



Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School

Inclusion Strategy

1. Our Vision

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we believe that every child has the right to belong, participate, learn and achieve.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where children are valued as individuals and their strengths, interests, communication, needs and experiences are recognised and respected.

Inclusion at Sandy Lane means more than children being present. It means ensuring that every child is able to access our curriculum, develop relationships, communicate, participate, become increasingly independent and experience success.

We aim to remove barriers to learning and participation and provide the right support at the right time so that children can thrive.

Our inclusive approach is underpinned by the belief that:

Every child can learn, every child can contribute, and every child deserves to feel that they belong.

2. Our Inclusion Principles

At Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School, we will:

- Welcome every child and family without discrimination.
 - Recognise and celebrate children's individual strengths, interests, cultures and experiences.
 - Identify barriers to learning and participation early.
 - Provide an ambitious curriculum for every child, including children with SEND, disadvantaged children and other vulnerable groups.
 - Adapt the environment, curriculum, teaching and communication approaches rather than lowering expectations.
 - Support children to develop increasing independence and confidence.
 - Ensure children's communication needs are understood and supported.
 - Develop positive relationships and emotional security as the foundation for learning.
 - Work closely with parents and carers and value their knowledge of their child.
 - Work collaboratively with other professionals and agencies.
 - Listen to children's views and use their interests and preferences to inform provision.
 - Monitor the progress and experiences of vulnerable groups to ensure they achieve well.
 - Continually develop staff knowledge, skills and confidence in inclusive practice.
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3. Strategic Priorities

Our inclusion strategy is based around six key priorities.

Priority 1 – Belonging, Relationships and Wellbeing

Aim

To ensure that every child feels safe, valued, understood and included as a member of the Sandy Lane community.

We will:

- Develop warm, responsive and respectful relationships between adults and children.
- Ensure children have consistent adults who know them well.
- Use relational and trauma-informed approaches where appropriate.
- Develop children's emotional literacy, self-regulation and resilience.
- Provide environments that support children's sensory and emotional needs.
- Ensure children with additional needs are supported to participate in shared experiences with their peers.
- Promote positive attitudes towards difference and diversity.

Impact for children

Children will:

- feel safe and secure;
 - develop trusting relationships with adults;
 - increasingly recognise and communicate their emotions and needs;
 - develop confidence to explore and learn;
 - develop a strong sense of belonging;
 - participate more successfully in group and social experiences.
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4. Priority 2 – Communication and Language for All

Aim

To ensure every child can communicate effectively at their own level and has meaningful opportunities to understand and express themselves.

We will:

- Identify children's communication strengths and needs as early as possible.
- Use a total communication approach where appropriate.
- Support children using speech, gestures, signs, symbols, objects of reference, visual supports, AAC and other appropriate communication systems.
- Embed approaches such as Makaton, Attention Autism and the Curiosity Programme where appropriate.
- Develop staff understanding of children's individual communication profiles.
- Work closely with Speech and Language Therapy and other relevant professionals.
- Provide communication-rich environments throughout the nursery and Forest School.
- Ensure children's communication systems are available across all areas of provision.
- Give children sufficient time to process information and respond.
- Ensure children are not disadvantaged because they communicate differently.

Impact for children

Children will:

- have a reliable way of communicating;
 - be increasingly able to express needs, choices, interests and feelings;
 - understand others more effectively;
 - develop social communication skills;
 - experience fewer barriers to participating in learning and play;
 - have greater confidence as communicators.
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5. Priority 3 – An Ambitious and Accessible Curriculum

Aim

To ensure every child has access to a rich, ambitious and meaningful curriculum, regardless of need or starting point.

We will:

- Maintain high expectations for every child.
- Use children's starting points, interests and individual needs to inform curriculum planning.
- Adapt teaching and learning without unnecessarily reducing the ambition of the curriculum.
- Provide multiple ways for children to access, experience and demonstrate learning.
- Use sensory, visual, practical and experiential approaches where appropriate.
- Ensure children with complex needs have meaningful access to the Early Years curriculum.
- Use Forest School to provide opportunities for exploration, problem-solving, communication, physical development, risk management and independence.
- Provide appropriate scaffolding and gradually reduce adult support as children's skills develop.
- Use children's interests as a starting point for engagement and learning.
- Ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable children have equitable access to experiences that develop cultural capital.

Inclusive approaches may include:

- TEACCH approaches;
- sensory circuits;
- RISE;
- Attention Autism;
- the Curiosity Programme;
- visual timetables and now-and-next boards;
- task analysis;
- modelling and imitation;
- structured teaching;
- intensive interaction;
- communication-supportive environments;
- Mediated Learning Support approaches;
- carefully planned adult support.

