered, through their leadership status within the school, to lead whole school improvement for SEND..
- Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately..
- Leaders use the graduated approach to ensure pupils receive appropriate support..
- Leaders ensure their work improves progress and achievement of pupils with SEND..
- Leaders meet the needs of pupils with SEND, and adapt the environment, teaching and the school's wider offer..
- Leaders monitor the progress of pupils with SEND..
- Leaders support successful transitions for pupils with SEND..

## Evidence of SEND for Ofsted Toolkit Criteria

Area of Toolkit	In gathering evidence about supporting pupils with SEND, inspectors consider the extent to which:	Evidence	Further evidence / development
<b>Inclusion</b>			
SEND	A qualified SENCo is empowered, through their leadership status within the school, to lead whole-school improvement for pupils with SEND		
	The published SEN information report is easily accessible and accurately describes the school's provision and support for pupils with SEND		
	Leaders identify pupils' emerging or changing needs quickly and accurately, make sure support is effective and draw on any specialist advice when necessary		
	Leaders use the 'graduated approach' ('assess, plan, do and review') which helps to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate level of support and meets pupils' needs,		
	Leaders make sure their work improves the progress and achievement of pupils with SEND and they do not lower their expectations of them		
	Leaders meet the needs of pupils with SEND, and adapt the environment, teaching and the school's wider offer in ways that support them to access education		
	Leaders monitor the progress of pupils with SEND, and review adaptations and support systematically, making any necessary changes to improve their learning and/or well-being		
	Leaders support successful transitions for pupils with SEND, whether that is into or within the school or on to other settings or adulthood		
<b>Curriculum</b>			
Inclusive curriculum and teaching	Staff know how to identify and remove barriers to achievement for their pupils through effective curriculum design, formative assessment and adapting their practice to meet pupils' needs		
	The school's approach to the curriculum and teaching draws explicitly on the best available evidence, including high-quality research relating to supporting pupils with SEND		
	Any additional adults in the classroom are deployed to enable all pupils to access high-quality teaching from their class teacher and to develop pupils' independence over time		
	Reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for specific pupils' needs are well targeted and effective in reducing barriers; adaptations focus on pupils' long-term success rather than short-term fixes; leaders consider the possible downsides of any adaptations and mitigate these		
<b>Achievement</b>			

# What are our controllables?

## Things we can't do much about..

- Delay to SEND Reforms
- Increase in amount & complexity of need
- Lack of funding / resource
- LA pressures
- Curriculum changes
- Accountability measures

## Things that are tricky but still possible..

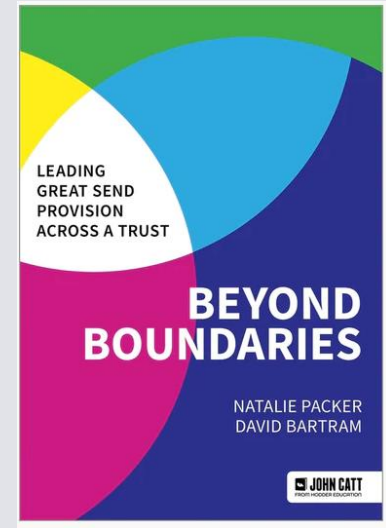
- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Attendance issues
- Our offer for pupils with complex needs
- Adaptations to our curriculum
- Accessing external expertise

## Things that are well within our reach..

- Creating inclusive culture
- Our environment
- Staff confidence and capabilities
- Support for HQT
- Partnerships with families
- Whole school approach

# Great leadership, great SEND provision

In our experience, schools and trusts with the strongest SEND provision are ambitious for all learners. They don't overcomplicate their approach and concentrate on doing a few things well. They value and celebrate difference and diversity. They focus on delivering high quality teaching and rich educational experiences. They continually strive to deepen their SEND knowledge, understanding and expertise. Above all, they prioritise SEND leadership.



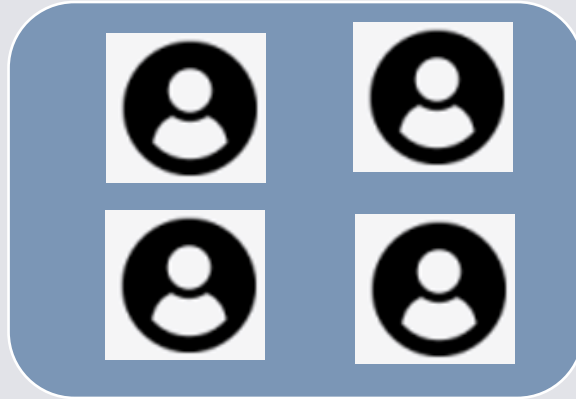
**Beyond Boundaries**  
**Packer and Bartram, 2024**

# Models of SEND Leadership

Adapted from Cassie Young, Inclusion Executive Officer for OCMAT  
Taken from <http://moderncassie.blogspot.com>



