

# SEND School Improvement Programme:

Networked support for schools to enhance strategic leadership of SEND

**Starting January 2026**



# Whole Education is a network at heart

We believe that when people connect around a shared purpose, amazing things begin to happen. Joining our SEND School Improvement Programme offers:

- a bespoke piece of work to support strategic planning for SEND in your school
- a network of SEND leaders and professionals who are passionate about the right education for children.
- A wider network of leaders who build schools that provide a rigorous whole education.

Our network believes in an education that provides individuals with the foundational knowledge, skills and dispositions that are necessary to thrive throughout formal education and into life and work. We view the challenges facing many children and families with special educational needs as our challenge. We cannot wait for solutions to come from elsewhere. The time is now, and the responsibility is ours.

The programme and network brings with it considerable benefits for you and your school:

- A framework and collaborative process to support you and other leaders in your school to develop and embed inclusive cultures and practice
- Professional learning events with exceptional speakers alongside bespoke resources to inspire your staff
- Tools to help your school implement high quality strategic action plans
- Access to a rapidly growing network of professionals just like you and your school leaders, and support from a highly experienced team to help you get connected to them.

This year we are growing our network and the opportunities available within the programme. In the past schools have taken part in the programme through their MAT or LA. This year we have designed a programme to benefit individual or small groups of schools, who can realise the many benefits of our programme without relying on their MAT or LA.

Through this programme you will not only be guided through a tried and tested process for tightening up strategic leadership of SEND, leading to boosted outcomes, but also work in a small group with other schools, learning from and supporting each other, facilitated by our team of experts.

We look forward to working with you.



# Benefits for Schools

- **A ready made and tested process and ‘toolkit’** to evaluate and action plan for effective strategic leadership of SEND and inclusion
- **A programme focused on building confidence** and capabilities of leaders to ensure all children have high quality provision
- **Membership** of a national network of leaders in SEND
- **An extensive catalogue** of resources linked directly to the outcomes of your self-evaluation
- **Training** from leading national SEND experts for SENCOs and leaders at all levels - online, face-to-face and recorded
- **Aligned to the School Inspection Framework** through an explicit focus on intent, implementation and impact
- **Explicit opportunity for school leaders**, with their SENCOs, to build strategic coherence across different domains of school leadership as they relate to SEND and inclusion
- **Access to bespoke advice and support from leading experts** such as Gary Aubin, David Bartram and Natalie Packer



# Who is this for?

We offer support for settings in **all phases of education**

- Early Years
- Primary
- Secondary
- Post-16

We work with **mainstream, special, independent** and **Alternative Provision** settings.

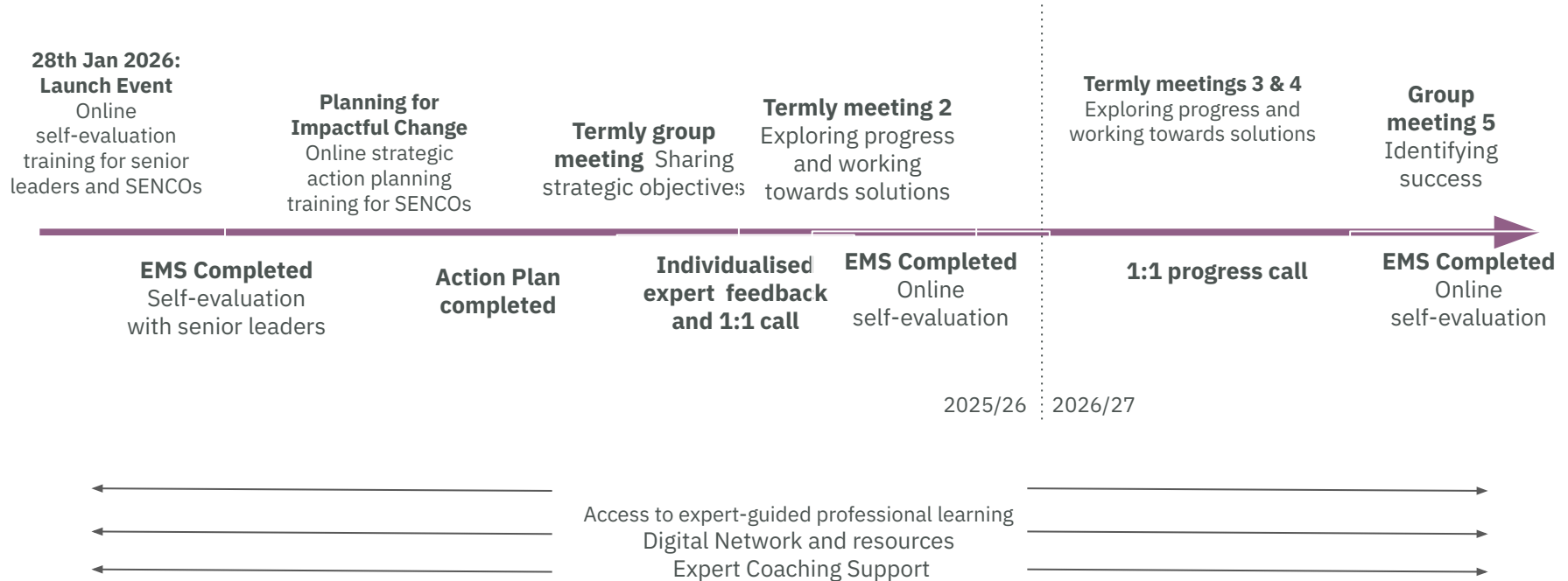
The programme is aimed at schools across a **range of governance types:**