Impact for children

Children will:

- engage more successfully in learning;
- experience success and challenge;
- develop new knowledge and skills;

- increasingly sustain attention;
 - become more independent learners;
 - have meaningful access to a broad range of experiences.
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6. Priority 4 – Independence and Executive Functioning

Aim

To develop children's ability to become increasingly independent, purposeful and confident learners.

We recognise that executive functioning skills such as attention, working memory, impulse control, emotional regulation, planning, flexible thinking and problem-solving develop gradually and may require additional support.

We will:

- explicitly teach and model independence skills.
- Break tasks into manageable steps.
- Use visual prompts and routines.
- Provide predictable structures while encouraging flexibility.
- Give children time to attempt tasks independently before providing help.
- Use the principle of '**help me to do it myself**'.
- Teach children how to make choices and solve simple problems.
- Gradually reduce adult prompting and physical assistance.
- Provide accessible resources and equipment.
- Identify and remove unnecessary barriers to independence.
- Monitor children's progress in independence as part of assessment and individual planning.

Impact for children

Children will increasingly:

- make choices;
 - initiate activities;
 - complete familiar tasks with less adult support;
 - solve problems;
 - manage transitions;
 - regulate their behaviour and emotions;
 - persevere when something is difficult;
 - develop confidence in their own abilities.
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7. Priority 5 – Inclusive Environments

Aim

To ensure that the physical, sensory, social and emotional environment enables every child to participate.

We will:

- Undertake regular reviews of accessibility.
- Provide appropriately adapted furniture, equipment and resources.

- Consider sensory needs when designing learning spaces.
- Provide quiet and calm spaces where required.
- Use clear visual organisation.
- Ensure resources are accessible to children with physical, sensory and communication needs.
- Adapt Forest School experiences so that children with additional needs can participate meaningfully.
- Consider mobility, positioning, visual access, hearing, sensory processing and communication when planning activities.
- Use specialist equipment where appropriate and following professional advice.
- Ensure risk assessments identify how children can participate safely rather than unnecessarily excluding them.

Impact for children

Children will:

- be able to access a wider range of activities;
- participate safely;
- move around and use the environment as independently as possible;
- experience fewer physical and sensory barriers;
- develop confidence in exploring their environment.

8. Priority 6 – Early Identification, Targeted Support and Partnership

Aim

To identify needs early and ensure children receive effective support through a graduated approach.

We will:

- Know children's starting points and individual needs.
- Monitor progress carefully.
- Identify emerging needs promptly.
- Use a graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review.
- Develop individual targets and support plans where appropriate.
- Review the impact of interventions rather than simply recording that an intervention has taken place.
- Involve parents and carers at every stage.
- Work collaboratively with external professionals.
- Make appropriate referrals when additional assessment or specialist support is required.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities for identifying and responding to additional needs.
- Ensure transition information is shared effectively with families and receiving settings.

Impact for children

Children will:

- receive support at the earliest opportunity;
- have provision matched to their individual needs;
- make progress from their starting points;
- experience continuity between home, nursery and other professionals;
- have their needs understood by the adults working with them.

9. Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School is committed to ensuring that vulnerable children achieve well.

This includes children who may experience additional barriers because of:

- SEND;
- disadvantage;
- social care involvement;
- safeguarding concerns;
- attendance difficulties;
- family circumstances;
- communication needs;
- English as an additional language;
- medical or physical needs;
- emotional or social difficulties;
- significant developmental delay;
- other factors that may affect their access to learning and wellbeing.

The nursery will monitor the attendance, engagement, progress, wellbeing and participation of vulnerable groups.

Where a child is not making expected progress or is experiencing barriers to participation, staff will consider:

1. What is the barrier?
2. What does the child need?
3. What can we change?
4. What additional support is required?
5. Is the support having an impact?
6. What needs to happen next?

10. Parent and Carer Partnership

Parents and carers are essential partners in achieving inclusion.

We will:

- listen to parents and carers;
- value their knowledge and expertise;
- involve them in identifying strengths and needs;
- share progress regularly;
- provide practical strategies that can be used at home;
- involve families in target setting and reviews;
- provide opportunities for parents to access advice and support;
- signpost families to relevant services;
- ensure communication is accessible;
- work sensitively with families experiencing challenges.

Where appropriate, Sandy Lane will provide opportunities such as:

- communication and language drop-ins;
- SEND information and support;

- wellbeing activities;
 - family learning;
 - workshops;
 - community activities;
 - opportunities to meet professionals.
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11. Staff Development

Effective inclusion depends on confident and knowledgeable staff.

