



# Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2021



**AIM** All Inclusive  
Middlesbrough

  
Learning  
Middlesbrough

  
Middlesbrough  
moving forward

# Foreword

There are some education systems around the world that achieve great things for large numbers of students but this is sometimes at the expense of many of the more vulnerable and needy children and young people in that society. In contrast, there are other very high performing systems, such as Finland and many parts of Canada, where equity and caring for the more vulnerable is given equal weight to a focus on high academic achievement; in fact they see the two aspects as complimentary. In the same way, there are some schools in England that are strong on high academic performance but are not as inclusive as they might be, whilst many other schools are highly successful in enabling all students to make good progress, including the more vulnerable and those with special needs.

In Middlesbrough, we are committed to having a whole-borough approach where there is a focus on high expectations and on inclusion, helping to remove barriers to learning for all children, whatever their circumstances, whatever their needs and wherever

their learning is taking place. That is why, as Chair of the Middlesbrough School Improvement Governance Board, I am so pleased to welcome this Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan. The borough has many challenges on this agenda and so it is very encouraging to see a strategy that has been co-constructed with representatives from all the key stakeholders in Middlesbrough. These are tough issues to address, especially during a time of high accountability and austerity. We will only succeed if we all commit to supporting and challenging each other to do the best we can for all children, in a spirit of trust and cooperation. I commend this strategy and I look forward to receiving progress reports over the coming months and years at the School Improvement Governance Board.

**Professor Steve Munby**  
Chair, School Improvement  
Governance Board.





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# Our Vision, Aims and Key Priorities

## Vision:

**“Our children are able to achieve to the best of their ability in an inclusive environment that allows them to flourish and build the foundation for a bright future”**

## Aims:

This strategy was developed through the collaboration of Local Authority Education Officers, Head teachers, Elected Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Leading Council Officers and partner agency leaders such as Health, PVI settings and Early Help but most importantly parents, children and young people. By working together we want to remove the barriers to learning so that all young people can improve their life chances.

Our fundamental aim is to promote achievement and well-being for all young people living in Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Council acts as the champion for all children, young people and their families in the town and encourages inclusivity across all schools. This strategy is aimed at improving the way we meet the needs of children and young people up to the end of their school years and we have full agreement from all school leaders and our partners that this is crucial for the best outcomes for young people. We aim to support our schools and academies to develop additional programmes, curriculum initiatives and innovative pedagogies to reduce the risk of underachievement and educational exclusion. The goals of raising standards and promoting educational inclusion are often seen to be pulling in opposite directions, however as a Local Authority and town we aim to bring together both high standards and the inclusion agenda.

## Definition:

What is Inclusion? Over the last decade much has been written about the definition of inclusion within education. In Middlesbrough we have agreed the definition of:

**‘The process of identifying and overcoming barriers to learning and well-being for all children and young people’**

**The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members**

Mahatma Gandhi



## Key Priorities for the Inclusion Strategy:

To support a Middlesbrough approach to ensuring that we identify and overcome the barriers to learning and well-being for children and young people

To ensure that educational settings are inclusive and that there is equality of educational opportunity for children and young people

To ensure the voice of parents, children and young people is heard so that they can express their opinions and help shape services to meet their needs

To develop an effective multi-agency response to inclusion involving strategic partnership working between key stakeholders

To reduce the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions in Middlesbrough so that children and young people have stable and continued education

## Our ambitious targets are:

### YEARS ONE to TWO

Inclusion leads to be identified to support, monitor and evaluate key developments

Resource manager in place and action plan to manage budgets agreed. Parents begin to feel actively engaged in their child's educational journey

Reduction in fixed term exclusions; reduction in permanent exclusions to 25

### YEAR THREE

Inclusion work is budget neutral

All schools in Middlesbrough have the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM)

All children and young people are educated within Middlesbrough in appropriate educational settings

Further reduction in fixed term exclusions, reduction in permanent exclusions to 10

### LONGER TERM TARGETS

Establish and agree how we measure achievement for SEND children; the progress of children and young people within SEND and AP is further improved (ipsative assessment and other tailored assessment strategies are well used)

High quality provision is adjusted to remove barriers to learning

Fixed term and permanent exclusions are minimal

## Objectives

In order to achieve key priorities and meet these targets the strategic partnership has the following objectives:

