

ANNUAL

# INCLUSION STRATEGY



**Roots Federation**

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR EARLY YEARS

**2026**



# STATEMENT OF INTENT



Roots

At Heath Lane Nursery School, our vision is that every child is seen, heard and belongs. We want every child, including children with SEND, children eligible for EYPP, children known to social care, children learning English as an additional language and children facing other barriers, to feel safe, confident and respected, participate fully and make strong progress from their starting points.

Our ultimate objectives are to:

- provide an ambitious, inclusive early years curriculum for all children aged 3 to 5;
- identify barriers early and respond before difficulties become entrenched;
- improve communication and language outcomes, particularly for children experiencing disadvantage or SEND;
- strengthen children's independence, emotional regulation, physical development, wellbeing and readiness for Reception;
- ensure that children with more complex or rare needs receive timely, coordinated support;
- improve the accessibility of our environment and the consistency of adaptive teaching across the staff team.

This strategy focuses on a small number of high-impact activities. It builds on our existing strengths: home visits and family discussions; the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review; WellComm and DfE SEND assessments; visual supports; Zones of Regulation; sensory storytelling; structured storytelling; story sacks; outdoor learning; trauma-informed practice; and partnership with the Roots Federation, families and external professionals.

The strategy addresses the DfE's 7 principles of inclusion:

- ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion
- evidence-based support prioritising early intervention
- high quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners
- enriching provision beyond the classroom that all children can access
- a safe and respectful culture fostering belonging, attendance, and participation in learning
- strong partnerships with families and wider services
- inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility

# STATEMENT OF INTENT

Families will help shape implementation through home visits, ongoing discussions, parent feedback, transition conversations and consultation about individual support. Children's views will be gathered through observation, communication, play and key-person relationships. The school will also work with the Federation SENDCo, the school SEND Lead, primary schools, local authority services, health professionals and other partners to share expertise and improve provision.

The strategy supports the school improvement priorities of improving the learning environment, strengthening adult interactions during child-initiated learning, closing gaps through the Every Child Programme and improving communication and language outcomes. It is also responsive to the previous inspection finding that all staff should develop greater expertise in modelling and teaching planned vocabulary. In line with the current Ofsted framework, leaders will monitor inclusion through safeguarding, inclusion, curriculum and teaching, achievement, attendance and behaviour, personal development and well-being, early years, and leadership and governance.



# BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

Roots

This details the key barriers to learning and participation that we have identified amongst our pupils, necessitating inclusive universal approaches and targeted support.

| NUMBER | DETAIL OF BARRIER TO LEARNING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | <p>The nursery operates mainly within one large room. The acoustics make it difficult for some children to hear, attend, process spoken language and sustain shared interactions, particularly children with hearing needs, speech, language and communication needs, sensory processing differences or emerging self-regulation difficulties. The current layout does not provide a consistently available, clearly defined co-regulation or quieter space where a child can calm, recover and return to learning. The combination of high levels of activity, competing sounds and limited separation between areas can affect engagement, wellbeing, participation and the quality of child-initiated learning.</p> |
| 2      | <p>The school is supporting children with increasingly complex and overlapping needs, including children who are eligible for EYPP and also have SEND, developmental differences or a diagnosed or suspected complex need. These children may experience a combination of communication, emotional regulation, sensory, physical, developmental and family-related barriers. Overlapping disadvantage and SEND can make it more difficult to identify the most effective adaptations, monitor progress accurately and ensure that support is coordinated without lowering expectations or reducing access to the full curriculum.</p>                                                                                  |
| 3      | <p>Children and families do not always have timely access to universal services or specialist advice. Waiting lists for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, paediatric assessment, educational psychology and other services can delay assessment, advice, training and intervention. This can leave the school supporting emerging or complex needs for an extended period while seeking external input, increasing the importance of confident ordinarily available provision, clear escalation routes, careful documentation and effective partnership working.</p>                                                                                                                                  |

# BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION

Roots

This details the key barriers to learning and participation that we have identified amongst our pupils, necessitating inclusive universal approaches and targeted support.

| NUMBER | DETAIL OF BARRIER TO LEARNING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4      | The range of need includes children with life-limiting or medically complex conditions as well as children whose needs can be met through reasonable adjustments and staff training. Rare or uncommon diagnoses may require significant environmental, curricular, communication, medical or physical adaptations for which readily available training and specialist guidance are limited. This creates a risk of inconsistent practice, staff uncertainty, delayed adaptation and avoidable restrictions on participation unless the school develops a structured process for obtaining expertise, sharing knowledge and maintaining continuity when advice is unavailable or delayed. |



