Saint Martin's Catholic Academy



Inclusion Strategy

Recognising effort, achievement and the virtues we value

INCLUSION STRATEGY

"Knowing that we are loved by God; Learning the best that has been thought and said; Living a virtuous life."

Strategy overview

Detail	Date
Academic year/years that our current Inclusion Strategy covers	2026–2027
Date this statement was published	To be confirmed (by 31 December 2026)
Date on which it will be reviewed	Autumn term 2027
Statement authorised by	Headteacher / Governing Body

Purpose and Ambition

Our inclusion strategy starts with being loved by God

At Saint Martin's Catholic Voluntary Academy, inclusion begins before teaching, assessment or SEND provision. It begins with what we believe about the child.

Every child is loved by God.

That is not simply a statement of our Catholic identity. It is the foundation of our approach to inclusion. A pupil's worth is not determined by attainment, behaviour, attendance, diagnosis, independence or contribution. Every pupil has inherent dignity because they are created and loved by God. Every pupil therefore has a rightful place in our school community and an entitlement to flourish within it.

Our mission is:

Knowing that we are loved by God;
Learning the best that has been thought and said;
Living a virtuous life.

These three commitments shape our inclusion strategy.

If pupils are loved by God, they must be **known and valued** as individuals.

If every pupil is entitled to **learn the best that has been thought and said**, inclusion cannot mean offering some pupils a less ambitious education. It means removing the barriers that prevent them accessing that education.

If we are preparing pupils to **live a virtuous life**, inclusion must extend beyond academic attainment. Pupils must learn to participate, contribute, form relationships, develop independence and recognise their responsibilities to others.

Two ways of thinking about inclusion

Imagine two schools.

School A has visibly invested in inclusion. There are numerous interventions, individual workstations, adult support, modified resources and pupils regularly working away from their classmates. The school can point to a large volume of activity designed to support pupils with additional needs.

School B is less visibly associated with inclusion. Its curriculum, teaching, routines, relationships and environment have been designed from the outset to enable a wide range of pupils to participate and succeed. Targeted support exists where it is genuinely needed, but it strengthens the mainstream offer rather than replacing it.

We want Saint Martin's to be School B.

The amount of visible inclusion activity is not, by itself, evidence that inclusion is working. In some circumstances, a large amount of separate provision can indicate that the everyday system is not working well enough for the pupils it serves.

Our ambition is therefore to build a school in which **inclusive practice is ordinary practice**.

That means high-quality teaching is our first response to difference. It means clear routines and relationships create security. It means reading and language are taught explicitly because pupils cannot access the curriculum without them. It means reasonable adjustments remove barriers without lowering expectations. It means additional adults are used to build access and independence rather than dependency. And it means targeted intervention is introduced when the universal offer is not enough, with its impact reviewed carefully.

The system produces what it is designed to produce

When a pupil is persistently absent, repeatedly removed from learning, unable to access the curriculum or increasingly dependent on adult support, our first question should not simply be, **“What is wrong with this child?”**

We should also ask:

“What is it about our system that is making success harder?”

Some barriers will arise from a pupil's individual needs. Others will arise from the interaction between those needs and the way school is organised, taught or experienced.

Our responsibility is to understand that interaction and improve the system.

This is why inclusion is not the responsibility of the SENCO alone. It belongs to teachers, leaders, support staff, pastoral teams, governors and everyone who contributes to the experience of a pupil at Saint Martin's.

What inclusion means at Saint Martin's

We want every pupil to be able to say, in practice:

- **I am known.**
- **I am valued.**

- **I belong here.**
- **I can learn here.**
- **Adults believe I can succeed.**
- **I receive the help I need without having my expectations lowered.**
- **I am becoming increasingly independent.**
- **I can participate in the full life of my school.**

This is the standard against which we will judge our inclusion strategy.

Our Position: What We Will and Will Not Do

Genuine inclusion requires us to be clear about the practices we will pursue and those we will avoid.