We will develop staff expertise through:

- high-quality CPD;
- coaching and mentoring;
- observation of effective practice;
- professional discussion;
- team teaching;
- sharing of expertise;
- specialist advice and training;
- regular review of interventions;
- opportunities to reflect on practice.

Key areas for professional development will include:

- SEND and inclusive practice;
- communication and language;
- Makaton and alternative communication;
- autism;
- sensory processing;
- executive functioning;
- emotional regulation;
- positive behaviour support;
- complex learning needs;
- physical and medical needs;
- adaptive teaching;
- Forest School inclusion;
- observation, assessment and identifying barriers to learning.

Staff will be expected to apply professional learning in practice and demonstrate its impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

Inclusion will be monitored through the nursery's self-evaluation and school improvement processes.

Leaders will consider:

Participation

- Are all children able to access the curriculum?
- Are children included in group, social and Forest School experiences?

- Are any children regularly excluded from activities because of their needs?

Progress

- Are children making progress from their individual starting points?
- Are interventions making a measurable difference?
- Are gaps for vulnerable groups reducing?

Independence

- Are children becoming less dependent on adults?
- Are prompts and support being reduced appropriately?

Communication

- Can children communicate their needs, choices and interests?
- Are communication systems consistently used?

Wellbeing

- Do children feel safe, secure and valued?
- Are children increasingly able to regulate their emotions?

Family engagement

- Do parents feel listened to and involved?
- Are families able to access appropriate support?

Staff practice

- Do staff understand children's individual needs?
- Are adaptations effective?
- Is inclusive practice consistent across the setting?

13. Evidence of Impact

Evidence may include:

- children's individual learning journeys;
- observations;
- progress information;
- SEND support plans and reviews;
- individual targets;
- intervention records;
- communication profiles;
- examples of children's work;
- photographs and videos where appropriate;
- parent feedback;
- children's views;
- professional reports;
- attendance information;
- monitoring of vulnerable groups;
- learning walks;
- staff observations;

- CPD records;
- staff feedback;
- curriculum reviews;
- environmental audits;
- case studies demonstrating progress and increased independence.

The focus will be on impact rather than activity.

For example, rather than simply recording that a child has accessed a sensory circuit, staff will consider whether this has resulted in improved regulation, attention, engagement or readiness to learn.

14. Three-Year Strategic Action Plan

Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Success Criteria
Belonging and wellbeing	Develop consistent relational and regulation approaches across the setting	2026–27	Children demonstrate improved emotional security, regulation and engagement
Communication	Embed a consistent total communication approach	2026–27	Children have effective ways to communicate at their individual level
Accessible curriculum	Review curriculum adaptations for children with SEND and complex needs	2026–27	All children access an ambitious and meaningful curriculum
Independence	Embed executive functioning and independence strategies	2026–28	Children increasingly complete tasks and routines with reduced adult support
Inclusive environment	Complete regular accessibility and sensory audits	2026–28	Environmental barriers are identified and reduced
Intervention	Review the impact of RISE, Curiosity Programme, sensory circuits, TEACCH and Attention Autism	2026–28	Interventions demonstrate measurable impact on children's engagement and learning
Staff expertise	Deliver a planned programme of inclusion-focused CPD	2026–29	Staff demonstrate increased confidence and consistency in inclusive practice
Family partnership	Develop opportunities for families to access information, advice and support	2026–29	Parents report that they feel listened to, informed and supported
Vulnerable groups	Strengthen monitoring of progress, attendance, wellbeing and participation	2026–29	Vulnerable children achieve well from their starting points
Community inclusion	Develop partnerships and opportunities for children and families to participate in the wider community	2027–29	Children and families experience increased opportunities for participation and belonging

15. What Will Be Different for Children?

When this strategy is successfully implemented:

Every child at Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School will:

- feel that they belong;
- be known and understood as an individual;
- have their strengths recognised;
- have a reliable way to communicate;
- be able to access an ambitious curriculum;
- experience success and appropriate challenge;
- develop increasing independence;
- have opportunities to develop friendships and social skills;
- receive support that responds to their individual needs;
- participate in Forest School and wider nursery experiences;
- develop confidence, resilience and self-regulation;
- have their voice and choices valued;
- experience fewer barriers to learning and participation.

Our measure of success

Inclusion will be successful when children are not simply present at Sandy Lane, but are actively participating, communicating, learning, developing relationships, becoming increasingly independent and experiencing a genuine sense of belonging.