



**Astrea Academy Trust**

## **Inclusion Policy**

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## 1. Introduction and Legislative Compliance

- 1.1. This policy sets out Astrea Academy Trust's expectations for all our schools to ensure all pupils in our care receive the best educational experience.
- 1.2. All schools must ensure that all pupils; including those with protected characteristics, as defined by the [Equalities Act 2010](#), are able to flourish and thrive within the school community.
- 1.3. The protected characteristics in which pupils must not be discriminated against are: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- 1.4. **As a result, inclusion is a term used to describe the process of ensuring equity of learning opportunities for all children and young people. It is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. Inclusion is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school.**
- 1.5. In this respect, this policy is concerned specifically for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those experiencing disadvantage – either through socioeconomic or care factors, those who are More Able (MABLE), those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and those who are identified as a minority ethnic group (MEG).
- 1.6. Inclusion does not mean that all pupils necessarily learn in the same way or together, but that practices are adapted to take account of all learners' needs, and without discrimination against any identified protected characteristics; this is equity in learning.
- 1.7. All pupils, including those identified as having SEND, have the same common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life.
- 1.8. All schools must operate in accordance with the law as set out in the following:
  - The Education Act 1996
  - The Children and Families Act 2014
  - The Special Educational Needs and Disability regulations 2014
  - The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) regulations 2014
  - The Equality Act 2010
- 1.9. All schools in England **must** have regard to the [Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) as it provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. Schools must fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEN or disabilities in light of the guidance set out.
- 1.10. Under the Equality Act (2010), all schools have duties towards individual disabled children and young people. They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services required by disabled children and young people to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.
- 1.11. The [Teachers' Standards \(2012\)](#) makes clear the expectation for all *teachers* to "adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils". Teachers must "have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them." (Standard 5)



## 2. Equality and Inclusion

- 2.1. All pupils should be equally valued in school. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) states that “avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports the agenda of improving attainment and progression for all pupils. Good education and skills are crucial for opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life”.
- 2.2. In addition, in England, equality and diversity are specified factors that must be considered during school inspections, such as those led by Ofsted.
- 2.3. Schools have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality and to foster good relations for “an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.” (EHRC, 2014)
- 2.4. With this in mind, all schools must ensure that a culture of tolerance, which embraces diversity, is promoted across the school community, so that all pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.5. Educational inclusion, therefore, is about equal opportunities, which lead to success, for all pupils, whatever their age, gender or gender identification, relationship preference, ethnicity, impairment, prior attainment, or socio-economic background.

## 3. Vision

- 3.1. Underpinned by the core values of **scholarship, tenacity and curiosity**, the Astrea mission, ‘Inspiring beyond Measure’, reflects the belief that an exceptional education for all is rich and empowering beyond the narrow confines of formal examination success.
- 3.2. The vision for Inclusion across the Trust reiterates the Astrea mission, acknowledging that an exceptional education will provide a rich and empowering experience which produces success through wider and academic outcomes and where ‘success’ is defined in terms of the individual learner.

## 4. Pupils with SEND

- 4.1 The January Census (2021) identifies that the percentage of pupils in England with special educational needs is now 15.8% and those with a statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan is now 3.7%; both representing increases compared to 2020.<sup>2</sup> The percentage of the total pupil population in England on SEN Support is now 12.2% and this again represents an increase from 2020.
- 4.2 The most common primary type of need in England has remained the same compared to last year.

