



Ellesmere
Primary School

Case Study: PINS Project at Ellesmere Primary School - PACC

1. Project Details

Ellesmere Primary School, an academy serving 378 pupils from Nursery to Year 6 is coming to the end of the PINS (Partnership for Inclusion and Neurodiversity in Schools) project to enhance parental engagement and foster an inclusive learning environment tailored to meet the diverse needs of its pupils. A fundamental objective of the project was to offer parent carers a safe, supportive space to engage with the Parent and Carer Council (PACC), strengthening home-school partnerships and ensuring that the school community collaboratively supports pupils' well-being and learning.

This intervention arises from the school's commitment to its vision of "Opening children's eyes to the world of possibility" and its values of respect, self-belief, co-operation, compassion, happiness, and responsibility. Given the increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the school's inclusive ethos, PINS aims to adapt the school environment and practises to better meet the needs of all children, particularly those who require additional sensory and emotional regulation support. The project aligns with the school's overall development priorities, particularly those focusing on inclusion, personal development, and behaviour, as highlighted in the Ofsted inspection report October 2024.

2. Implementation

The PINS project was implemented through a collaborative partnership with PACC, providing parent carers with opportunities to discuss their children's needs in a safe, welcoming setting. Recognising the importance of environmental factors in supporting pupils with sensory and emotional needs, the school undertook a comprehensive sensory audit across all classrooms as well as working alongside the NHS Occupational Therapy Team. This audit led to practical adaptations such as stripping back classrooms to natural and neutral colours and adding hessian backing to walls, creating calmer, less overstimulating learning spaces.

A pilot inclusive classroom has been established, incorporating flexible seating options including standing desks, low lighting, and tables designed to allow children to kneel, thereby fostering a calming and adaptable environment. To support pupils who become



overwhelmed during unstructured times, reading corridors have been created as safe spaces accessible during break and lunchtime. These corridors provide a quiet, comforting environment that pupils can independently access, helping to prevent behavioural incidents and support emotional regulation.

Throughout the project, staff training and reflective practice underpinned the adaptations, ensuring that the changes were embedded within teaching and pastoral support strategies. Parent carers were kept informed and involved, with plans to hold an inclusion workshop in March, to demonstrate the classroom adaptations and foster further understanding and engagement.

3. Evaluation and Impact

The PINS project has yielded positive outcomes in multiple areas. Feedback from parent carers indicates improved relationships with the school, fostering a sense of partnership and shared responsibility for pupil welfare. Observations and behavioural data show that pupils, especially those with SEND or sensory needs, exhibit better self-regulation and more positive attitudes to learning. The inclusive classroom pilot has shifted the approach from removing children for “brain breaks” to creating environments within classrooms that support ongoing regulation, allowing pupils to remain engaged with learning in a way that suits their individual needs.

Ellesmere works closely with parent carers to support children with food sensitivities, ARFID and PICA. Through PINS, staff have undertaken specialist training in this area and maintain strong, ongoing communication with families to ensure consistent, safe approaches that meet each individual child’s needs throughout the school day. The school also works closely with parent carers to accommodate the sensory needs of pupils who experience challenges at lunchtimes. Through this partnership, staff have identified effective strategies such as adapting the eating environment and implementing personalised adjustments to reduce sensory overwhelm and support children to be emotionally regulated in afternoon lessons and after school.

In addition, the school works with parent carers to make personalised adjustments to uniform, ensuring that sensory needs are understood and accommodated so that pupils feel comfortable, regulated and ready to learn.

The reading corridors have been particularly effective in reducing incidents during break times, providing pupils with a constructive alternative to leaving the playground environment altogether. This has contributed to improved behaviour and conduct across the school. Staff report that children using these spaces appear happier, feel safer, and



Ellesmere Primary School

are less overwhelmed, which aligns with the school's nurturing ethos and the 'Ellesmere Way' introduced by leadership.

These outcomes reflect the school's commitment to a broad and ambitious curriculum that supports all pupils, as noted in the Ofsted report October 2024 and demonstrate practical progress towards embedding inclusion within everyday school life.

4. Next Steps and Recommendations

Building on the success of the PINS project, Ellesmere Primary School plans to attend an Inclusion Panel on 6th February to explore funding opportunities for expanding inclusive classroom adaptations across more learning spaces. This will enable the school to scale the benefits of flexible environments and sensory-friendly classrooms for a larger proportion of pupils.

The school also intends to extend the reading corridors, ensuring that more pupils can access these calming spaces during unstructured times.

To deepen parent carer engagement and understanding, an inclusion workshop is planned for March, to showcase the classroom adaptations and promote collaborative approaches to inclusion.

Recommendations for other primary schools considering similar interventions include:

- Conducting a sensory audit to identify environmental factors impacting pupil well-being.
- Establishing flexible and adaptable classroom environments that support diverse learning and regulation needs.
- Creating accessible quiet spaces during break times to reduce behavioural incidents and support emotional well-being.
- Prioritising strong home-school partnerships through safe, ongoing dialogue with parents carers.
- Embedding inclusion within whole-school policies and practises, ensuring staff receive appropriate training and release time for monitoring and development.

These steps should be aligned with the latest Ofsted framework priorities, particularly focusing on inclusion, personal development, and safeguarding to ensure holistic pupil support.

5. Conclusion



Ellesmere Primary School

The PINS project at Ellesmere Primary School exemplifies a thoughtful, evidence-based approach to fostering inclusion and supporting the well-being of pupils and their families. Through environmental adaptations, collaborative partnerships, and innovative classroom practises, the school has enhanced pupils' ability to self-regulate and engage positively with learning. The project's impact on behaviour, parental relations, and pupil happiness underscores its value as a model for inclusive education.

Importantly, the project contributes to ongoing school improvement priorities and supports the vision of reaching for the stars by opening pupils' eyes to a world of possibility. As the school moves forward, the lessons learned from PINS will inform future initiatives and policy development, reinforcing Ellesmere Primary's commitment to nurturing every child's potential within a safe, inclusive, and inspiring educational community.

Images to support the culture of change at Ellesmere Primary School below:

Communication Board – Nursery



Inclusive classroom Year 3/4

Sofa area



Ellesmere
Primary School



Standing desks





Ellesmere
Primary School



Low/Mood lighting





Ellesmere
Primary School



We have even introduced low lighting in the admin office





Ellesmere
Primary School



Reading corridors around school





Ellesmere
Primary School





Ellesmere
Primary School

