The Derby Way

Derby's Graduated Response to meeting needs

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Introduction

The Derby Way sets out what all Derby schools are expected to provide for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It describes how inclusive practice should be delivered through a graduated approach in our schools and settings, and how leaders, teachers and support staff can work together to ensure that every child achieves their best possible outcomes.

Derby City Council's vision for inclusion goes beyond compliance. The Derby Way promotes a culture where inclusion is embedded in daily classroom practice, leadership decisions and relationships with families. It reflects local priorities identified through SENCO networks and the SEND Partnership Board. We gather feedback from children and young people through the Young SEND ambassadors and their parents through the Parent Carer Forum.

Core Principles

- Inclusion is everyone's responsibility.
- High quality, inclusive teaching is the first step in meeting SEND.
- The graduated approach (Assess → Plan → Do → Review) underpins all support.
- Partnerships with families and agencies are essential.
- Inclusive practice should be visible in every classroom, corridor and playground.
- Leaders ensure staff are confident in differentiating and adapting for the broad areas of special need. (Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Physical and Sensory).
- Many adjustments are universal and benefit all pupils, not only those with identified SEND.
- SENCOs will lead through collaboration with access to communities of practice and local training networks.

To support the delivery of the Derby Way approaches described in this document we have introduced a ***'Derby Way resource bank'*** this tool provides practical ways of delivering an ***inclusive and adaptive curriculum.*** **It provides examples of presentation 'what you might observe' and practice 'what you might do and deliver'.**

Graduated Approach to Practice: Framework

Level of Support	Description	Examples of Provision

Universal	High-quality teaching available to all pupils including reasonable adjustments.	Visual timetables; chunked instructions; movement breaks; consistent routines.
Targeted	Short-term or small-group approaches where extra support is needed.	Speech & language groups; precision teaching; nurture interventions.
Specialist	Support involving external professionals or specialist settings.	STEPS input; EHC Plans; enhanced resource bases.

Working in Partnership

Effective support for children with SEND depends on strong partnership working between schools, parents, carers, and external professionals. Families should feel listened to and involved in all decisions that affect their child. Communication should be open, respectful, and solution focused.

Derby Education settings demonstrate partnership by sharing clear, jargon-free information and recognising parents as equal partners. Schools (including mainstream, nurseries, and academies) **must** publish information on their websites about their arrangements for meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

This information includes the:

- SEND Policy, and
- SEND Information Report.

Schools and settings should also publish their Accessibility Policy on their website.

The information should be freely available to download from the website and **must** be updated annually (any changes during the academic year should be updated as soon as possible).

Multi-agency working is most successful when roles are clear and there is a shared understanding of expected outcomes.

Schools should record and monitor partnership work throughout the Graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review cycle) and reflect on family feedback at least annually. This may be done in a variety of ways. For example: parental view forms, SEND parent questionnaires, SEND parent events.

Partnership Levels of Support

Level of Support	Description	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	Day-to-day inclusive communication with families.	Weekly class newsletters; open-door times; clear SENCO contact information.
Targeted	Structured liaison for pupils requiring specific support plans.	Termly joint reviews; parent workshops (e.g., anxiety, phonics).
Specialist	Multi-agency planning with external professionals.	TAC meetings; coordinated EHC planning with LA services.

Assessing Needs & The Graduated Approach

All Derby schools follow a Graduated Approach to identifying and meeting needs. The Assess → Plan → Do → Review cycle ensures that provision is carefully matched to individual pupils and that progress is continually monitored.

Embed the graduated approach within day-to-day practice. Emphasise early identification, clear intervention tracking, and collaboration with families. SEN Support plans are concise, outcome-focused, and reviewed at least termly with pupils and parents.

Teachers remain responsible for the progress of all pupils, even when support staff or external agencies are involved.

Use evidence from classroom practice—pupil voice, work samples, and formative assessment—to inform each stage of the cycle. Focus on impact, not volume of paperwork.

Graduated Response Table

Level of Support	Purpose	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	Identify emerging needs early.	Classroom observation; screening tools; differentiation recorded in planning.
Targeted	Implement short-term interventions.	SEN Support Plan; measurable outcomes; termly review with family.
Specialist	Coordinate multi-agency involvement for complex needs.	EP advice; external reports embedded into strategies; consider EHC assessment.

Teaching & Learning

High quality, inclusive teaching is the foundation for meeting the needs of all pupils. Staff use a range of inclusive approaches and reasonable adjustments including visual supports, structured routines and scaffolded tasks.

Adjustments where possible are planned in advance. Consider communication needs, processing time, sensory differences, and emotional regulation when designing learning. Reduce reliance on one-to-one support by prioritising scalable classroom approaches.

Support staff work collaboratively with teachers to deliver adaptations and promote independence.

Where one-to-one support is used, it is time-limited, impact-monitored, and includes a clear exit strategy to build independence.

Inclusive Teaching Framework

Level of Support	Description	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	High quality teaching embedded for all learners.	Dual-coded instructions; visual timetables; chunked tasks; movement breaks; manipulatives.

Targeted	Short-term adaptations for identified needs.	Small-group phonics; precision teaching; reading fluency; emotion-coaching check-ins.
Specialist	Individualised strategies based on professional advice.	AAC/assistive tech; SLT/OT-designed visuals; personalised sensory plans.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

All staff share responsibility for supporting the emotional well-being of children and young people. Schools create environments that promote positive relationships, resilience and emotional literacy. Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils are supported by teaching assistants or specialist staff. High Quality Teaching is the best approach for all pupils, including those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Embed emotional well-being at whole-school level through staff modelling, consistent routines and accessible safe spaces. Prioritise proactive regulation to reduce crisis responses; align pastoral approaches with everyday classroom practice.