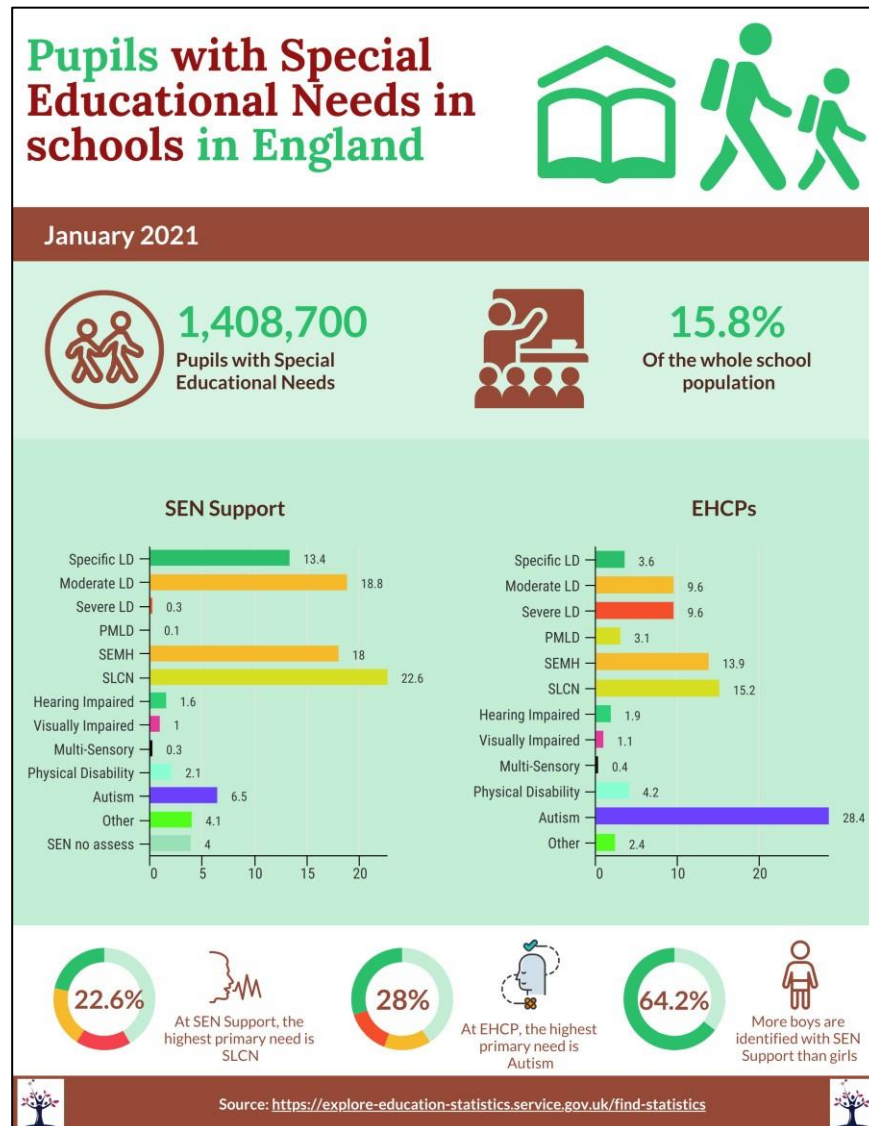
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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted (2021) *School Inspection Handbook*, paragraph 261, descriptor for Good

<sup>2</sup> DfE; Special Education Needs in England: January 2021: <https://explore-educationstatistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>



- 4.3 23% of all pupils on SEN Support have Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as a primary type of need in January 2021. 28% of all pupils with a statement or EHC Plan have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as a primary type of need in January 2021; representing a decrease from 2020.
- 4.4 The breakdown of primary type of need is taken from the DfE, as per the footnote, and provided below:



- 4.5 There is; however, a clear distinction between ‘underachievement’, often caused by a poor early experience of learning, and ‘special educational needs’.
- 4.6 Some pupils may be underachieving but will not necessarily have a special educational need; it is our responsibility to identify this quickly and ensure that appropriate support is put in place to help these pupils ‘catch up’.



- 4.7 As recognised in the SEND Code of Practice, “a child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or has a disability which prevents him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions”.
- 4.8 For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.
- 4.9 A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).” (Code of Practice, updated January 2015)
- 4.10 The Code of Practice (2014, updated January 2015) makes clear the four broad areas of Special Education Need, these are:
- Communication and Interaction
  - Cognition and Learning
  - Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
  - Sensory and/or physical needs
- 4.11 In line with the Code of Practice, all schools follow the graduated approach to a learners’ special educational needs. This support should take the form of “a four-part cycle through which earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil’s needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes.”