We will:

- Start from the belief that every pupil is **loved by God and has inherent dignity and worth**, regardless of attainment, behaviour, attendance, diagnosis or additional need.
- Maintain an ambitious mainstream curriculum for every pupil and seek to remove barriers to accessing it rather than lowering the ambition.
- Design the universal offer around the full range of learners, recognising that strong inclusive teaching benefits every pupil.
- Treat identification of need as continuous. We will use assessment, reading information, classroom observation, attendance, behaviour, pastoral information, pupil voice, parent voice and professional advice rather than waiting for a formal diagnosis.
- Use Assess–Plan–Do–Review to understand need, test provision, evaluate impact and change what is not working.
- Use reasonable adjustments to enable pupils to access the same high expectations as their peers.
- Deploy LSAs and other adults deliberately, using prompting, scaffolding and **least-help-first** approaches to build independence.
- Work with pupils, families, primary schools, the local authority and wider services in the best interests of the child.
- Consider participation in the whole life of the school—including worship, enrichment, trips, clubs, sport and relationships—as part of inclusion.
- Hold leaders and staff collectively responsible for the quality of the inclusive environment.

We will not:

- Treat a pupil's diagnosis, SEND status or EHCP as the definition of their needs.
- Lower the academic or behavioural expectations we hold for pupils because they experience difficulty.

- Create a parallel curriculum where effective adaptation of the mainstream curriculum is possible.
- Assume that more adult support necessarily means better inclusion.
- Allow pupils to become unnecessarily dependent on adults to access learning.
- Treat reasonable adjustments as a replacement for teaching or as a way of quietly replacing the expectations held for other pupils.
- Remove pupils from high-quality classroom teaching unnecessarily.
- Allow the quantity of interventions, paperwork or separate provision to be mistaken for impact.
- Continue provision simply because it is established or well-intentioned when evidence shows that it is not helping.

The barriers we need to overcome

Our pupils experience different barriers to learning and participation. These are not fixed characteristics of children. They are the challenges our curriculum, teaching, relationships, routines and wider provision must respond to.

1. Literacy and communication

Some pupils arrive with weaknesses in reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, written communication or speech and language. These gaps can restrict access to an ambitious secondary curriculum and become increasingly difficult to overcome if they are allowed to compound.

Our response: a strong universal reading culture, including **Morning Reading**, explicit vocabulary teaching and high-quality classroom literacy, combined with timely assessment and targeted intervention where needed.

2. Attention, executive function and learning behaviours

Some pupils experience difficulties with attention, organisation, working memory, self-regulation or executive functioning. These can affect their ability to begin work, sustain attention, organise themselves, retain knowledge and participate successfully in the routines of school.

Our response: explicit routines, carefully designed teaching, manageable cognitive load, modelling, checking for understanding, scaffolding and deliberate teaching of independence.

3. Social, emotional and mental health, attendance and belonging

Anxiety, emotional regulation difficulties, poor attendance and wider pastoral needs can weaken a pupil's connection with school and interrupt learning. For some pupils, these barriers can also contribute to repeated behaviour incidents.

Our response: a calm, predictable and respectful culture in which pupils are known by adults, emerging patterns are identified early, expectations remain high and proportionate support is provided where needed.

4. Cognition and learning

Some pupils require additional scaffolding, explicit instruction, repetition, retrieval and carefully targeted intervention to acquire, retain and apply knowledge.

Our response: strengthen the quality of everyday teaching first, then provide targeted support where the universal offer alone is insufficient.

5. Sensory, physical and accessibility needs

Some pupils experience sensory, physical, medical or other accessibility barriers.

Our response: anticipate commonly occurring barriers in the physical and learning environment and make reasonable adjustments that enable pupils to participate fully in lessons and the wider life of the school.

6. Transition and independence

Transitions can be particularly significant for pupils with additional needs, especially entry to Year 7, preparation for KS4 and movement towards post-16 education, employment and adulthood.

Our response: use information from previous settings, pupils and families to prepare carefully for transition while ensuring that support progressively builds confidence and independence.

Our Strategic Priorities

Our inclusion strategy does not sit alongside the school's core work. **It is the way we do the core work.**

Our priorities are therefore not a separate list of SEND activities. They are the features of Saint Martin's that must work particularly well for pupils who find school hardest.