- Stand-alone academies
- Maintained schools
- Federated schools
- Individual academies in MATs

It may be particularly useful for local groups of schools who work together through semi-formal arrangements, and want to use these arrangements to collectively drive provision for pupils with SEND. Please get in touch to discuss if you are interested but not sure if the programme applies to you.



# Core process and 18-month timeline





# A shared language and framework for improvement

Schools will undertake self-evaluation under 7 themes, each with a bank of statements to promote deeper thinking and understanding of the quality of provision with the school:

- Intent
- Implementation
- Impact
- Identification
- Work with learners and families
- Effective use of Teaching Assistants
- Provision Mapping

Training activities and resources are linked directly to the 7 themes, with a digital network that enables schools to navigate through the same themes - creating a language understood by all your staff.



# Strategic action planning

Schools will use their self-evaluation as a basis for developing a tailored action plan that addresses your most pressing priorities.

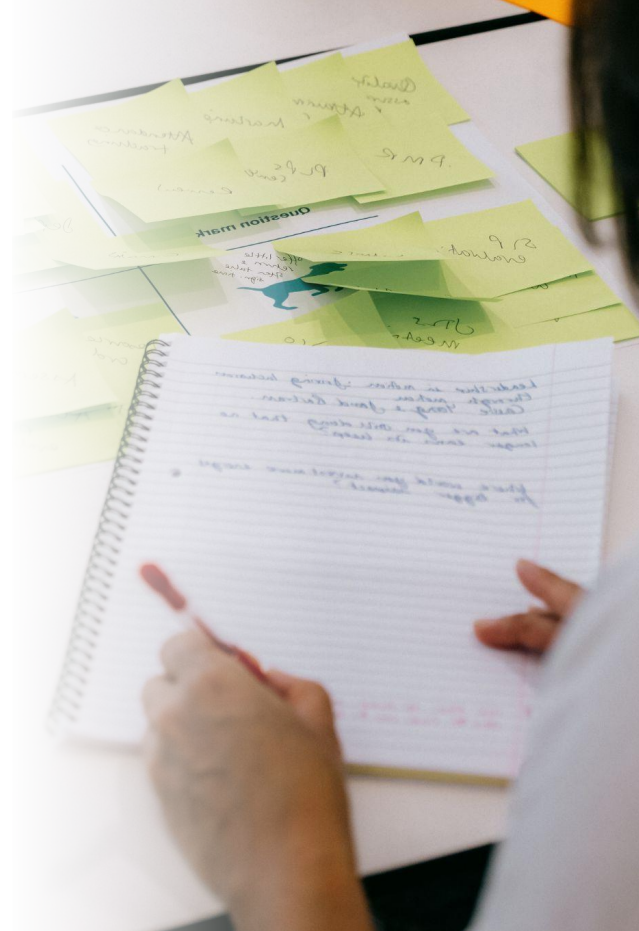
Action plans are intended to complement School Development Plans, and often overlap, while also giving space for more SEND-specific actions.

The plan is developed using the same, easy to use tool.

Every school has an external review of their plan by an expert from the Whole Education team, and receives individualised feedback both in the action planning tool, and via an additional 1:1 call.

Whole Education also signpost to resources and training that might support the actions you have developed.