(The Graduated Approach)



## 5. Working Together across Education, Health and Care

- 5.1 Astrea Academy Trust is committed to joint working arrangements with education, health and care bodies and professionals to secure effective outcomes for all pupils in our schools.
- 5.2 The SEND Code of Practice confirms that at a strategic level, partners must engage children and young people with SEN and disabilities and their parents in commissioning decisions, so that useful insights can be gained into how to improve services and outcomes.
- 5.3 When commissioning training for professionals, partners should consider whether combined services delivery, training or a common set of key skills would help professionals and providers adapt to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND in a more personalised way.
- 5.4 This could include commissioning 'key working' roles to support children and young people with SEND and their parents, particularly at key points such as diagnosis, EHC plan development and transition.
- 5.5 Each Astrea school will cooperate with the relevant Local Authority in developing and reviewing its local offer.
- 5.6 The Astrea Central Team will work with our schools, local and national providers to secure the services needed to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These services could include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education psychology, mental health services, other health and social care professionals.

## 6. Disadvantaged Pupils in Receipt of the Pupil Premium

- 6.1 For those pupils who have been in receipt of free school meals (FSM) at any point in the last six years, are children of Service personnel who have served at any point in the last six years, or are children who have been looked after for 1 day or more, adopted from care, or who have left care under a special guardianship order, a residence order, or a child arrangements order, the Pupil Premium is additional funding provided to schools in order to address two policies:
  - To raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities to reach their potential; and
  - Supporting children and young people with parents in the regular armed forces.
- 6.2 As at September 2021<sup>3</sup>, rates of pupil premium funding are as follows:

• Pupils in Reception to Year 6	£1,345
• Pupils in Year 7 to Year 11	£955
• Looked After Children	£2,345
• Previously Looked After Children	£2,345
• Service Children	£310

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<sup>3</sup> <https://bit.ly/3stW6Cu>



## 7. More Able Pupils

- 7.1 A pupil is considered to be 'more-able' if they perform at a level that exceeds that which is expected for their age group; this may be in one or more areas of learning.
- 7.2 The National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE)<sup>4</sup> believes:
- Defining ability is complex and evolving
  - High ability includes all domains of human achievement
  - Many children are capable of high achievement given the right opportunities
  - There should be no ceiling on how many children in a school are defined as highly able
  - Every school can and should provide opportunities for their highly able to flourish and achieve.
- 7.3 NACE also states that learners of high ability may demonstrate all or some of the following characteristics:
- Able to master the rules of a domain easily and transfer their insights to new problems
  - Make connections between past and present learning
  - Work at a level beyond that expected for their age group
  - Produce original and creative responses to common problems
  - Shows curiosity, asks questions and enjoys engaging in debate or discussion.

## 8. Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Pupils from Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG)

- 8.1 The term EAL learner is often used interchangeably with 'bilingual learner' (DfES 2007); the government definition of a bilingual learner is that it refers to 'all pupils who use or have access to more than one language at home or at school – it does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all languages'. (DfES 2003)
- 8.2 Government research (2003) identifies that 'minority ethnic groups are differentiated based on a combination of categories including 'race', skin colour, national and regional origins and language...this is based on the assumption of an 'ethnic majority' that is white, of British origin, and English-speaking'.
- 8.3 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are considered a minority ethnic group across Astrea. DfE research (2010) uses the umbrella term to embrace all Gypsy and Traveller groups as well as Roma from Eastern and Central Europe. Within this, Roma is a generic term used to describe many different groups of Romani people including for example, Gypsies, Tsiganes, Sinti Kale, and Romanichal.
- 8.4 To ensure equity of learning for our EAL and MEG pupils, it is important that recognition and respect is given to the value and significance of the first language and the associated cultural expectations and norms. "EAL learners, their families / carers and communities are not homogenous groups; it is important to know and understand who they are, in order to effectively support their needs."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [www.nace.co.uk](http://www.nace.co.uk)

<sup>5</sup> National Subject Association for EAL (2017) [www.naldic.org.uk](http://www.naldic.org.uk) [Accessed 1 March 2017]