# ACTIVITY IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



| DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ACTIVITY TYPE | TOTAL BUDGETED COST |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <p>Inclusive acoustics, regulation and accessible learning environment project.</p> <p>Building on the school's existing sensory spaces, visual supports, communication aids and accessible layout, leaders will undertake an environmental audit with staff, families and relevant specialists. The project will prioritise acoustic improvements, zoning within the large room, reduction of competing noise, clearly defined low-stimulation areas and a consistently available co-regulation space.</p> <p>The space will include developmentally appropriate visual cues, regulation resources and a clear route back into play and learning; it will not be used as exclusionary provision. Staff will be trained to use co-regulation, predictable transitions and environmental adaptations consistently. This activity reflects DfE best practice, which identifies calm spaces, improved acoustics, reduced distraction, visual supports and environments that meet sensory and regulatory needs as important elements of inclusive practice.</p> <p>Evidence and implementation will be informed by the <u><a href="#">Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools (DfE)</a></u>.</p> <p>Principle: inclusive environments with continuous improvements to accessibility. Barriers addressed: 1, 2, 4</p> | Universal     |                     |



# ACTIVITY IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



| DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | ACTIVITY TYPE | TOTAL BUDGETED COST |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <p>Inclusion leadership, evidence and implementation cycle.</p> <p>Leaders will establish a concise inclusion implementation cycle that brings together SEND, EYPP, social care, attendance, wellbeing, communication and language, and transition information. Building on the existing Federation SENDCo, school SEND Lead and assess, plan, do and review process, the school will use a shared inclusion overview to identify common barriers, record adaptations, check whether support is reaching children promptly and evaluate impact.</p> <p>The school will use staff feedback, family views, observation, child development information and professional advice to refine provision rather than waiting for a formal diagnosis. This will be implemented in manageable stages, with clear ownership, staff support and review points.</p> <p>The approach is consistent with DfE expectations that schools identify cohort barriers, use evidence, monitor impact and embed inclusion through leadership and governance. It will be supported by the <a href="#">Guide to implementation (EEF)</a>, and <a href="#">Using research evidence (EEF)</a>.</p> <p>Principle: ambitious leadership and governance that embeds inclusion.</p> <p>Barriers addressed: 2, 3, 4</p> | Universal     |                     |



# ACTIVITY IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



| DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ACTIVITY TYPE | TOTAL BUDGETED COST |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <p>Consistent adaptive interaction and vocabulary practice.</p> <p>Building on the school's existing structured storytelling, story sacks, Phase 1 phonics, sensory storytelling, WellComm assessment and language-rich curriculum, the school will formalise a small, shared repertoire for adult interactions during both adult-led and child-initiated learning. This will include modelling planned vocabulary, commenting rather than over-questioning, sustained shared thinking, extending children's utterances, giving processing time, using visual and concrete cues, checking understanding and adapting language without reducing ambition. Leaders will provide coaching, observation and feedback so that all adults, including those identified in the previous inspection report, can confidently model and revisit important vocabulary across the day.</p> <p>The approach will be reviewed through learning walks, observations of child-initiated learning, vocabulary sampling and children's communication and language assessments. The evidence base supports high-quality adult-child interaction, explicit vocabulary teaching, shared reading, storytelling and professional development in early years communication and language.</p> <p>This is supported by the <a href="#"><u>Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (EEF guidance report)</u></a>, and the <a href="#"><u>Resource library for educators (Speech and Language UK)</u></a>.</p> <p>Principle: high quality adaptive teaching with curriculum designed for all learners. Barriers addressed: 2, 3, 4</p> | Universal     |                     |

# ACTIVITY IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



| DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | ACTIVITY TYPE | TOTAL BUDGETED COST |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <p>Early targeted communication, participation and regulation support.</p> <p>Building on the school's use of WellComm, DfE SEND assessments, Zones of Regulation, visual timetables, now-and-next boards, structured play and adult modelling, the school will provide short, purposeful small-group or individual support for children whose needs cannot be met through the universal offer alone. Support may include vocabulary and concept teaching, listening and attention, narrative and storytelling, social communication, emotional vocabulary, requesting help, transitions and re-entry to learning after regulation. Activities will be linked directly to the curriculum and children's interests, delivered by trained staff and reviewed at agreed points.</p> <p>Progress will be measured through baseline and follow-up observations, communication and language assessments, participation records and child-level assess, plan, do and review records. Support will be available without waiting for diagnosis or specialist assessment, while remaining consistent with professional advice when this becomes available.</p> <p>The use of targeted, evidence-informed language support and professional development is supported by the <u>Promising Programmes (EEF)</u>, and the <u>Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (EEF guidance report)</u>.</p> <p>Principle: evidence-based support prioritising early intervention.<br/>Barriers addressed: 2, 3, 4</p> | Universal     |                     |