1. A strong universal offer

Our first priority is to ensure that the everyday experience of school is inclusive.

This means:

- high-quality adaptive teaching;
- explicit instruction and modelling;
- effective checking for understanding;
- appropriate scaffolding;
- explicit vocabulary and reading instruction;
- retrieval and manageable cognitive load;
- clear and predictable routines;
- reasonable adjustments where required;
- a calm and orderly environment;
- teaching pupils the behaviours and strategies needed for independence.

SEND provision should strengthen this universal offer rather than sit separately from it.

2. Reading, communication and access to the curriculum

Reading and language are the means through which pupils access almost everything else we teach.

We will maintain and strengthen **Morning Reading**, our reading culture and explicit vocabulary teaching. Assessment will identify pupils whose reading, literacy or communication needs additional support, allowing targeted intervention to be introduced promptly and reviewed for impact.

Our ambition is not simply that pupils receive reading intervention. It is that pupils become increasingly able to read, communicate and access the full curriculum independently.

3. Early identification and proportionate support

We will not wait for difficulty to become entrenched before responding.

KS2 information, baseline assessment, reading assessment, classroom observation, attendance, behaviour, pastoral information, pupil voice and parent voice will be brought together to identify barriers early.

Where additional support is required, Assess–Plan–Do–Review will provide a disciplined cycle:

identify → plan → implement → evaluate → adapt.

The absence of a diagnosis will never be treated as evidence that a need does not exist.

4. Adults who build independence

Additional adults can either increase access to learning or unintentionally increase dependency.

Our approach will therefore focus on **least help first**. LSAs will work alongside teachers to provide appropriate prompting and scaffolding while deliberately reducing support as pupils develop competence.

The measure of successful adult support is not how much help a pupil receives. It is whether the pupil is increasingly able to succeed without it.

5. Belonging, behaviour, attendance and participation

A pupil cannot flourish if they do not feel that they belong.

Our behaviour, attendance, pastoral and SEND information will be considered together so that patterns are identified early. We will maintain high expectations within a calm, predictable and respectful culture, while making reasonable adjustments where these enable pupils to participate successfully.

Inclusion extends beyond lessons. Pupils should be able to participate in **worship, trips, clubs, sport, enrichment and the wider life of Saint Martin's**. Where barriers exist, we will identify them and act.

6. Transition, partnership and the wider community

Inclusion is strongest when the adults around a pupil share information, understand their needs and work towards common outcomes.

We will strengthen information-sharing with primary schools, involve pupils and families in planning, use SEND review meetings effectively and work constructively with the local authority and external professionals.

Transition to Year 7, KS4 and post-16 destinations will be planned with an emphasis on successful participation and increasing independence.

Activity in this academic year

The activities below are the practical means through which we will strengthen these priorities. Funding will be drawn from core school resources, including the notional SEN budget, and the Inclusive Mainstream Fund as appropriate.

Activity	Type	Budget
Strengthen adaptive teaching as the universal offer. Whole-school professional development and implementation support focused on explicit instruction, modelling, checking for understanding, scaffolding, vocabulary, retrieval, manageable cognitive load and appropriate reasonable adjustments. **Barriers 1, 2 and 4.**	Universal	£_____
Strengthen literacy and reading provision. Maintain and develop **Morning Reading**, explicit vocabulary teaching and a strong reading culture, alongside targeted reading, literacy and communication intervention informed by assessment. **Barriers 1 and 4.**	Universal and targeted	£_____
Earlier identification and intervention. Strengthen the use of KS2 information, baseline and reading assessment, teacher observation, attendance, behaviour, pastoral information, pupil voice and parent voice. Use Assess–Plan–Do–Review where appropriate. **Barriers 1–6.**	Universal and targeted	£_____
Develop effective LSA deployment. Train and coordinate LSAs to use prompting, scaffolding and least-help-first approaches, working with teachers to increase access while developing independence. **Barriers 2 and 4.**	Universal and targeted	£_____
Behaviour, belonging, attendance and SEMH. Bring together behaviour, attendance, SEND and pastoral information to identify patterns early. Maintain high expectations within a calm, predictable culture and provide proportionate targeted support. **Barriers 2 and 3.**	Universal and targeted	£_____
Transition, family partnership and wider services. Strengthen transition information, pupil and parent engagement, SEND review meetings and liaison with external professionals, including preparation for KS4 and post-16 destinations. **Barriers 3, 5 and 6.**	Universal and targeted	£_____
Accessibility and participation. Review classrooms, resources and sensory considerations and make reasonable adjustments that enable pupils to participate in lessons, worship, trips, clubs, sport and enrichment. **Barriers 3, 5 and 6.**	Universal and targeted	£_____

