

# Pupil Inclusion: an overview for governors

Part of the Governor Services *Introduction to Governance* Series

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**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

# Introduction

Governors have a responsibility to ensure that their school is inclusive for all, whether child or adult.

This training is about **inclusion for all children** regardless of any particular pupil characteristic such as special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), medical needs, gender, wealth or ethnicity.

It emphasises the **governing board's responsibility** to provide equality of opportunity for all and an inclusive framework that meets the needs of all learners and allows all to thrive.



# What is inclusion?

Inclusion is where a school meets the needs of children so that their personal and educational requirements are met.

It is about recognising the barriers in some children's lives to being included and seeking to reduce these barriers for these children.

As governing boards remain strategic, governors consider **groups of pupils** rather than individuals. They plan to support the identified groups that need it, so that all can flourish in the school.

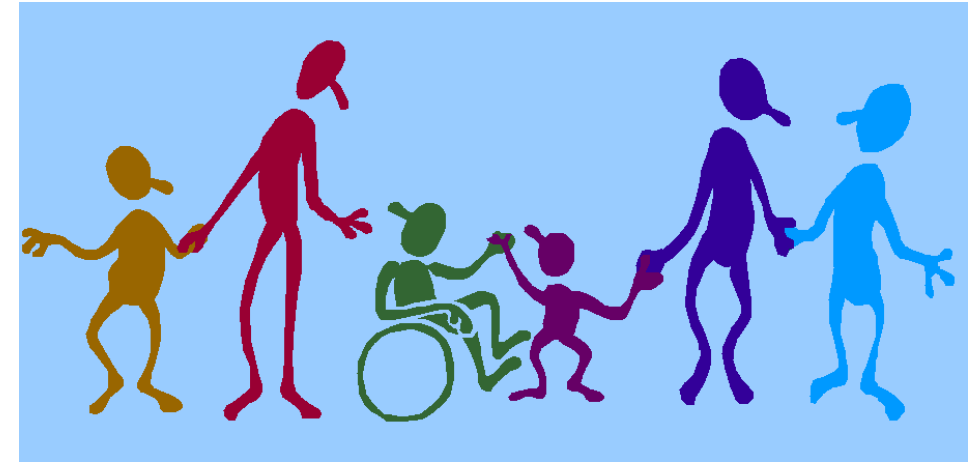


# Inclusion as the golden thread

Inclusion should run through all aspects of the board's work but there are several areas that the board oversees where there is a statutory responsibility to ensure inclusion.

These include:

- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Children who receive the pupil premium grant
- Children who are at risk of being excluded or missing education
- Children with protected characteristics (as identified in The Equalities Act 2010)



# Where to find out more

Clicking on the links will take you to key documents around inclusion. Look for the role of governors in ensuring inclusion.

**SEN Duties**

**Equality Act  
Guidance**

**Children Missing  
Education  
Guidance**

**Pupil Premium  
Information**

**Exclusion  
Guidance**



# Inclusion is ongoing

As new barriers stop children in your school from thriving, these will need to be identified and action taken to mitigate these barriers. In this way, inclusion should be a consideration that runs through all of the board's work.

The board should be vigilant about the effectiveness of any policies and procedures that support inclusion, and should be prepared to take action when it is found that some groups of children are not able to thrive.



# Key inclusion policies

SEN Policy

Accessibility Plan

Equality Objectives

Pupil Premium Strategy

Behaviour Statement and Policy

Find these documents for your school.  
Use them to identify:

- The main barriers for your children entitled to the pupil premium grant
- The school's approach to identifying and supporting special educational needs
- The agreed equality and accessibility objectives
- Your school's approach to avoiding exclusions



# Consider

Consider your school's response to pupils' attendance information.

*Discuss this with your Chair or another governor on your board if you are unsure.*

Did you identify any pupil groups will low attendance?  
Which groups?

How did your board know about this?  
What evidence did you have?

What did your board do about this?  
What was the impact of any school actions?

Governors regularly review their effectiveness in terms of their impact on children's outcomes. This simple process provides a framework for this self-review.





# Governors' Role

Governors have the power and responsibility to influence and build inclusive schools.

They set the inclusive **vision, ethos and strategic direction** and, through the headteacher, communicate this to the school community so that all children can benefit.

- Inclusive practices should be clear through:
  - The school vision statement
  - The policies and practices of the school
  - The lived culture of the school
  - The impact on all groups of children

More information about **Vision, Ethos and Strategic Direction** can be found in this Governor Services' Bitesize series.



# Consider

**Read your school's vision statement on your website.**

## **How inclusive is your school's vision?**

- What does it want for all children?
- Where would you expect to see evidence of your inclusive vision in action?
- Does your school improvement plan move the school towards your vision?



# Thinking space

How do you know that **all** children are thriving at your school?

