



GRANGE ACADEMY

Inclusion Strategy 26-27

Removing barriers for pupils with moderate learning difficulties

Academic year 2026/27

Strategy owner	Headteacher / Inclusion and Curriculum Leaders
Authorised by	Local Governing Body
Published	September 2026
Review cycle	Termly monitoring; annual full review
Next full review	July 2027
Applies to	Whole-school universal provision, targeted support and personalised bespoke provision

Purpose: to secure ambitious, accessible and meaningful learning, participation, communication, independence and preparation for adulthood for every pupil.

1. Strategic intent

Grange Academy is a specialist SEND school for pupils with education, health and care plans, including pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autism. This strategy focuses on the predictable and individual barriers that a pupil with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) may experience, while maintaining high expectations and avoiding a deficit model.

Our approach is inclusive by design. We first strengthen the universal offer, then provide precise adaptations and additional support where assessment shows these are required. Inclusion means access, active participation, belonging, progress, agency and preparation for adult life, not simply physical presence in a classroom.

Grange commitment

Every pupil will be known well, taught an ambitious and functional curriculum, supported to communicate, and enabled to demonstrate learning in ways that preserve challenge and dignity. Adaptation will remove barriers without narrowing the intended learning.

2. Grange context and SEF alignment

- All pupils have EHCPs and join the school working significantly below age-related expectations. The SEF describes a bespoke curriculum and environment focused on long-term achievement, well-being, independence and employability.
- The SEF identifies strong inclusive practice, including an autism- and communication-friendly approach, pupil passports, plan-do-review, family partnership and specialist input.
- The SEF identifies precision adaptation, oracy and communication, attendance, sixth-form development and preparation for employment as continuing priorities.
- The SEF also records that the curriculum is sequenced through Grange Steps, linked to real-life experiences and qualifications, with a need to ensure that activities are always closely aligned to pupils' learning needs and extend knowledge.

3. The seven DfE inclusion principles translated into Grange practice

DfE principle	Grange implementation
1. Ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion	Inclusion is evident in school improvement, curriculum design, workforce development, resource deployment, safeguarding, attendance and governor challenge. Leaders review patterns, not only individual cases.
2. Evidence-based support prioritising early intervention	Assessment identifies barriers early. Staff use plan-do-review, pupil progress review, well-being review, EHCP outcomes, therapy advice and family knowledge to select, monitor and stop or adjust support.
3. High-quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners	Teachers preserve ambitious subject intent while adjusting the route, language, pace, modelling, practice, resources, response method and level of scaffolding. Grange Steps clarify starting points and next learning.
4. Enriching provision beyond the classroom that all children can access	Farm, forest school, community projects, clubs, trips, enterprise, work-related learning and cultural experiences are planned with communication, sensory, literacy, mobility and regulation access from the outset.
5. A safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance and participation	Relationships, restorative practice, safeguarding, predictable routines, co-regulation and pupil voice create psychological and physical safety. Absence or reduced participation triggers curiosity and support, not lowered expectation.

DfE principle	Grange implementation
6. Strong partnerships with families and wider services	Family knowledge, pupil preference, SaLT, OT, health, social care and other specialist advice shape provision. Information is shared accessibly, and strategies are consistent across home, school and community where appropriate. Leaders prioritise time to seek family views and input.
7. Inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility	Leaders routinely audit communication, sensory, cognitive, physical and digital access. Improvements are prioritised, implemented and evaluated through pupil experience and outcomes. Pupil feedback is integral to this, and their views acted upon. Awards such as the Gold Rights Respecting Award UNICEF highlight this practice.