Each school receives a second 1:1 call to enhance progress and support implementation of action plans.



# Peer Support

Each term you will take part in a facilitated group coaching session.

Once a term you will have an online 60-90 minute session, facilitated by Whole Education, where the focus is on sharing priorities, progress and practice.

You will work together in groups of 4, matched either by geographic location (to enable local schools to visit each other) and/or areas of strength and weakness in your self-evaluation (to enable practice sharing that is relevant to your priorities).

One school in each group will include an experienced SENCO who may, if appropriate, take a lead in sharing practice.

Groups may change throughout the year to make sure that you are well-matched with supportive peer groups.





# Whole Education SEND professional learning for 25/26

<b>28th Jan 2026: Launch and strategic leadership support</b>	<p>The programme begins with a launch event, led by David Bartram OBE, that covers the fundamentals of strategic leadership of SEND for Heads and SENCOs, followed by training for SENCOs on self-evaluation</p> <p>Once self-evaluations are completed, the event is followed up with another expert-led session on strategic prioritisation and action planning</p>
<b>Expertise into Practice</b>	<p>Online professional learning series throughout the year, designed to complement your action plans</p> <p>7 webinars across the year that combine expert inputs from leading voices on strategic leadership of SEND, with opportunities for discussion with our national network. We expect that SENCOs and other interested leaders will attend the sessions that feel most relevant to their own priorities. Elements of each session will also be recorded and uploaded to the Digital Network.</p>
<b>Digital Network</b>	<p>An online space solely for SENCOs and school leaders in the Whole Education network. This online space includes a dedicated bank of resources for SEND leaders in schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Recorded professional learning and webinars from previous years of the programme</li><li>- Guidance, resources, templates and toolkits related to each of the seven themes in our self-evaluation and action plan framework</li><li>- Navigation aides of the resource bank to allow highly personalised and time-efficient professional learning.</li></ul>
<b>Support for staff in your school</b>	<p>Although the focus of this programme is on strategic leadership of SEND, we also include various networked professional learning offers for staff in your school, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- New and aspiring SENCO professional learning</li><li>- Teaching and Learning for SEND webinar series</li><li>- Action research for classroom teachers</li><li>- Teaching Assistant professional learning</li></ul>

## Quotes from programme participants in 24/25

*"[The programme] allowed us to know exactly where we currently were as a school and what our next priorities were. It brought all of the staff together on the same page"* Headteacher

*"A reflective process enabling us to understand the area that needs the most attention"* SENCO

*"The self evaluation process was a really good way of getting all of the leadership team to discuss where we are at in terms of SEND"*  
SENCO

*"The opportunity to work alongside other SENCO's was great and is something that I haven't had the opportunity to do for a number of years. The discussions we had about the evaluations and action plans were really useful."* SENCO

*"Highly effective and very useful"* Headteacher

*The action planning tool was intuitive and easy to use but what I have most appreciated has been the fantastic signposting to resources from the action plan. I feel confident that when I watch clips / read articles recommended through Whole Education they are worth investing time in so rather than trawling through loads of articles to find what I need, it has been done for me. Huge thank you!"* SENCO

# Investment and next steps

- £995 for 18 months participation in the programme
- This price includes all aspects of the programme including tools, support, network access and professional learning
- The price also includes discounted access to Whole Education's [Summer Conference](#)
- Launch date **28th Jan 2026 - 8.45am -12pm**

## To find out more:

Read an [independent evaluation](#) of the programme

Book a call with Bart Shaw - Whole Education's Operation Lead for SEND School Improvement

[Bart@wholeeducation.org](mailto:Bart@wholeeducation.org)

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

“

Whole Education are helping to build the confidence and capability of leaders... their approach provides a 'networked' solution that connects SEND leaders in schools, facilitating them to share their knowledge and expertise and work together more effectively for the benefit of all SEND learners

**Edwina Grant OBE, in the foreword to Professor Philip Garner's independent evaluation of the programme**

”



## Get in touch with the team



**Gary Aubin**

Director of SEND

[gary@wholeeducation.org](mailto:gary@wholeeducation.org)



**Bart Shaw**

Operational Lead — SEND School Improvement

[bart@wholeeducation.org](mailto:bart@wholeeducation.org)



**Meredith Arthur**

Project Manager

[meredith@wholeeducation.org](mailto:meredith@wholeeducation.org)

wholeeducation.org | send@wholeeducation.org



@wholeeducation



@wholeeducation



@whole\_education\_uk