

Inclusive Mainstream Fund

The Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) is a new Department for Education Grant (DfE) for all mainstream schools in England from 2026–27. The IMF is a £400 million annual fund for schools, automatically allocated through a formula paid either via local authorities or directly to trusts, and forms part of the wider SEND and inclusion reform programme.

The IMF supports a move to an “inclusive by design” system by enabling early support without diagnosis, reducing barriers for all pupils, strengthening whole-school inclusive practice, and reducing reliance on statutory processes.

Key Expectations for Schools

1. **Whole-School Inclusion. Inclusion must be embedded across:**

- Teaching and curriculum
- School culture and behaviour
- Leadership and governance

2. **Early Identification & Support**

- Needs identified early
- Support provided without waiting for diagnosis

3. **Strong Universal Provision**

- Focus on high-quality, adaptive teaching
- Remove “common and predictable” barriers

4. **Targeted Support**

- Evidence-based interventions for pupils requiring more than universal provision

Inclusion Strategy (Statutory Expectation)

All schools must publish an Inclusion Strategy by Dec 2026. This must set out how needs are identified; how barriers are removed and how inclusive practice is embedded. Support should not depend on EHCPs or diagnosis; inclusion should be everyone’s business and rooted in whole-school practice. Schools will need to clearly evidence their strategy and impact, clearly define the steps that have taken to improve inclusive practice and the mechanisms for evidencing impact.

Principles of Inclusion

Schools are expected to align with:

1. **Ambitious leadership** embedding inclusion
2. **Early, evidence-based support**

Children, Young People and Learning

SEND and Inclusion



3. **High-quality teaching for all learners**
4. **Inclusive wider opportunities** (clubs, trips)
5. **Culture of belonging and attendance**
6. **Strong partnerships with families/services**
7. **Accessible environments**

This information is intended as a summary, please use the following link [Inclusive mainstream fund: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#) to find published information from the Department for Education.