4. Potential barriers for a pupil with moderate learning difficulties

Barrier	What it may look like	Risk to inclusion	Core response	Principles
Cognition and processing	Slower processing; difficulty holding and manipulating information; cognitive overload; weak generalisation; uneven profile.	Reduced task completion, guessing, copying, apparent disengagement or dependence.	Smaller learning steps; explicit modelling; worked examples; overlearning; retrieval practice; reduced verbal load; visual sequence; take up time; teach transfer and generalisation explicitly.	2, 3, 7
Language and communication	Difficulty understanding abstract, idiomatic or lengthy language; limited vocabulary; difficulty explaining reasoning or asking for help.	Misunderstood instructions, low participation, limited evidence of knowledge, social vulnerability.	Communication profile; key vocabulary teaching (including word of the week) pre-teaching; concrete language; visuals/symbols; chunked instructions; check understanding through demonstration; AAC or communication aids where needed; structured talk, explicit oracy teaching and stem sentences and sentence frames.	3, 5, 6, 7
Literacy and recording	Reading/spelling/writing demands may exceed conceptual understanding; slow transcription; limited working memory.	Curriculum access is narrowed; fatigue; avoidance; knowledge underestimated.	Age-respectful accessible texts; phonics matched to need; read-aloud/text-to-speech; speech-to-text; scribing where appropriate; alternative recording; writing frames; vocabulary banks; reduce copying while retaining thinking. Real life opportunities to put into practice.	2, 3, 7
Numeracy and functional application	Difficulty with abstraction, sequencing, place value, time, money and applying skills beyond the taught example.	Dependency in life skills; misconceptions; insecure problem solving.	Concrete-pictorial-abstract teaching; manipulatives; real-life rehearsal; explicit vocabulary; multiple examples and non-examples; cumulative practice; banking, shopping and travel contexts.	3, 4, 7
Executive functioning	Difficulty initiating, planning, organising, shifting attention, monitoring work and remembering routines.	Late starts, lost equipment, incomplete multi-step tasks, reliance on adults.	Now/next/then supports; task checklists; visual timers; organised workstations; model planning; prompt hierarchy; gradually fade adult support; teach self-check routines.	2, 3, 7
Attention, sensory processing and regulation	Noise, visual clutter, sensory discomfort, anxiety, fatigue or interoceptive differences can reduce readiness to	Withdrawal, dysregulation, increased behaviour, missed learning or attendance.	Predictable routines; calm spaces; sensory profiling; movement/regulation breaks; environmental adjustment; co-regulation plan; explicit emotional vocabulary; planned re-entry to learning.	2, 5, 7

Barrier	What it may look like	Risk to inclusion	Core response	Principles
	learn.			
Social understanding and belonging	Difficulty interpreting social cues, perspective-taking, friendship repair or hidden rules.	Isolation, conflict, masking, vulnerability or reduced contribution.	Explicit teaching; supported group roles; restorative conversations; peer structures; safe clubs; named adults; rehearse community situations; celebrate contribution and expertise. Grange Well-being team and Pupil Mental Health Champions. Real life reasons to communicate with visitors and pupil leadership roles.	4, 5, 6
Confidence and learned dependence	History of difficulty, over-support or repeated failure may create low expectation of self.	Avoidance, 'I can't', prompt dependence, reluctance to take risks.	High-success entry points with genuine challenge; specific feedback; visible progress; choice; pupil leadership; scaffold fading; teach help-seeking and self-advocacy.	1, 3, 5
Attendance and transitions	Anxiety, health needs, transport, family pressures or previous negative school experience may affect attendance and punctuality.	Interrupted learning, weak routines, reduced peer belonging and slower progress.	Individual attendance plan; trusted transition contact; visual preparation; phased re-engagement where required; home-school communication; maintain curriculum continuity; multi-agency support if needed.	1, 5, 6
Assessment and demonstrating learning	Formal language, speed, handwriting or unfamiliar contexts can obscure what the pupil knows.	Inaccurate starting points; task mismatch; under-challenge or unnecessary repetition.	Triangulate observation, work, discussion and practical application; accessible assessment instructions; familiar response modes; assess retention and transfer; use assessment to choose the next precise step. Use of AI self and live assessment such as CANVA. Qualifications assessed by continual assessment not just exams.	2, 3
Safeguarding and vulnerability	Communication difficulty, social naivety, online contact, exploitation, consent and difficulty recognising/reporting risk.	Increased vulnerability and delayed disclosure.	Repeated contextual safeguarding curriculum; accessible scenarios; named adults; teach body autonomy, consent, online safety and help-seeking; verify understanding; coordinate with families and specialists. Bespoke CPD for all adults including weekly refreshers. Staff trained to respond immediately and as a team if a situation needs a higher level of support.	4, 5, 6
Preparation for adulthood	Limited opportunities to practise independence, travel, money, employability and community participation.	Skills remain classroom-bound; low aspiration; dependency after school.	EHCP aspirations are embedded into curriculum; authentic roles; work experience; enterprise; travel/money practice; community problem solving; careers communication accessible to pupil and family.	1, 3, 4, 6