1. Working in isolation



2. Working in silos



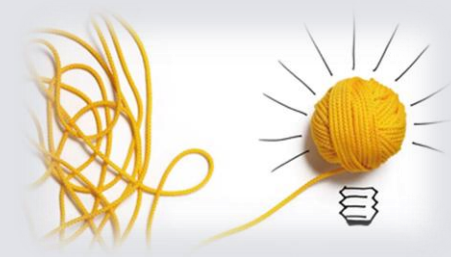
3. Collaboration  
without vision



4. Leading as a team



# The Whole School Approach

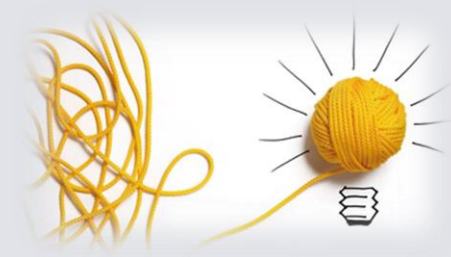


1. Establish a shared vision, clearly articulated to all stakeholders
2. Give the SENCO a strategic voice
3. Share information with leaders to inform key decision-making and develop a shared language
4. Establish effective whole school systems and processes e.g. identification, provision mapping
5. Embed the principles of inclusion by design

# Do senior and middle leaders (and governors) know about ..

- Children and Families Act (Part 3)
- Equality Act (Reasonable Adjustments duty)
- SEND Regulations (SENCO / SEN information report)
- Code of Practice (Ch. 6)
- Broad areas of need and school SEND profile
- The Graduated Approach
- SEN Funding
- SEND in the Ofsted framework
- Planned national changes to the SEND system

# The Whole School Approach



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# The 'automatic doors' approach (Gary Aubin) or 'inclusion by design'



# EEF Report: Special educational needs in mainstream schools




***To what extent are these embedded in your school?  
To what extent are other leaders involved in their implementation?***

# Resources

[www.sendgateway.org.uk/](http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/)

## Teacher Handbook: SEND



Embedding inclusive practice

WholeSchool SEND



### Inclusive Leadership and Management in Schools

Webcasts | 23 Oct 2025 | Free

Universal SEND Services


## EVERY LEADER A LEADER OF SEND

A tool enabling all leaders to reflect on and strengthen SEND provision in their setting


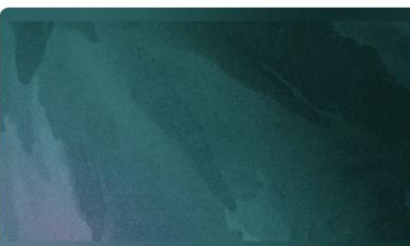




## Whole Education Digital Resources Bank

### SEND and Inclusion



### WHOLE EDUCATION



What SENCOs and School Leaders need to know about national policy changes with Gary Aubin...

SEND and Governance with Gary Aubin (February 2025)

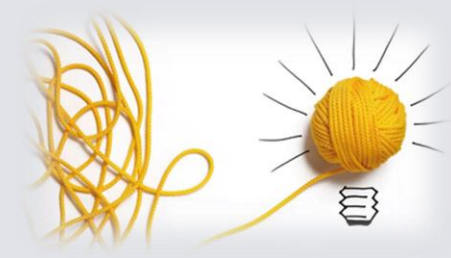
SEND and Teaching & Learning — leading an effective strategy in your school with Gary Aubin...

Building an inclusive culture as an SLT with Rhian Warner and Amy Joynes (October 2024)

Creating Inclusive Environments: Insights with Laura Page (September 2023)

Maria Constantinou and David Bartram: Governance (June 2023)

# The Whole School Approach



6. Enable leaders to collaborate to develop and monitor curriculum and teaching & learning
7. Empower teachers to take responsibility through CPD
8. Regularly reflect on the quality of SEND practice and provision to support whole school development planning.

## Leadership and management

	Statements	R	A	G
<b>Governance</b>	1. The Governors, Leaders and SENCO have a clear and ambitious vision for SEND curriculum provision and outcomes in the school based on a culture of high aspiration for all pupils. The vision is communicated to all stakeholders.			
	2. An update on SEND is presented at every governing body meeting and governors use this to support and challenge accordingly.			
	3. The SEND governor has appropriate knowledge and understanding of SEND policy and practice.			
	4. The SEND governor supports and challenges leaders regarding the provision for SEND in the school.			
<b>Distributed Leadership</b>	5. All leaders take responsibility for the implementation of SEND policy and practice in the school.			
	6. Leaders ensure that the SEND provision is monitored and evaluated regularly.			
	7. All leaders know about the SEND profile, the implementation of the graduated approach and the quality of teaching for SEND in their areas of responsibility.			
	8. There is a SEND development plan in place with clear aims and objectives that links to the whole school development plan.			
	9. There is sufficient strategic capacity to effectively implement the SEND Development Plan and support improvements across the school			
	10. All staff understand their responsibilities towards SEND. The performance management system is used to improve outcomes for pupils with SEND.			
<b>SENCO</b>	11. The SENCO is a member of the Senior Leadership Team or another member of SLT acts as the lead on SEND in SLT meetings to ensure it is seen as a whole school responsibility.			
	12. The SENCO is appropriately qualified or is working towards the SENCO National Professional Qualification (NPQ).			
	13. The SENCO is involved in making decisions about staff recruitment, deployment and use of resources for SEND (including funding).			

