



**THE BELLBIRD
PRIMARY SCHOOL
INCLUSION STRATEGY
2026–27**

Every pupil belongs. Every pupil participates. Every pupil can achieve.

School type	Local authority maintained mainstream primary school
Strategy period	September 2026 – August 2027
Approved by	Governing Body: 9 th September 2026
Review date	Autumn 2027 (and annually thereafter)

CARE: Curiosity • Ambition • Respect • Empathy

1. Purpose and status

This strategy sets out how The Bellbird Primary School will strengthen an inclusive mainstream offer in which barriers to learning and participation are anticipated, reduced and removed wherever possible. It is designed for a maintained mainstream primary school and aligns with the Department for Education's 2026 Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) guidance, the seven principles of inclusion, the SEND Code of Practice and the Equality Act 2010.

Publication requirement: schools receiving the Inclusive Mainstream Fund must publish an inclusion strategy statement for 2026–27 by 31 December 2026. The published statement must identify barriers, funded activities, intended outcomes and budgeted costs. Insert Bellbird's confirmed IMF allocation and costs before publication.

2. Our vision for inclusion

At The Bellbird, inclusion is not a separate intervention or the responsibility of one team. It is the way we design teaching, curriculum, routines, relationships, environments and support so that pupils can belong, participate and succeed. Our CARE values underpin this approach: Curiosity helps us understand need; Ambition maintains high expectations; Respect recognises difference and dignity; and Empathy shapes compassionate, proportionate responses.

- We start with high-quality, adaptive teaching and a curriculum designed to be accessible to all.
- We identify need early and respond to barriers rather than waiting for a diagnosis or statutory process.
- We maintain high expectations while making reasonable adjustments and providing additional support where needed.
- We keep pupils connected to their class, peers and curriculum wherever possible.
- We work in genuine partnership with pupils, families, governors, the local authority and specialist services.
- We evaluate provision by its impact on attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing, belonging, participation and independence.

3. Understanding our cohort and barriers

Our planning is informed by classroom observation, assessment, pupil and parent voice, SEND information, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding and pastoral information, and advice from external professionals. We look beyond labels to identify commonly occurring and predictable barriers across the cohort.

Commonly occurring barrier	What this can look like	Strategic response
Communication and interaction	Difficulty understanding language, expressing needs, social communication or classroom discourse.	Communication-supportive teaching, visuals, explicit vocabulary, structured talk, early language support and specialist advice where required.
Cognition and learning	Gaps in prior knowledge, literacy/numeracy difficulty, slower processing, working-memory or executive-function barriers.	Explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding, flexible grouping, additional practice, assistive technology and carefully chosen intervention.

Social, emotional and mental health	Dysregulation, anxiety, withdrawal, low engagement, behaviour that communicates unmet need, difficulty with relationships.	Predictable routines, relational and restorative practice, co-regulation, pastoral support, adapted behaviour responses and timely multi-agency work.
Sensory and/or physical access	Sensory overload, fatigue, motor or physical access barriers, difficulty navigating busy environments.	Reasonable adjustments, calm/quiet spaces, sensory-aware classrooms, accessible resources and individual access planning.
Attendance and belonging	Persistent or emerging absence, school avoidance, reduced participation or difficulty with transitions.	Early attendance support, strong relationships, transition planning, family partnership, reasonable adjustments and graduated reintegration where appropriate.
Disadvantage and wider vulnerability	Financial barriers, limited access to enrichment, mobility, EAL, safeguarding or family pressures that affect participation.	Barrier-led pupil premium work, equitable access to clubs/trips, pastoral support, strong safeguarding and family support, and targeted academic help.

4. The Bellbird universal inclusive offer

Our universal offer is the entitlement of every pupil. It is organised around the DfE's seven principles of inclusion.

1. Ambitious leadership and governance

Inclusion is a whole-school priority. Leaders use data and professional insight to understand barriers; governors scrutinise strategy, funding and impact; curriculum and policy decisions are tested for inclusion.

2. Early, evidence-based support

Needs are noticed early. Staff use a graduated response and do not wait for diagnosis before making appropriate classroom adaptations or providing proportionate targeted support.

3. High-quality adaptive teaching

Teachers remain responsible for the progress of all pupils. Teaching uses clear explanations, modelling, scaffolding, checks for understanding, purposeful practice, flexible grouping and accessible resources while preserving curriculum ambition.