5. Inclusive curriculum, adaptation and communication framework

5.1 Curriculum entitlement

- Teach the same ambitious but precisely adapted curriculum purpose wherever possible, using Grange Steps to identify the pupil's secure starting point and next component.
- Connect knowledge to real-life experiences, independence, employability and EHCP aspirations. Plan deliberately for pupils to use learning in another lesson, setting and community context.
- Protect access to the full curriculum, cultural capital, pupil leadership, enrichment and qualifications. Intervention should not routinely remove a pupil from valued curriculum experiences.
- Build vocabulary, reading, communication, problem solving and oracy across subjects. Subject leaders identify the language and concepts that create the greatest access barriers.
- Ensure resources are age-respectful even where the reading or developmental level is lower.

5.2 Precision adaptation cycle

1. Identify	2. Anticipate	3. Adapt	4. Check	5. Refine
Use pupil passport, EHCP, assessment, family/pupil voice and observation to define the barrier precisely.	Identify the lesson component, environment or communication demand likely to exclude the pupil.	Change only what is needed: language, model, resource, pace, grouping, environment, response mode or scaffold.	Check access, participation, understanding, retention, independence and transfer, not only task completion.	Fade, strengthen or replace support from evidence. Record key learning in the pupil passport and planning.

Non-negotiable: An adaptation must not remove the key thinking, reduce ambition by default, create unnecessary adult dependence, or make the pupil visibly different where a universal design solution could support the whole class.

5.3 Communication entitlement

Entitlement	Expected practice
Understand	Adults gain attention, use the pupil's name appropriately, reduce sentence length, give one step at a time when needed, pair speech with visual/concrete support (dual coding), allow processing time and check through action or explanation rather than "Do you understand?"
Express	The pupil has reliable ways to answer, comment, refuse, ask for help, repair misunderstanding and contribute ideas, including speech, gesture, symbols, AAC, writing, drawing or technology as appropriate. All pupils must have access to their EHCP recommended communication system, which adults will also use. (be aware that a child who is dysregulated may need more visual support and reduced language).
Interact	Adults model and extend language without over-correcting; create genuine reasons to communicate; use supported peer interaction, structured roles and turn-taking. Adults will create a formal and informal range of opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of real life interactions including with the use of IT and film in preparation for employment. Pupils will be taught how to support one another and build on each other's ideas.
Build vocabulary and oracy	Subject vocabulary is selected, explicitly taught, revisited and applied. Sentence frames support complete explanations and are faded as independence grows. Vocabulary is ambitious and linked to topics, qualifications and interests. Oracy is embedded throughout the curriculum, alongside explicit teaching of skills.
Safeguard	The pupil can identify trusted adults, describe worries in an accessible format, understand consent and online/offline risk, and knows what will happen after a disclosure. Pupils know they can have almost immediate access to adults and feedback that support helps them.

Entitlement	Expected practice
Home-school consistency	Families know the priority communication strategies and can share what works at home for their child. Key vocabulary, visual systems and communication aids are consistent where this benefits the pupil. School is proactive in training and supporting parents. Our regular contact (2 weekly) guarantee is warmly received by parents.