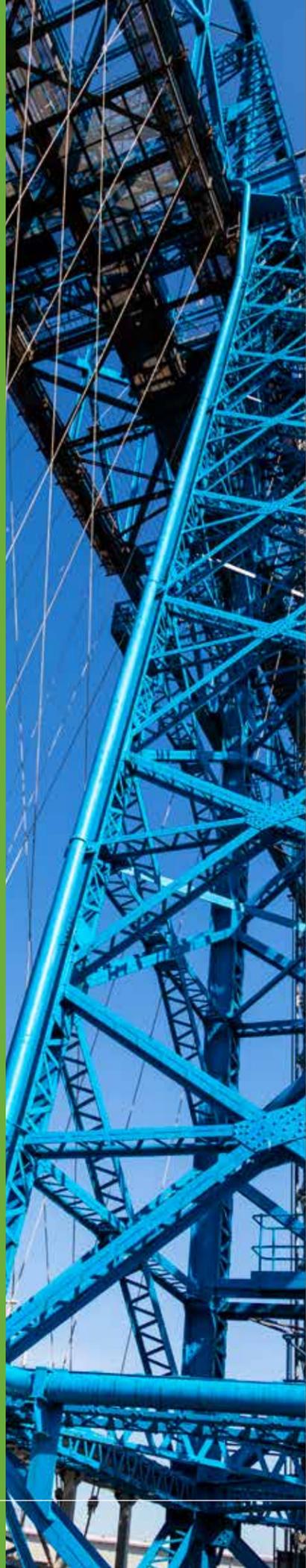
- To promote a local agreement and common understanding of inclusion
- To support children to access inclusive learning from the earliest ages to narrow gaps
- To improve mainstream schools' capacity to support children and young people with SEND through agreed best practice, peer challenge and co-ordinated training
- To raise the profile of inclusion across the area through conferences, employers' events and local area campaigns
- To use the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) to enable schools to plan for improved outcomes for children and young people
- To further develop a co-ordinated system of alternative and special educational provision to meet needs within the Tees Valley including governance of effective transitions in both step-up and step-down procedures
- To learn from other areas of the country and internationally who have had a positive impact on inclusive education e.g. Newham, North Tyneside, New Zealand and Finland



# Setting the Scene

Middlesbrough is a vibrant town with a strong sense of community and an increasingly diverse population incorporating many nationalities, cultures and religions. The community strives to include all members and the council aims to ensure that everyone has a voice in how services are delivered. There are 42 primary schools, seven secondary schools, four special schools and a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), working together through the school improvement project to ensure that education is of the highest standard. Across the authority, there is also economic diversity with some schools existing in affluent areas and others serving families living in significant poverty. School Leaders in Middlesbrough are passionate and committed to ensuring that disadvantage is not a barrier to learning and academic success; educational outcomes are a testament to the work of those in education to tackle challenges faced by children, young people and families.

The impact of health and well-being on children's development and learning is well documented. There is national recognition of the importance of health behaviour during pregnancy and the early years of life, responsive parenting and secure attachment on a child's development. There is also strong evidence that investing in intervention, prevention and support as early as possible leads to increased developmental and educational outcomes for children and young people. Public Health work hard to ensure that early intervention is in place and that families have access to services that can support them in the right way at the right time. However, factors which increase a child's risk of poor life chances still exist in Middlesbrough and these risk factors have a negative impact on the growth and development of a child, affecting physical growth as well as emotional and mental development and wellbeing. An aim of the Inclusion Strategy is to ensure that all services across Education, Public Health and beyond are able to work together to minimise the impact of risk factors.



# Support for Children and Young People

Middlesbrough's schools, academies and specialist providers, as well as private providers of early year's education (PVI) educate approximately 23,000 children and young people; a proportion of those may be disadvantaged or vulnerable and may have additional learning needs which arise from a wide range of personal, physical, social, emotional or cultural factors. Specific groups of disadvantaged or vulnerable young people include:

- those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including pupils with cognition and learning difficulties; communication and interaction difficulties; emotional and mental health, behavioural and social difficulties; sensory impairments and those with complex medical needs
- those from different cultural groups, such as pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL); children of migrant workers; those seeking asylum or refugee status; minority ethnic groups; and Gypsy, Traveller & Roma pupils
- those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, such as Looked After Children; young offenders; young parents and pregnant young women; carers; pupils who are excluded from school; children and young people who are being bullied; children of families in difficult circumstances; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender pupils; and those who are more able or talented

The needs of the most vulnerable learners must be recognised and prioritised at every stage and by all of those involved in the education system. Here in Middlesbrough, we want to develop a system which ensures that in-school support in mainstream schools is the most obvious choice for the majority of children because it is of the highest quality. We need to ensure that exclusions and exclusionary practice are rare. All agencies and partners are committed, through the Inclusion Strategy, to working together to achieve this.