4. Enrichment for all

Trips, clubs, sport, arts, outdoor learning, leadership opportunities and wider school life are planned so pupils with additional needs can participate alongside peers wherever reasonably possible.

5. Safe, respectful culture

CARE values, safeguarding, restorative practice and a clearly taught behaviour curriculum promote safety, dignity and belonging. Behaviour is understood in context while high expectations and boundaries remain clear.

6. Strong family and service partnerships

Parents and carers are listened to early and involved in planning and review. The school works constructively with health, education, social care, Early Help and specialist services.

7. Inclusive environments

Classrooms and shared spaces are reviewed for physical, sensory, communication and organisational barriers. Visual supports, predictable routines, accessible technology and quiet/regulation spaces are used where they improve access.

We recognise that inclusion does not mean that every pupil must access learning in exactly the same way, or in the same environment, throughout the whole school day. For some children, the sensory, social and cognitive demands of a busy mainstream classroom can, at times, become overwhelming and create a barrier to learning.

In response, we have carefully developed our *Starling Room* as an integral part of Bellbird’s inclusive mainstream provision. This is a calm, nurturing and thoughtfully designed space, equipped with a range of sensory and regulation resources, where pupils can have their individual needs met while remaining fully part of the Bellbird community.

For some pupils, the Starling Room provides a short period of calm and regulation during the school day – giving them the space and headspace they need before returning to their classroom ready to engage successfully with their learning. For others, whose needs may be greater or more sustained, it can provide a more regular and structured element of their individual provision.

Our aim is never to separate pupils unnecessarily from their peers or the wider curriculum. Instead, we consider carefully what each child needs in order to belong, participate, learn and flourish within a mainstream school. Provision is flexible, purposeful and regularly reviewed, with the ambition that every pupil accesses their classroom, friendships and the wider life of the school as fully as possible.

5. Graduated response: from universal to targeted support

Where the universal offer does not sufficiently remove a pupil’s barriers, staff use a graduated Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle. Support is matched to need, time-limited where appropriate, and evaluated for impact. Targeted provision supplements rather than replaces high-quality classroom teaching.

ASSESS	PLAN	DO	REVIEW
Identify the barrier using observation, assessment, pupil/family voice and relevant professional advice.	Agree the intended outcome, adjustment/intervention, responsible adult, frequency and review point.	Deliver with fidelity; teachers retain oversight and connect additional support to classroom learning.	Evaluate impact and pupil experience. Continue, adapt, step up or step down support based on evidence.

6. The Starling Room – Our Inclusive Mainstream Provision

During 2026–27, The Bellbird will continue to develop the Starling Room as an important part of our inclusive mainstream provision. The Starling Room reflects our understanding that inclusion does not mean that every

pupil must access learning in exactly the same way, or remain within the classroom environment for the entirety of the school day.

For some pupils, the sensory, social and cognitive demands of a busy mainstream classroom can, at times, become overwhelming and create a barrier to successful learning. The Starling Room provides a calm, nurturing and carefully designed environment, with sensory and regulation resources, where pupils can be supported to regulate, feel secure and develop the readiness and headspace needed to engage successfully with their learning.

The provision is flexible and responsive to individual need. For some pupils, accessing the Starling Room may be temporary or for short periods during the day – for example, to regulate, receive targeted support or prepare successfully to return to classroom learning. For other pupils with more significant or sustained needs, the Starling Room may form a more regular and structured part of their individual provision.

The Starling Room is not a separate provision from the school, nor is it a punishment or a place to which pupils are routinely removed when they find learning difficult. Pupils accessing the Starling Room remain fully part of their class, year group and the wider Bellbird community.

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Access to the Starling Room is based on identified individual need, with clear purposes and intended outcomes.
- Provision is personalised, flexible and regularly reviewed through the school's graduated approach.
- Pupils are supported to access their mainstream classroom, curriculum, friendships and wider school experiences as fully as possible.
- Time within the Starling Room is purposeful and designed to promote regulation, engagement, communication, independence and successful learning.
- Where appropriate, the Starling Room can support targeted academic work, pre-teaching, communication and interaction, pastoral support, sensory regulation and carefully planned reintegration into classroom learning.
- Staff consider each pupil holistically, recognising that the environment itself can sometimes create barriers and that appropriate adaptations can enable pupils to flourish.
- Pupils' views and the views of parents/carers are considered when planning and reviewing provision.
- Where a pupil has an EHC plan, provision remains consistent with the requirements of that plan and is reviewed alongside the pupil's wider SEND provision.