Consider the information your board currently receives about inclusion and equality:

- Is this provided regularly as a discrete report or is it contained within other monitoring information?
- Does it come from a variety of sources or just from one main source?
- How does it impact the board's evaluation of this area and any subsequent decisions? Where is the evidence for this?



*Do you have enough information to decide if your school is inclusive?*



# Analyse school performance

More information about ASP is available in the *Understanding External Performance Data* training from Governor Services

One source of information for schools is **Analyse School Performance (ASP)**.

This is an annual, school specific report that provides data for school leaders, including governors. This external data allows governors to compare:

- Different pupil groups within their own school
- Groups from their own school with the same group locally
- Groups from their own school with national levels

In this way governors can ask how successful their school is at supporting all children and can identify any gaps that need closing between different pupil groups.

This report should be available from your Headteacher or Chair. Alternatively you can request a governor log-in from your school administrator via your Headteacher or Chair.



# ASP activity

**Look at your most recent ASP report and use it to find the answers to these questions about your school.**

- How many pupils in Year 6 (primary) or Year 10 (secondary):
  - received the pupil premium grant?
  - had an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)?
  - received Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support?
- How does the performance of these groups relate to the performance of other pupils in your school? Do they do as well, better or worse?
- Are some groups of pupils more vulnerable to underachievement in your school? In which areas?



What would you say might be the specific issues in your school around educational inclusion and closing gaps in performance?



# Other evidence

As well as external performance data, governors should use a range of evidence when evaluating inclusion.

This evidence may include:

- Attendance rates for different pupil groups
- Exclusion, behaviour and bullying information for different pupil groups
- Parent and Pupil feedback
- Information on the pupil groups who access extracurricular clubs, trips or enrichment opportunities
- Internal performance/ tracking data
- Admissions information
- Reports from the SEN Coordinator (SENCO)

*Speak with your Chair or another governor to understand the evidence that your board uses to evaluate inclusion.*



# Organising your board

With so many aspects to inclusion, many boards will:

- Delegate to **committees** to overseeing a particular area (*such as the effectiveness of the pupil premium grant in improving outcomes for pupils*)
- Delegate to **lead governors** to have oversight of a particular area (*such as Safeguarding (a statutory role) or SEND*)
- Delegate to the **headteacher**

However, the board is ultimately responsible for all areas of inclusion and should build regular updates into meeting agendas. In this way, all governors will be aware of the evidenced strengths in their school and can work to address any weaknesses.

There is additional training for governors on **SEND**, the **pupil premium** and **exclusions** to support your board's work around inclusion.

These can be booked by using the training tab on **GovernorHub** or by contacting **Governor Services** directly.



# Questions to consider

To what extent is this a happy school for every child with a positive learning culture? What is the school's record on attendance, behaviour and bullying? ***Where is your evidence?***

How have you and the other school leaders created a culture and ethos that welcomes and engages parents and carers of **all** learners? ***Where is your evidence?***

Are safeguarding and inclusion procedures securely in place? What is being done to address any current issues, and how do you know if it is working? ***Where is your evidence?***





# Support within Oxfordshire

Your school will have access to inclusion support from a range of teams within Oxfordshire County Council. These include:

- [School Improvement Team | Schools \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#). This team works with schools to raise standards and diminish the achievement gap between different pupil groups and individuals.
- [Access to learning | Schools \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](#). The Access to Learning team in Oxfordshire County Council works with all schools to improve attendance and reduce exclusions.
- The Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team (OXSiT) is a traded service through Oxfordshire County Council that support schools to improve educational inclusion. [Oxfordshire School Inclusion Team \(OXSiT\) - traded offer | Schools](#)



# Summary

- The board has a responsibility to make sure that its school **is inclusive for all children**. This is an ongoing responsibility.
- Inclusion covers **all aspects of the board's work** but some areas have specific duties and responsibilities attached to them.
- The board should consider its monitoring evidence and use this to evaluate the effectiveness of its inclusive **vision, ethos, policies or processes**.
- The board should **look for gaps between pupil groups** and address any discrepancies. The priorities can be recorded in the school improvement plan so that the board can monitor progress and impact.
- Governors are the **champions of all children** in their school and should be satisfied that children - regardless of any protected characteristic or need - can reach their potential and be successful.



# Additional support

Further information about **Inclusion** in your school will be available from your Chair or your governor mentor.

Consider any other training needs you have. There may be other modules in this series that would help you in your governor role or you may benefit from joining one of our face to face training sessions. *Details of these are available on the training tab on **GovernorHub** or by contacting **Governor Services** directly.*

If you have additional questions, do get in touch with Oxfordshire County Council Governor Services, who will be happy to support you:

Email: [GovernorServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:GovernorServices@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Phone: 03300 249046



# Quiz and feedback

We hope you found this introduction to **Pupil Inclusion** helpful.

Please use the link below to access the quiz and feedback form. You will be able to request your certificate from here too.

[Quiz](#)

*Thank you for completing this training and for your valuable feedback.*