**‘Every school is a school for pupils with SEND, and every teacher is a teacher of SEND pupils ’**

Damien Hinds,  
Education Secretary,  
July 2018

# Support for Children and Young People

In Middlesbrough, learners' needs are at the centre of our decision-making and we need to respond effectively to individual needs, differences and abilities; we value the views of children, young people and their families and want to actively involve them in decision-making wherever possible. In the first instance, we want mainstream schools to be able to respond effectively to a wide range of needs in the classroom with all staff having the confidence and skills to deliver quality first teaching; accessing specialist advice where necessary to help all children to reach their potential. Our School Improvement Strategy is based on a model of sharing practice which has the greatest impact on outcomes for all young people but particularly meets the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

Education Services need to offer flexible provision across a range of different settings; children and young people

should be able to move smoothly across the different types of provision, phases and settings as their needs develop and change. There will be occasions where the strategies required to meet certain types of needs will be in specialist provision within the locality or within the local authority's designated special schools, as well as times when children and young people are able to go back to mainstream education once they have accessed this. Those with additional needs may require access to staff who have appropriate training, qualifications and experience so that they can learn well, as well as appropriate curriculum expertise to enable them to access a broad, balanced and relevant education. The expertise of staff within specialist settings and mainstream settings is a Local Authority (LA) wide resource which we intend to use more effectively to develop best practice across all settings.

**'The way the education system has changed has made it a more hostile environment for those who happen not to be in the 'average and above' category in terms of their academic ability or who have other barriers to learning that make it harder for them to fulfil their potential'**

Dr Rhona Tutt

## Using Inclusive Language



A key factor in ensuring we are inclusive practitioners is the language we use when discussing children and young people. How we talk to and about people reflects our ethos and our relationships with them. Children and young people who are in need of additional support are the most vulnerable so we need to recognise this in the way we communicate with and plan to support them. Language which helps to put the individual child's needs first is vital and the Inclusion Strategy aims to recognise this by promoting the following changes in language:

**'challenging behaviour' becomes distressed behaviour**

**'complex children' become children in complex circumstances**

**'challenging children' become vulnerable children**

**'How we speak to children, of children, and on behalf of children, are key - our language creates our society'**

Dr Fiona Alexander 2018,  
Principal Education Psychologist

# Ownership, Governance and Accountability

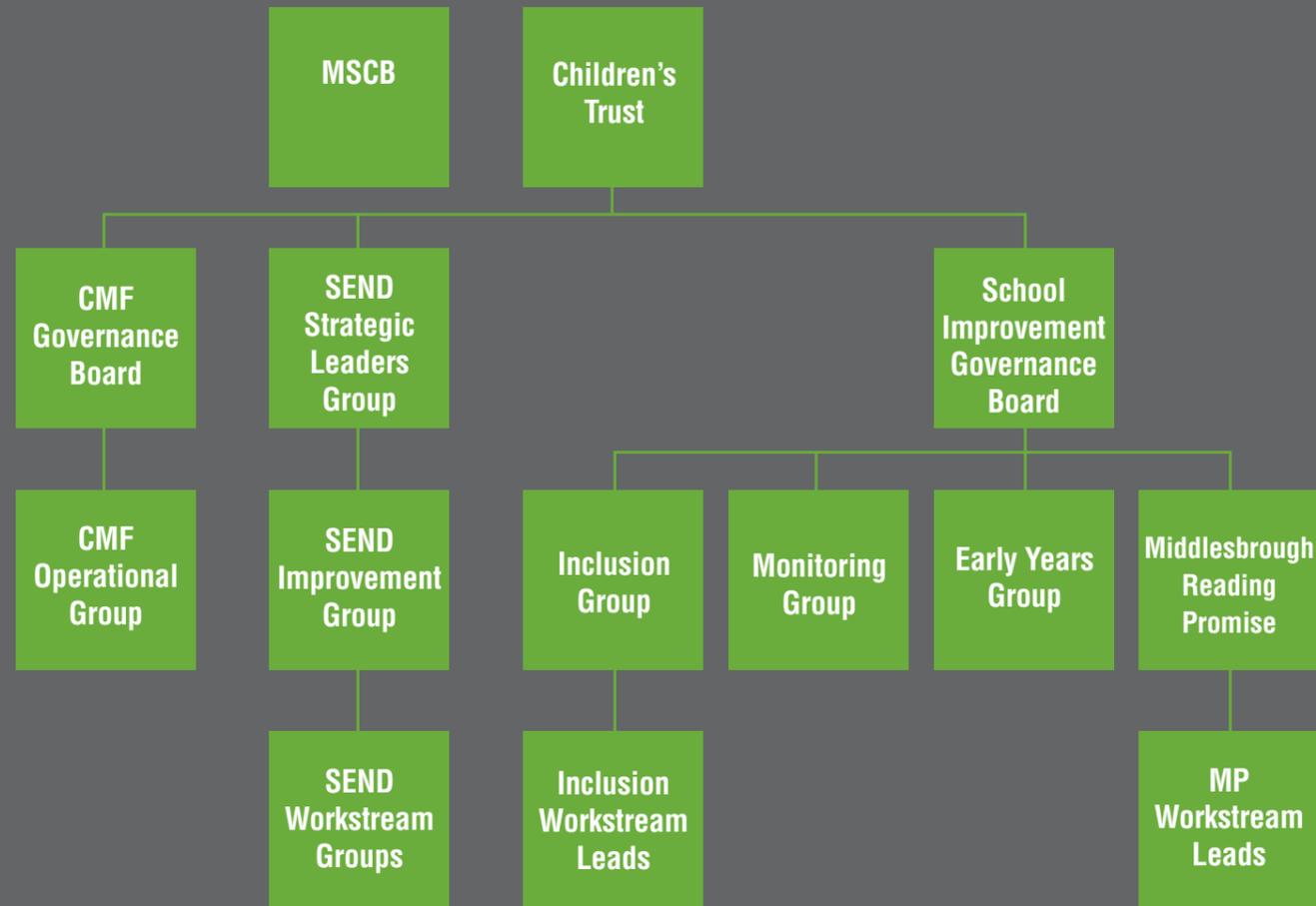
The Inclusion Strategy action plan is led by work stream leaders who meet monthly to review progress. The Inclusion Strategy Group acted as the steering group to develop the strategy. They meet on a termly basis to receive reports from work streams and to challenge and support the development of the action plan.

The School Improvement Governance Board also receive a termly report but consider the wider strategy of curriculum development, aspiration and post-16 routes for our most vulnerable young people. The Children's Trust oversee the work but

combine wider agency involvement such as Mental Health, Early Help, Social Care, Public Health and the Police, holding strategic partners to account on the Inclusion agenda. All of these mechanisms ensure that the Inclusion Strategy works effectively towards its key priorities and will eventually achieve its aims.

**The following diagram illustrates the routes for support, challenge and accountability:**

N.B. CMF (Controlling Migration fund), MSCB (Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children's Board), MAP (Middlesbrough Achievement Partnership)



# Inclusion Strategy Action Plan

## 1. Development of Parenting

**To engage with and include parents in order to enable them to develop their skills and confidence in supporting their child's education**

### Key Actions

- Consult with parents and carers, using their views to inform a wider parenting strategy
- Map current parenting provision against local need, developing a comprehensive directory of parenting programmes, including 1 Minute Guides
- Provide training for schools on safeguarding thresholds
- Develop support through the Early Help model, including Early Help Officers supporting schools

## 2. Voice of the Child and Family

**To ensure the views and opinions of children and their families inform the work of the Inclusion Strategy and enable us to evaluate our impact**

### Key Actions

Create a Consultation Plan which details how and when the views of children, young people and their families will be gathered

Implement the activities in the Consultation Plan, feeding the outcomes into the Inclusion Strategy Strategic Leads Group; support settings to run their own consultations

Utilise creative ways of capturing the voice of the child, e.g. video or other media

Produce an annual report which evaluates the voice of the child feedback and informs further strategic planning