Above all, the Starling Room represents our commitment to creating a genuinely inclusive mainstream school. Rather than expecting every child to fit one model of provision, we seek to understand the individual child, identify the barriers they experience and thoughtfully adapt our environment and support so that they can belong, participate, learn and flourish at The Bellbird.

7. Behaviour, attendance and safeguarding through an inclusion lens

Inclusion does not mean lowering expectations. It means applying expectations fairly, teaching the behaviours and routines pupils need, understanding barriers, and making lawful and proportionate adjustments. Our restorative approach seeks to repair relationships, build regulation and return pupils successfully to learning. Patterns of dysregulation, withdrawal, absence or repeated sanction trigger curiosity about underlying need and consideration of additional support.

- Safeguarding always takes precedence and information is shared through the school's safeguarding systems.

- Attendance concerns are addressed early, with SEND and other barriers considered when agreeing support.
- Suspension or exclusion decisions are made in line with statutory guidance, with particular attention to SEND, disability, vulnerability and reasonable adjustments.
- Reduced or alternative arrangements are exceptional, purposeful, time-limited, regularly reviewed and focused on reintegration.

8. Partnership with pupils, families and professionals

Pupil and parent/carers knowledge is central to effective inclusion. We seek to make communication early, respectful and solution-focused. Pupils are supported to explain what helps, what creates barriers and how they experience provision. Families are involved in Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycles and significant decisions about support.

- Regular pupil voice and parent/carers feedback on inclusion and belonging.
- Clear signposting to the SEND Information Report, Local Offer and relevant support.
- Timely consultation with educational psychology, speech and language, health, Early Help, social care and other specialist services as appropriate.
- Strong transition arrangements between classes, phases and settings, with enhanced transition for pupils who need it.

9. Leadership, accountability and staff development

Role	Core inclusion responsibility
Governing Body	Scrutinises the strategy, IMF use, statutory compliance and impact; provides support and challenge.
Headteacher / SLT	Sets the culture and strategic direction; ensures inclusion is embedded across teaching, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, curriculum, staffing and resources.
SENDCo / Inclusion leadership	Coordinates the graduated response, supports staff, tracks provision and outcomes, liaises with families and professionals, and informs strategic improvement.
Teachers	Are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of pupils in their class, including where pupils access additional support.
Teaching assistants / support staff	Deliver planned support skilfully, promote independence, feed back impact and work under teacher direction.
All staff	Notice barriers, make agreed adjustments, uphold high expectations and contribute to a culture of belonging.

10. Strategic priorities for 2026–27

The first-year strategy deliberately focuses on a small number of high-impact priorities, consistent with DfE guidance.

Priority	Key actions	Intended outcome	Evidence / monitoring	Lead
1. Strengthen adaptive teaching	Agree a concise Bellbird inclusive-teaching model; CPD and coaching; learning walks focused on access, checking understanding, scaffolding and independence.	Greater consistency in classroom access; fewer barriers require escalation to separate provision.	Learning walks; pupil work; staff confidence; progress of pupils with additional needs.	SLT / SENDCo
2. Earlier identification and response	Tighten graduated-response thresholds and APDR documentation; use assessment, attendance, behaviour and pastoral data together; strengthen pupil/parent voice.	Needs identified and supported earlier; clearer evidence of what has been tried and its impact.	Provision reviews; APDR quality; referral patterns; pupil/parent feedback.	SENDCo / Pastoral Lead
3. Develop the Inclusion Hub – The Starling Room	Define purpose, entry/exit criteria, staffing, timetable, curriculum links and reintegration; align with DfE inclusion-base guidance.	Targeted support improves regulation, engagement and access while pupils remain connected to class and curriculum.	Hub entry/exit data; attendance; behaviour; curriculum access; pupil voice; reintegration success.	SLT / SENDCo
4. Inclusive behaviour and belonging	Embed restorative practice and behaviour curriculum; clarify reasonable adjustments and SLT escalation; develop regulation	Improved consistency, belonging and staff confidence; reduced repeat escalation and lost learning.	Behaviour incidents; suspensions; call-outs; pupil/staff voice; attendance.	SLT / Pastoral Lead

and calm-space provision.