6. Graduated provision and decision-making

Level	Offer	Decision and review
Universal inclusive offer	Quality-first teaching; accessible routines and resources; communication-friendly classrooms; positive relationships; curriculum sequencing; formative assessment; belonging and safeguarding. Adaptations to support MLD learners (visuals, demonstration, bespoke curriculum taught within real life contexts)	All pupils routinely access this. Leaders evaluate consistency through learning walks, work, pupil voice and assessment.
Targeted additional support	Time-limited, evidence-informed support for a defined barrier, such as pre-teaching, structured literacy/numeracy intervention, communication group, regulation coaching or adult supported generalisation.	Baseline, intended outcome, frequency, responsible adult and review date are recorded. Progress in class is checked, not only performance in the intervention.
Personalised/specialist provision	Individualised teaching, therapy-informed programme, specialist equipment/AAC, personalised timetable or intensive multi-agency plan where universal and targeted support do not sufficiently remove the barrier.	Linked explicitly to EHCP outcomes and specialist advice. The pupil and family are involved. Leaders review benefit, participation, impact and value.

7. 2026/27 strategic action plan

Priority	Key activity	Lead	Milestones	Success evidence	Principles
Precision adaptations	Leaders audit curriculum plans and pupil work for alignment between intended learning, pupil starting points and adaptation. Coach staff to use the five-stage adaptation cycle.	Curriculum leaders / SLT	Autumn baseline; half-termly review	Samples show adaptation removes the specified barrier, preserves challenge and increases independent success. Staff can explain why an adaptation was chosen and its impact.	1, 2, 3
Communication and oracy	Ongoing updating of communication profiles and pupil passports. Identify essential vocabulary and structured oracy opportunities in every subject. Extend appropriate speech-to-text and communication technology (CPD plan in place)	Communication Lead / SaLT link / Subject leaders	Profiles by Oct; termly review	Pupils have a reliable way to understand, contribute and ask for help. Work and observation show stronger use of subject vocabulary and fuller explanations across contexts. Monitoring shows and increase in opportunities and successful use of oracy skills. (triangulated with exam results in Speaking and Listening).	2, 3, 6, 7
Curriculum access and	Grange Steps, EHCP aspirations, independence and preparation for adulthood.	Deputy Head / Curriculum	Maps by Dec; termly	Planning identifies transferable knowledge and where it will be applied. Pupils demonstrate	3, 4

Priority	Key activity	Lead	Milestones	Success evidence	Principles
transfer	Add planned opportunities to retrieve and apply learning in real-life contexts.	leaders	sampling	retained learning in a new or functional context.	
Independence and adult deployment	Ensure adults know how to use prompts and questioning without reducing thinking (and how to increase scaffolding in a prompt if needed); review adult positioning to be proactive and engaged but not over-velcroed. Plan for fading. Train staff to distinguish support from over-scaffolding.	Teachers / Team leaders	Training Autumn; review monthly	Observation shows increased pupil initiation, self-checking and help-seeking, with reduced unnecessary adult prompting.	1, 2, 3
Belonging, participation and attendance	Use pupil voice and participation mapping to identify pupils who are present but not fully included. (this may be teacher observation in a lesson) Connect individual attendance plans to trusted relationships, curriculum access and reintegration. Continue to create pupil roles for leadership and participation building on strength, ability, age and interest. Continually respond to pupil voice by implementing ideas and regular communication and explanation.	Pastoral / Attendance / Class teams	Half-termly	Target pupils increase active participation in lessons, clubs, leadership or community activity. Attendance plans show barrier-specific actions and reviewed impact. Use PP funding if needed. Pupils feel listened to and empowered to take an active role in developing the school.	4, 5, 6
Accessible environment	Complete communication, sensory, cognitive, physical and digital accessibility walks with pupils. Prioritise practical changes and publish outcomes through pupil feedback.	Inclusion Lead / Site / Digital Lead	Autumn audit; Spring re-audit	Priority barriers are removed; pupils report improved navigation, understanding, safety and ability to work independently.	5, 7
Family and specialist partnership	Hold accessible termly conversations focused on what is working, current barriers and shared next steps. Align school strategies with specialist advice and family knowledge.	Class teachers / SENCO / Family team	Termly	Review records show family and pupil contribution, agreed strategies and subsequent adjustment based on impact.	2, 6
Governance and quality assurance	Establish an inclusion dashboard (within the LGB report) covering access, progress, participation, attendance, exclusions/suspensions, safeguarding themes, pupil/family voice and	Headteacher / Governors	Termly	Governors can triangulate evidence, challenge variation between cohorts/classes and track completion and impact of actions.	1, 2, 5, 7

Priority	Key activity	Lead	Milestones	Success evidence	Principles
	provision impact.				