- 8.5 It is important to note that “significant differences of culture, outlook, narrative and experience should be recognised and respected. It is important that all pupils should feel that they belong – to the school itself, the neighbourhood and locality, and to Britain more generally. Belonging involves shared stories and symbols; a shared sense of having a stake in the well-being and future development of the wider community; a sense that one is accepted and welcomed, and that one is able and encouraged to participate and contribute.” (Derbyshire EA 2003)
- 8.6 English as an Additional Language (EAL) is not considered a Special Education Need.
- 8.7 Differentiated or personalised work and individual learning opportunities must be provided for children who are learning English as an Additional Language as part of the Trust’s provision for vulnerable pupils; this may be underpinned by the approaches highlighted for the disadvantaged and more able, where appropriate.
- 8.8 The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) have identified five principles of good practice in EAL teaching and learning ( 1999). These were also endorsed by Ofsted (2004) and are:
- Activating prior knowledge in the learner
  - Providing a rich context
  - Encouraging learners to communicate in speech and writing
  - Pointing out key features of English explicitly
  - Developing learners’ independence.
- 8.9 Research<sup>6</sup> suggests that EAL learners benefit from a combination of focused provision, which is underpinned by inclusive practices in three areas, as demonstrated below:



- 8.10 Teachers should plan to meet these needs by identifying pupils’ levels of proficiency using *The Bell Foundation EAL Assessment Framework*, see appendix 3 for an example, then selecting appropriate classroom strategies, TA strategies or out-of-class support and home learning from *The Bell Foundation EAL Classroom Support Strategies* document, see appendix 4, for an example.

<sup>6</sup> New Arrivals Excellence Programme Guidance; Primary and Secondary *National Strategies* | Crown copyright 2007 [Accessed 1 Jan 2018]



- 8.11 The British Council’s mantra “Good for EAL, Good for All’ should be remembered (British Council, 2017)<sup>7</sup> as: ‘new vocabulary is not only important for beginners. Advanced EAL learners and learners with English as a mother tongue need to acquire the more formal vocabulary and register required for academic success and will benefit from these teaching and learning strategies.’
- 8.12 As of September 2018 the DfE removed the requirement for schools to track proficiency levels in English language in addition to curriculum-level data;<sup>8</sup> see appendix 2 for a summary overview. However; the official position from NALDIC recommends that:
- Schools continue to assess for internal purposes
  - The DfE review this decision.
- 8.13 As a result, **Astrea schools will be expected to continue using proficiency levels as a key indicator of language proficiency and to assist in the early identification of support.**

## 9. Expectations of all Schools

9.1 At the heart of educational inclusion is provision which meets the needs of all pupils.

9.2 All schools are *committed* to providing:

- Quality First Teaching (QFT) which meets the needs of all pupils and which is appropriately accessible;
- Effective systems for tracking and monitoring progress, so that early intervention can address gaps in learning; this includes, but is not exclusive to, monitoring and evaluation through learning walks and work scrutiny, across all pupil groups;
- Opportunities to extend and challenge all pupils, so that they can achieve their potential;
- Effective lines of communication between home and school, so that through collaboration, a shared understanding of ‘what success looks like’ is achieved for each pupil and their family.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://eal.britishcouncil.org/teachers/great-ideas-introducing-new-vocabulary>

<sup>8</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/651601/2017\\_to\\_2018\\_School\\_Census\\_Guide\\_V1\\_3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/651601/2017_to_2018_School_Census_Guide_V1_3.pdf)



9.3 All schools are *required* to have the following:

- **SEND Information Report** (All schools updated annually);
- **Accessibility Plan** for disabled pupils (All schools updated every 3 years);
- **Equality Policy and Equality Objectives**; details of how compliance with the public sector equality duty is met (All schools updated every 1 year for the policy and every 4 years for the objectives);
- **Pupil Premium Strategy** (All schools updated annually) which has two main parts and details:
  - Part A – an explanation of the strategy to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the school intends to use their pupil premium (and recovery premium) funding in the current academic year, and the evidence that supports each activity.
  - Part B – should explain what the outcomes of the school’s strategy in the previous academic year were for disadvantaged pupils.
- **Coronavirus Catch-Up Premium Evidence of Impact Statement for 2020-21** (All schools);

9.4 It is *best practice, but not a requirement*, for all schools to also have the following:

- SEND Action Plan for Improvement;
- Pupil Premium Action Plan for improvement;
- A coordinated provision map, which identifies additional support / strategies by pupils and which can be filtered according to pupil characteristics;
- Links to disadvantaged, SEND, more-able and EAL attainment / progress / wider outcomes in the whole-school Improvement Plan.