## Identification

	St. Mary's %	PDET %	National %
Overall SEN	17%	15.6%	16%
SEN Support	13%	13.9%	13.5%
EHCP	4%	1.7%	2.5%

Plus 2 RSAs submitted Autumn 2023

## Attendance

	St. Mary's %	National %
SEN Support	93%	93%
EHCP	90%	93%
Whole School	95%	95%

## Our inclusive curriculum

**Intent:** For all learners to reach their full potential academically, spiritually and physically, as individuals.

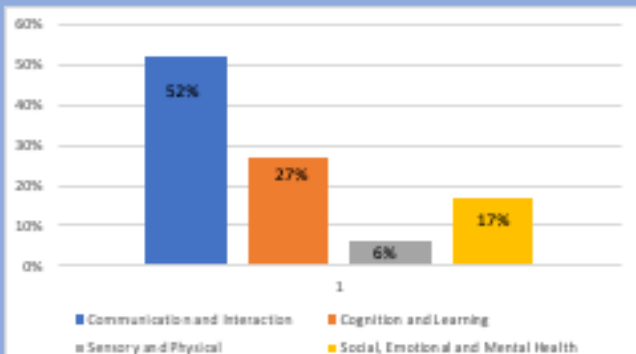
**Implementation** - We do this by:

- Adapting the curriculum and environment as appropriate to ensure that children with SEND have the same opportunities as their peers.
- Early identification of needs and a timely response
- Working as a team – including all school staff and families to achieve the best [outcomes](#)
- Effective allocation of resources

**Impact**

Our learners with SEND will have secured key skills in order to access the curriculum and developed greater independence.

## Broad Areas of Need



## SEND in a Nutshell

Spring 2024

### Support

- Classroom strategies - toolkits, concrete resources, adult support, differentiating work to correct level.
- **Communication and Interaction Support** – Chatterway, Speak About, Colourful Semantics, Social Stories, Comic Strip Conversations, Blanks Levels of Language, Intensive Interaction
- **Cognition and Learning Support** – Read Write Inc, Fresh Start, SNIP Spellings, Shine: Maths and Reading, Precision Teaching, Pre-Teaching, Whole Word Reading
- **Sensory and Physical Support** – Physiotherapy, Fine Motor Skills, Speed Up Handwriting, Sensory Circuits
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support** – Growth Mind-set, Emotional Resilience, ELSA Mind-set, Social Skills, Drawing and Talking.

## Strengths

- Our inclusive vision encourages all children to dream and achieve – “Everything is possible for one who believes.”
- Inclusive environment – breakout spaces, pastoral room, complex needs room – Rainbow Room and Sunshine Room
- Open door policy and strongly believe in the need to work in positive partnerships with parents.
- Learning walks and observations with a focus on children with SEND.
- We make use of the support of external agencies for training, observations and support.

## Attainment

Average learning plan outcome taken from EduKey from Autumn Term 2023 (0 – no progress, +1 – expected progress, +2 exceeded progress)

EYFS	1	2	3	4	5	6
-	+0.94	+0.78	+0.89	+0.87	+0.59	+0.79

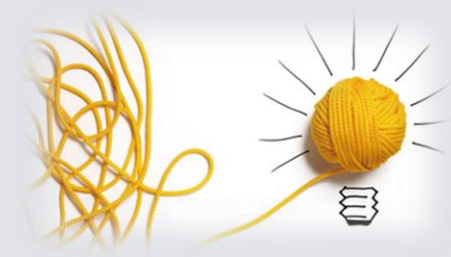
Progress made from Summer 2023

Some progress made from Summer 2023


## Our Key Priorities

- Ensure teaching staff and teaching assistants are effectively using QFT in the classroom, including adaptations, scaffolding and pitch.
- Develop a consistent strategy for assessment in the Sunshine Room.
- Make effective use of high quality outside agency support and ensure that it is utilised effectively, with a focus on Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

# The Whole School Approach



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"What would we want for this child if they were ours?"

***SEND is Everyone's  
Responsibility***

Thank you!

Please contact me for further information:

[n.packer174@btinternet.com](mailto:n.packer174@btinternet.com)

[www.nataliepacker.co.uk](http://www.nataliepacker.co.uk)