8. Individual inclusion planning discussion points

Pupil strengths, interests and aspirations	What motivates the pupil? What are they proud of? What do they want to achieve?
Priority barrier stated precisely	In which context does the barrier occur? What is the demand? What evidence shows this?
Intended inclusive outcome	Describe observable change in access, participation, learning, communication, independence or belonging.
Universal provision first	Which whole-class design and teaching changes will remove or reduce the barrier?
Targeted/personalised support	What additional support is needed? Frequency, duration, lead and specialist guidance.
Communication and pupil voice	How will the pupil understand choices, express views and evaluate whether support helps?
Evidence and review	What baseline and evidence will be used? Include retention, transfer and independence. Review date.
Decision after review	Continue, adapt, fade or stop. Record rationale and update pupil passport/EHCP provision as appropriate.

9. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

Dimension	Key question	Evidence
Access	Can the pupil enter the task, environment, trip, club or community activity without avoidable barriers?	Learning walks; accessibility audit; participation map; pupil voice
Engagement and participation	Does the pupil actively think, communicate, make choices and contribute?	Observation; work; communication sampling; pupil feedback
Learning and progress	Is knowledge retained, connected and applied? Are gaps addressed and challenge sustained?	Grange Steps; work scrutiny; assessment; practical application; qualifications
Independence	Is support enabling self-initiation and self-advocacy, or creating prompt dependence?	Prompt audit; adult deployment observation; pupil passport review
Belonging and well-being	Does the pupil feel safe, known, valued and able to seek help?	Pupil/family voice; safeguarding and well-being review; behaviour patterns
Attendance and	Are barriers to attendance identified and is curriculum	Attendance review; reintegration plan;

Dimension	Key question	Evidence
continuity	continuity protected?	family and multi-agency records
Equity	Are outcomes and participation systematically weaker for any cohort or pathway?	Dashboard by relevant pupil groups; governor challenge; case review SLT minutes – equity reviews

Review discipline: Completion of an activity is not impact. Each review must identify what changed for pupils, what remained difficult, whether support increased independence, and the next decision. This will part of termly pupil progress meetings and nest moderation.

10. Roles and minimum expectations

Role	Expectation
Governors and trustees	Set ambition; assure statutory and strategic alignment; challenge patterns and impact; ensure resources support inclusion.
Headteacher and SLT	Embed inclusion across improvement, staffing, curriculum, safeguarding, attendance and professional development; address variation quickly.
Inclusion/SEND leadership	Coordinate graduated provision; maintain accurate pupil information; broker specialist input; evaluate interventions and accessibility.
Curriculum and subject leaders	Design accessible sequences; identify language and conceptual barriers; model subject-specific adaptation; monitor challenge and transfer.
Teachers	Know the pupil, anticipate barriers, teach ambitiously, adapt precisely, assess understanding and independence, and review impact.
Learning support staff	Promote communication and independence; use agreed prompts; observe and feedback learning; avoid completing or thinking for the pupil.
Inclusion therapy and family teams	Connect well-being, safeguarding, attendance, communication and home context to classroom access and participation.
Pupils and families	Co-produce priorities; identify what helps or hinders; evaluate whether support improves participation, learning, independence and belonging.

11. Source links and reference base

Department for Education: [Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools](#)

Department for Education: [Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund](#)

Department for Education: [Inclusion strategy template](#)

Internal reference: Grange Academy School Self Evaluation, September 2026, particularly the Inclusion, Curriculum and Teaching, Achievement, Attendance and Behaviour, Personal Development, Safeguarding, and Leadership and Governance sections.

Note on scope: The DfE Inclusive Mainstream Fund guidance is written for mainstream settings, however as a SEND setting we felt it was important to consider our strategic practice. This strategy uses its seven principles as a quality framework for specialist provision, adapted to Grange Academy's context and SEF priorities.

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