## 10. Responsibilities of the Trust

- 10.1 To ensure the expectations of all schools are upheld, the Trust undertakes a variety of Quality Assurance (QA) activities on a minimum of an annual basis, from which strengths and areas of development are identified to inform best practice and priorities for improvement.
- 10.2 For September 2021, the following activities are offered as part of the core offer for all schools:
- Regular **SENCO Coaching**;
  - **SENCO Network meetings** to inform and share best practice;
  - **Pupil Premium Lead Network meetings** to inform and share best practice.
- 10.3 Additional support is available to all schools, on request, and can include any of the following:
- SEND Review;
  - Pupil Premium Strategy Review;
  - Staff training, research projects and conferences, as detailed within the Astrea CPD Institute offer;
  - External review preparation and guidance;
  - Leadership of Mental Health Review;
  - Behaviour Review;
  - Effective Use of Teaching Assistants Review;
  - EAL Review.
- 10.4 Any reviews undertaken are reported on formally and shared with Transition Board members / Local Education Consultative Committees, as appropriate, for further discussion and challenge.
- 10.5 Where a school is identified to have significant weaknesses or areas for development, supplementary support is provided by the Central Team, through Trust Performance Reviews (TPR), to ensure accelerated improvements are made, leading to effective and consistently good practice to meet the needs of learners.



## Appendix 1








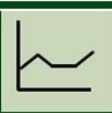

Department  
for Education

### What are the most effective ways to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement?



Evidence for  
Excellence in  
Education

Research undertaken by NFER has identified seven building blocks that are common in schools which are more successful in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

<p><b>1. Whole-school ethos of attainment for all:</b> Schools have an ethos of high attainment for all pupils and avoid stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as all facing similar barriers or having less potential to succeed.</p> 	
<p><b>2. Addressing behaviour and attendance:</b> Schools ensure effective behaviour strategies are in place, respond quickly to poor attendance and provide strong social and emotional support, including through working with families.</p> 	<p><b>3. High quality teaching for all:</b> Schools emphasise 'quality teaching first' and provide consistently high standards by setting expectations, monitoring performance and sharing best practice.</p> 
<p><b>4. Meeting individual learning needs:</b> Staff identify each pupil's challenges and interests. They seek the best strategies to help each pupil make the next step in his or her learning. Schools provide individual support for specific learning needs and group support for pupils with similar needs.</p> 	<p><b>5. Deploying staff effectively:</b> Schools devolve responsibility to frontline staff, use their best teachers to work with pupils who need the most support and train teaching assistants to support pupils' learning.</p> 
<p><b>6. Data driven and responding to evidence:</b> Teachers use data to identify pupils' learning needs, review progress every few weeks and address underperformance quickly. They have manageable Assessment for Learning systems, which provide clear feedback for pupils. Schools use evidence to make decisions about their support strategies.</p> 	<p><b>7. Clear, responsive leadership:</b> Senior leaders set ever higher aspirations and lead by example. They hold all staff accountable for raising attainment, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance. They share their thinking and invest in staff training.</p> 

This briefing, by Caroline Sharp, Shona MacLeod, Amy Skipp and Steve Higgins, is based on national research with primary, secondary and special schools across England. A full research report and a summary for school leaders are also available from the Department for Education and NFER websites: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/research> and [www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01)



## Appendix 2

Where 'Proficiency in English' is required, schools will assess the position of their EAL pupils against a five-point scale of reading, writing and spoken language proficiency (see below) and make a 'best fit' judgement as to the proficiency stage that a pupil corresponds most closely to:

- **New to English [Code 'A']:** May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying / repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.
- **Early acquisition [Code 'B']:** May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative / accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.
- **Developing competence [Code 'C']:** May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.
- **Competent [Code 'D']:** Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.
- **Fluent [Code 'E']:** Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.

Alongside the scale outlined above, 'Not Yet Assessed' [Code 'N'] is available for use where the school has not yet had time to assess proficiency.



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