5. Family partnership and transitions	Strengthen SEND/inclusion communication, parent voice and enhanced transition planning; establish accessible guidance and signposting.	Families report greater clarity and partnership; pupils needing enhanced transition are identified early.	Parent feedback; complaints/concerns themes; transition reviews; attendance after transition.	SENDCo / Phase Leaders
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11. Inclusive Mainstream Fund: planned expenditure

The table below is intentionally left ready for completion once the school's confirmed 2026–27 IMF allocation and detailed costs are available. Only evidence-informed activity that aligns with at least one of the seven DfE principles should be recorded as IMF-funded.

Activity / investment	Barrier addressed	DfE principle(s)	Budgeted cost	How impact will be evaluated
Adaptive-teaching CPD / implementation support	Access to teaching and curriculum	2, 3	£_____	Learning walks, staff confidence, pupil progress/engagement
Inclusion Hub preparation / targeted provision	Regulation, engagement, communication and access	2, 5, 7	£_____	Entry/exit outcomes, attendance, behaviour, reintegration
Evidence-based targeted intervention / staff training	Specific identified cohort barrier	2, 3	£_____	Baseline/end-point measure and implementation fidelity
Accessibility / communication resources (non-capital)	Sensory, communication or organisational access	3, 7	£_____	Pupil access, independence and feedback
Other agreed IMF activity	_____	_____	£_____	_____

Confirmed IMF allocation: £_____ **Total planned IMF expenditure: £_____**

12. Measuring impact

Leaders and governors will consider both implementation and pupil outcomes. No single measure will define success.

- Attainment and progress, including for pupils with SEND and other identified additional needs.
- Attendance and persistent absence, with analysis of patterns for pupils with SEND/additional needs.

- Behaviour, suspensions, repeated incidents, lost learning and successful reintegration.
- Pupil belonging, wellbeing, participation, independence and access to enrichment.
- Parent/carer confidence and the quality of partnership.
- Staff confidence and consistency in adaptive teaching and the graduated response.
- Impact and cost-effectiveness of targeted interventions and Inclusion Hub provision.

13. Monitoring and review cycle

When	Activity	Accountability
Autumn 2026	Confirm cohort barriers; baseline measures; finalise IMF expenditure; governor scrutiny; publish by 31 December.	Headteacher / SENDCo / Governing Body
Termly	Review priority implementation, APDR quality, attendance/behaviour/SEND data, Hub impact and pupil/parent voice.	SLT; reported to governors
Summer 2027	Evaluate intended outcomes, value for money and sustainability; identify priorities for next strategy.	SLT / Governing Body
Autumn 2027	Publish updated annual strategy including review of 2026–27 outcomes.	Headteacher / Governing Body

14. Statutory and evidence framework

- Department for Education (2026), Developing an inclusion strategy using the Inclusive Mainstream Fund, updated 7 August 2026.
- Department for Education (2026), Inclusive Mainstream Fund: best practice for schools.
- Department for Education (2026), Inclusive Mainstream Fund for schools: conditions of grant 2026 to 2027.
- Department for Education (2026), Inclusion bases in schools.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Education Endowment Foundation guidance on inclusive teaching, SEND in mainstream schools and implementation.

This strategy should be read alongside the school's SEND Information Report, Accessibility Plan, Equality Information and Objectives, Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and Suspension/Exclusion Policy.

Appendix A – One-page Bellbird Inclusive Offer

BELONG → ACCESS → PARTICIPATE → ACHIEVE

UNIVERSAL – for every pupil

CARE culture • safeguarding • high-quality adaptive teaching • accessible curriculum • predictable routines • communication-supportive classrooms • inclusive enrichment • family partnership

ADAPTED – when a barrier emerges

Reasonable adjustments • additional scaffolding • visuals/technology • flexible grouping • pre-teaching • enhanced transition • regulation support • closer monitoring

TARGETED – when universal/adapted provision is not enough

Assess–Plan–Do–Review • evidence-based small-group/individual intervention • pastoral or communication support • Inclusion Hub provision • specialist consultation

SPECIALIST / STATUTORY – when needs are significant or persistent

Multi-agency assessment and advice • EHC needs assessment where appropriate • provision specified in an EHC plan • coordinated review with family and professionals

Key question: What barrier is preventing this pupil from belonging, participating or learning – and what is the least intrusive effective response?