Intended Outcomes: What will success look like?

We will not measure inclusion by the amount of activity undertaken. We will measure it by what pupils experience and what they are increasingly able to do.

Intended outcome	Success criteria
Pupils with SEND and additional needs access an ambitious curriculum and make strong progress.	Termly review of attainment and progress identifies gaps and trends and leads to action. Targeted provision demonstrates measurable impact from pupils' starting points. Quality assurance shows consistent adaptive teaching.
Pupils experience Saint Martin's as a calm, orderly and inclusive community.	Behaviour patterns are reviewed for repeated or disproportionate barriers. Reasonable adjustments are applied consistently where required. Targeted support is introduced where evidence indicates an unmet need.
Pupils at risk of disengagement attend, participate and belong.	SEND/additional-needs attendance and persistent absence are monitored against whole-school figures. Identified pupils demonstrate improved engagement following support. Pupil voice indicates that pupils feel safe, known, valued and able to participate.
Adult support builds independence.	LSA deployment reviews demonstrate effective least-help-first practice. Pupils increasingly begin, sustain and complete learning with reduced adult prompting where appropriate.
Needs are identified before they become entrenched.	Assessment and other evidence lead to timely action. Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycles are completed and reviewed. Support is not unnecessarily delayed pending diagnosis.
Pupils experience successful transitions.	Enhanced transition plans are in place where required. Information is transferred promptly. Pupil and parent voice informs planning. KS4 and post-16 destinations and transition arrangements are secured for vulnerable pupils.
Pupils participate in the whole life of Saint Martin's.	Participation in worship, enrichment, trips, clubs, sport and other opportunities is monitored. Barriers are identified and reasonable adjustments or additional support are provided where required.
Pupils experience the dignity, belonging and worth expressed through our Catholic mission.	Pupil voice and pastoral information demonstrate that pupils feel known, valued, safe and part of the community, regardless of SEND or additional need.

Implementation and Accountability

Inclusion is not a separate workstream owned by the SENCO. It is a shared leadership responsibility.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will maintain oversight of the strategy and the use of IMF and core/notional SEN funding. Leaders will monitor implementation through the school's existing quality assurance systems, including:

- attainment and assessment information;
- attendance and persistent absence;
- behaviour and participation data;
- pupil and parent voice;
- intervention reviews;
- lesson visits and work scrutiny;
- LSA deployment reviews;
- Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycles; and
- evidence of participation in the wider life of the school.

The central question in quality assurance will be:

Is what we are doing helping this pupil to learn, participate, belong and become more independent?

Where the answer is no, we will adapt the provision rather than continue it because it is established or well-intentioned.

Review and Improvement

2026–2027 is the first year of this Inclusion Strategy. From 2027–2028, the annual review will consider the impact of the strategy against the intended outcomes.

The review will draw on attainment, assessment, attendance, behaviour, participation, pupil and parent voice, intervention outcomes and quality assurance evidence.

We will ask three questions:

1. **What has improved for pupils?**
2. **Where has our provision not had the intended impact?**
3. **What does this tell us about what we should change next?**

This will ensure that the strategy remains a living part of school improvement rather than an annual compliance document.

Further information

This strategy should be read alongside the school's SEND Policy, Behaviour Policy, Accessibility Plan, Attendance Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant curriculum and teaching policies.

The final published version will confirm the budgeted cost of each activity and distinguish clearly between core/notional SEN expenditure and activity funded or enhanced through the Inclusive Mainstream Fund.