Pupils who require targeted support have needs identified through observation, discussion and monitoring.

Use regular pupil voice to shape support. Practical tools include emotion check-ins, self-regulation boxes and calm corners.

Identification of SEMH needs when recognising all behaviour is a form of communication.

SEMH Support Framework

Level of Support	Purpose	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	Promote emotional literacy and regulation.	Whole-class emotional coaching; daily wellbeing check-ins; Meet and Greet; restorative conversations.
Targeted	Provide structured interventions.	Nurture groups; Zones of Regulation; ELSA; Behaviour Box; EBSNA tookit; Lego therapy; small-group resilience.

Specialist	Coordinate external support.	CAMHS liaison; Educational Psychology consultation; multi-agency panels.

Environment & Resources

An inclusive learning environment is structured, organised and predictable. Classrooms promote independence, accessibility and comfort for all pupils.

Use the environment as a teaching tool: reduce cognitive load, ensure purposeful displays, and make resources easy to locate. Balance stimulation with calm and remove unnecessary clutter.

Resources are age-appropriate and adapted where required to ensure access.

Complete an annual Inclusive Environment Checklist covering signage, lighting, noise reduction, sensory toolkits and flexible seating.

Equipment and resources for SEND are maintained and accessible.

Teach pupils explicitly how to use assistive tools and technology to build independence and self-advocacy.

Environment & Resource Framework

Level of Support	Purpose	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	Support access for all pupils.	Visual signage; tidy workstations; calm corners; accessible manipulatives.

Targeted	Adaptations for individuals or groups.	Alternative seating; TEACCH workstation, ear defenders; personal resource packs.
Specialist	High-level adjustments guided by professionals.	Personalised sensory diets; AAC devices; adapted furniture.

Staff Development & Training

Ongoing professional development enables staff to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively. Training covers understanding of specific needs and inclusive strategies that are relevant to the setting and their context. For example, approaches to encourage early communication, language and emotional regulation.

Maintain a live SEND CPD calendar aligned with local priorities. Establish SEND Champions in phases/subjects and use peer observation to embed practice. Induct new staff on inclusive environments, early identification and graduated approach procedures.

SENCOs provide regular updates and promote collaborative reflection.

Build reflection into staff meetings and appraisal. Use short audits, gather staff voice, use coaching or peer-observation to celebrate and strengthen inclusion.

Staff Development Framework

Level of Support	Purpose	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	All staff understand inclusive principles.	Whole-school CPD on differentiation, UDL and sensory regulation.
Targeted	Focused training for teams or phases.	Joint planning clinics; co-coaching; SEND drop-in sessions.
Specialist	Expert-led professional learning.	SLT CPD; Autism Education modules; EP workshops.

Transitions

Successful transitions maintain progress and emotional well-being. Transitions occur between settings and also classes, year groups and key stages.

Plan transitions early with information sharing at least one term in advance. Focus on continuity of support rather than re-assessment. Use visual booklets, videos and social stories routinely.

To ensure **successful SEND transitions**, Derby city settings consider the following strategies:

1. **Early planning:**
   Start transition discussions and preparations well in advance to anticipate challenges and build a bridge for pupils to cross comforta bly.
2. **Transition planning with partners:**
   Engage teachers, parents, pupils, and support staff in the planning process to ensure everyone is on the same page.
3. **Individual support:**
   Recognise that SEND pupil's needs are unique and plan accordingly, using tools like visual aids and personalised transition plans.
4. **Communication:**
   Maintain open lines of communication with all stakeholders to keep routines consistent and provide a sense of security.
5. **Collaboration:**
   Work closely with parents, carers, health professionals, and school staff to ensure effective support and coordinated planning.
   These strategies can help foster resilience and ensure academic and social success for SEND pupils.

Transition Examples

Type of Transition	Universal Practice	Targeted / Specialist Practice
EYFS → Primary	Home visit; pupil passport/profile shared with Reception staff.	Staggered starts; multi-agency meetings; visual booklet.
Primary → Secondary	Visits; transition days; SENCO liaison.	Individual transition plans; phased induction; mentor allocation.
Within-school / class-to-class	Changeover sessions; display photos of new staff, transition booklets.	Calm corner set up in new class; early family meeting.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Quality Assurance

Schools regularly monitor the impact of provision for pupils with SEND and use findings to refine practice. Evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative measures.

Adopt a triangulated quality assuarance approach: outcomes, learning walks, and pupil/parent voice. Define impact through engagement, attendance, regulation and independence as well as attainment.

SENCOs work with leaders to evaluate how effectively the school meets the needs of all pupils.

Complete an annual SEND action plan with termly reviews that is shared with the senior leadership team and governors.

Schools seek feedback from pupils and families on their experiences of SEND provision.

Embed feedback into reviews and planning. Schools signed to the Derby Inclusion Charter use this as part of self-review.

Quality Assurance Framework

Level of Review	Focus	Examples of Practice in Derby Schools
Universal	Evaluate classroom practice and outcomes.	Learning walks; book looks; teacher feedback.
Targeted	Review impact of interventions/plans.	Intervention trackers; pupil progress meetings.
Specialist	Multi-agency evaluation and strategy.	SEND Review with LA/MAT; external peer review; governor link visits.