## 3. Budget and Resource Management

**To ensure financial resources are allocated appropriately and managed effectively in order to support services and schools to promote inclusion**

### Key Actions

Develop robust monitoring procedures for all aspects of the High Needs Block

Implement a model of financial contribution from Health, Social Care and Education

Establish robust systems (and training) to ensure all settings are using their notional SEND budget effectively to meet needs prior to requesting additional support

Support alternative provision to implement an effective and sustainable financial model

Review the effectiveness and impact of Matrix Funding and suggest alternative funding approaches

Monitor the High Needs Budget Recovery Plan, ensuring it is adhered to; design and implement controls on the High Needs budget

Develop an action plan detailing how the number of children with SEND educated outside of the area is to be reduced; increase the number of SEMH/ASD places for secondary pupils to enable more young people to be educated in Middlesbrough



## 4. Inclusive Practice in Schools and Settings

**To support schools and settings to ensure they provide a high quality, inclusive education and to facilitate robust self and peer-evaluation**

### Key Actions

Support schools to achieve the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) and access IQM clusters; support at least two schools to gain 'Attachment Friendly' status.

Review the quality of AP settings and ensure provision meets the expected quality standard; implement action plans where provision needs to improve

Work with high quality AP providers to develop a comprehensive outreach offer so that they can support other settings be more inclusive

Design and implement a model to share best practice in Inclusion Centres within mainstream schools (Peer Review model); audit similar provision in primary

Produce a CPD offer which identifies clear levels of support for targeted schools

Investigate and share best practice in curriculum and assessment in alternative provision and special schools; ensure the needs of children are met through an improved curriculum offer

## 5. Multi-Agency Working

**To support schools to remove barriers to learning through multi-agency and partnership working**

### Key Actions

Develop common criteria for permanent exclusion and fixed term exclusion, developing a 'Managed Moves' protocol to help make managed moves successful; ensure bespoke packages of support to assist managed moves and re-integrations are available

Use data to identify patterns and trends in behaviour, and communicate these to schools; develop a range of preventative strategies, approaches and interventions which have a positive impact in reducing exclusion

Further develop Restorative Practice, Early Help and Signs of Safety practice within schools

Develop the LA role in school pastoral support planning meetings; improve service and communication between schools, CAMHS, AP, Early Help, police and educational psychologists (Team Around the School model)

Ensure the offer made by all agencies for mental health support and therapeutic intervention is clear, easy to access and well publicised; introduce the Asdan Head Starters pathway in all schools, and create a network of young mental health champions

## 6. Inclusive Provision for Children and Young People with SEND

**To improve teaching and pupil support to enable more children and young people with SEND to be taught in mainstream schools**

### Key Actions

- Carry out analysis to identify the barriers or reasons preventing pupils with SEND from accessing, attending and making good progress in mainstream schools
- Support specialist SEND settings to develop a comprehensive outreach offer to support mainstream schools and settings 0-25
- Implement a programme of SEND peer reviews across early years, schools, and post 16 settings; produce case studies to showcase best practice from SEND Reviews
- Ensure the implementation of Trauma Informed Practice is embedded in schools
- Set up a Multi-Agency Working Party to ensure effective early identification and assessment of children's needs; ensure high-quality referral pathways are open and easily accessible by schools and settings
- Review the operation of SEN Support across schools and report on effectiveness, impact and value for money
- Develop and agree a transition protocol for step up and down of services and review placement criteria for all specialist SEND settings
- Support all schools to review their emotional and mental health provision against the quality standards
- Review the quality of specialist SEND settings and ensure provision is of the highest standard; carry out a review of SEND Base provision
- Further develop a sense of belonging and celebration of learning, building on the Inclusion Conference



## Our Partners

### Middlesbrough Children's Trust

- MVDA
- Early Help
- Public Health including Headstart
- Education and Children's Services
- Health Visiting/School Nursing
- Cleveland Police
- STCCG
- South Tees Hospital's Foundation Trust
- Middlesbrough Council
- Housing
- CAMHS
- DWP

### Middlesbrough Education

- Teaching Schools (primary and secondary)
- Learning Hubs
- Primary and Secondary Schools and Academies
- Academy Trusts
- PVI Nurseries
- RTMAT (PRU)
- Special Schools
- Hospital Teaching
- Children's Centres
- Teesside University
- Middlesbrough College
- Cleveland Unit