# ACTIVITY IN THIS ACADEMIC YEAR



| DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ACTIVITY TYPE | TOTAL BUDGETED COST |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <p>Family and wider-services inclusion pathway.</p> <p>Building on home visits, detailed family discussions, transition planning, Federation expertise and existing work with external professionals, the school will formalise a single pathway for families whose children have complex, rare, medically significant or emerging needs. This will include a named school contact, a clear record of reasonable adjustments, accessible sharing of strategies, planned review dates, support while families are waiting for specialist services, and structured information-sharing with receiving Reception schools.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the school will seek advice from local authority and health partners, use professional recommendations consistently and request specialist training or outreach for uncommon needs. Families will be invited to contribute cultural, linguistic, medical and developmental knowledge, and to evaluate whether support is improving their child's participation and wellbeing. The pathway will also strengthen attendance by identifying practical or emotional barriers early and agreeing supportive responses with families. This extends existing partnership practice rather than creating a separate service. DfE guidance highlights collaboration with families, wider services, transitions, shared expertise and support for attendance as important aspects of inclusive practice.</p> <p>This is supported by the <u><a href="#">Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools (DfE)</a></u>, and the <u><a href="#">Attendance toolkit for schools (DfE)</a></u>.</p> <p>Principle: strong partnerships with families and wider services.<br/>Barriers addressed: 2, 3, 4</p> | Universal     |                     |

# MEASURING THE IMPACT



| INTENDED OUTCOME                                                                                                                                    | SUCCESS CRITERIA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Intended outcome 1: Children access a calmer, more accessible environment that supports listening, regulation, engagement and participation.</p> | <p>An environmental audit and action plan are completed. The agreed co-regulation and quieter space is available, appropriately supervised and used consistently. Staff observations show reduced avoidable noise and distraction, improved access to adult interaction and more successful transitions. Children who previously needed frequent adult withdrawal from learning increasingly return to play or learning after regulation. Family and staff feedback indicates improved confidence in the learning environment.</p>                                                    |
| <p>Intended outcome 2: The quality and consistency of adult interactions improve, particularly during child-initiated learning.</p>                 | <p>All staff receive agreed training, modelling or coaching. Observations show adults consistently modelling planned vocabulary, extending children's language, giving processing time, using visuals and checking understanding. The proportion of observed interactions judged to meet the school's agreed standard increases from the baseline established at the start of the strategy. Children's vocabulary, listening, attention and communication outcomes show progress from individual starting points, with particular monitoring of children with SEND, EYPP and EAL.</p> |
| <p>Intended outcome 3: Children with overlapping SEND, EYPP or complex needs receive earlier, better-coordinated support.</p>                       | <p>The inclusion overview is reviewed at least termly. Every identified child has current assessment information, agreed adaptations and review dates. Children are not left without an appropriate school response solely because they are awaiting diagnosis or specialist advice. Progress reviews show whether support is improving attainment, participation, wellbeing, engagement and independence. Gaps between identified groups and their peers narrow where this is realistic, while individual progress from starting points is prioritised.</p>                          |
| <p>Intended outcome 4: Targeted communication, participation and regulation support improves children's access to learning.</p>                     | <p>Targeted support has a recorded baseline, intended outcome, delivery record and review. Children demonstrate measurable improvement in relevant skills, such as understanding and using vocabulary, joining group activity, communicating needs, sustaining attention, managing transitions or returning to learning. Participation in adult-led and child-initiated learning increases, and incidents of distress or disengagement reduce where these were identified as barriers. Support is adapted, continued or withdrawn on the basis of evidence.</p>                       |

# MEASURING THE IMPACT

Roots

**Intended outcome 5: Families experience greater trust, clarity and involvement in decisions about inclusion.**

Families contribute to home visits, reviews and transition planning. Records show that family knowledge, culture, language and priorities inform provision. Families receive clear information about adaptations and how to support continuity between home and nursery. Feedback shows improved understanding of the school's inclusive offer and greater confidence that concerns are listened to and acted upon.

**Intended outcome 6: Children with rare, complex, physical or medical needs participate safely and meaningfully in nursery life and transition to Reception.**

Individual risk assessments, care information and reasonable adjustments are current and understood by relevant staff. Staff receive appropriate briefing or specialist training when required. Children participate in indoor learning, outdoor learning, stories, physical development, community experiences and transition activities as fully as possible. Receiving schools receive timely, accurate information and children demonstrate improved independence, belonging and readiness for their next stage.

**Intended outcome 7: Inclusion is embedded in leadership, governance and school improvement.**

Leaders and governors review implementation and impact during the academic year. Monitoring covers attendance, progress in learning, communication and language, wellbeing, belonging, participation, engagement and behaviour, including the experience of children with SEND and children eligible for EYPP. Findings inform the next annual strategy, budget decisions and professional development priorities.

