

Inclusion Spotlight (2026-27)

Embedding inclusive teaching practice across core training

Introduction

The Inclusion Spotlight is a deliberately sequenced strand of the Mid Essex ITT Core Training curriculum. It is designed to strengthen trainee knowledge, application and professional judgement relating to inclusive classroom practice. Inclusion is not taught as a discrete area of study. Instead, it is woven through the wider curriculum, enabling trainees to consider barriers to learning, participation and belonging through the lenses of curriculum, behaviour, assessment, safeguarding and adaptive teaching. The Inclusion Spotlight reflects the Mid Essex ITT CORE values of Committed, Optimistic, Research-informed and Effective.

Curriculum Rationale

Historically, trainee exposure to inclusion often occurs through isolated SEND sessions or individual pupil case studies. Whilst valuable, these approaches can sometimes limit trainees' understanding of inclusion as an integral component of everyday classroom practice. The Inclusion Spotlight was developed to ensure inclusion is encountered repeatedly throughout the training curriculum, enabling trainees to make increasingly sophisticated links between theory, classroom practice and pupil experience.

Key Design Principles:

- Inclusion is part of high-quality teaching
- Professional judgement matters
- Pupils are more than labels
- Identity and belonging matter
- Barriers are multifaceted

Curriculum Design

Autumn	Spring	Summer
<i>Secure Foundations</i>	<i>Revisit & Practice</i>	<i>Look Ahead & Transition</i>
Recognising Barriers	Adapting Teaching	Anticipating Need

The Inclusion Spotlight is carefully sequenced across the training year to build trainee knowledge and application over time.

Pupils are revisited across the year under different curriculum lenses, including behaviour, assessment, and curriculum design. This creates a spiral curriculum, enabling trainees to develop increasingly sophisticated understanding rather than encountering inclusion as isolated examples. This reflects our commitment to sustained learning and ensures that trainees can apply inclusive thinking flexibly in different contexts.

Pupil Cohort

The Inclusion Spotlight does not introduce a new case study in every session. Instead, trainees will repeatedly encounter the same twelve pupils across behaviour, curriculum, assessment and safeguarding themes.

This approach supports:

- ✓ Retrieval of prior learning
- ✓ Deeper understanding of pupil experience
- ✓ Comparison between different barriers
- ✓ Stronger professional judgement
- ✓ Long-term retention and application

Inclusion Spotlight Pupil Cohort (2026-27)				
Pupil	Year	Area	Inclusion Theme	Learning Barriers
Freya 	7	Dyslexia	Literacy access	Reading, writing and working memory demands
Malik 	9	ADHD	Self-regulation	Attention, organisation and executive functioning
Theo 	10	ASD	Predictability and participation	Social communication, sensory and processing demands
Elena 	8	SLCN	Language access	Understanding and using academic language
Ibrahim 	8	EAL	Language development	Accessing curriculum through an additional language
Rowan 	10	MYA	Curriculum continuity	Gaps in prior learning and social integration
Megan 	9	SEMH	Emotional regulation	Anxiety, engagement and wellbeing
Reece 	11	LAC	Relationships and safety	Trust, self-regulation and belonging
Hannah 	10	Young Carer	Hidden disadvantage	Fatigue, responsibility and attendance pressures
Alex 	12	Identity	Inclusion and representation	Belonging, visibility and psychological safety
Annika 	13	HPA	Stretch and challenge	Under-challenge and perfectionism

				
Kieran 	8	Medical	Curriculum access over time	Interrupted learning and attendance

Inclusion Spotlight Deliberate Revisit Strategy (2026-27)				
Pupil	Year	Area	Sessions	Revisit Rationale
Freya	7	Dyslexia	How Children Learn → Literacy → Transition	Demonstrates progression from cognition to curriculum access to transition planning.
Malik	9	ADHD	<i>Not revisited</i>	
Theo	10	ASD	SEND → Group Work	Moves from identification of need to participation within classroom pedagogy.
Elena	8	SLCN	<i>Not revisited</i>	
Ibrahim	8	EAL	Assessment → EAL	Develops understanding from assessment validity to language acquisition support.
Rowan	10	MYA	<i>Not revisited</i>	
Megan	9	SEMH	Motivation → Behaviour → SEMH	Shows increasing sophistication in understanding emotional regulation and behaviour.
Reece	11	LAC	<i>Not revisited</i>	
Hannah	10	Young Carer	Form Tutor → Stakeholders	Highlights the move from noticing hidden needs to coordinating support.
Alex	12	Identity	PSHE → Post-16	Places identity and belonging at the heart of inclusion and progression.
Annika	13	HPA	Adaptive Teaching → Assessment → Metacognition	Demonstrates that challenge requires more than additional work.
Kieran	8	Medical	Technology → Data	Explores how attendance, medical needs and learning continuity interact.

Curriculum Mapping

Core Training Session	Inclusion Spotlight	Intended Outcome
Establishing High Expectations	Self-regulation & behaviour (Malik - ADHD)	Understand that high expectations and adaptive support are complementary, not contradictory. Recognise the difference between deliberate non-compliance and executive functioning difficulties.
The Role of the Form Tutor	Hidden disadvantage (Hannah - Young Carer)	Appreciate the pastoral role of the tutor and develop awareness that some barriers are invisible within lessons but significantly affect school experience.
How Children Learn 1: Introduction to Cognitive Science	Working memory & cognitive load (Freya - Dyslexia)	Recognise how literacy difficulties interact with memory, processing and learning. Consider how cognitive science applies to learners with SEND.
Curriculum 1	Curriculum coherence & gaps in learning (Rowan - MYA)	Understand that curriculum sequencing cannot be assumed. Consider what happens when pupils join without the same curriculum journey as their peers.
Learners with SEND	Identifying barriers rather than labels (Theo - ASD)	Develop a nuanced understanding of autism as a set of potential learning barriers and strengths rather than a checklist of characteristics.
Adaptive Teaching 1	Language as curriculum access (Elena - SLCN)	Recognise that pupils may struggle because of language demands rather than conceptual difficulty.
Motivation Supporting All Learners	Engagement & emotional wellbeing (Megan - SEMH)	Understand that motivation is often shaped by emotional experiences, belonging and previous success rather than effort alone.
Assessment 1: Formative Assessment	Valid assessment (Ibrahim - EAL)	Learn to distinguish between what a pupil knows and what they can communicate in English.
Developing Learners' Literacy, Oracy & Reading Skills	Reading access across the curriculum (Freya - Dyslexia)	Move from recognising dyslexia to considering practical curriculum adaptations that improve literacy access.
Adaptive Teaching 2: Stretching the Most Able	Challenge as inclusion (Annika - HPA)	Broaden understanding of inclusion to include highly attaining pupils whose needs may be overlooked.
AI Technology in the Classroom	Technology & continuity of learning (Kieran - Attendance)	Consider how technology can maintain access to learning when attendance is disrupted.
Behaviour 2: De-escalation, Reboot & Reset	Regulation of behaviour (Megan - SEMH)	Apply de-escalation approaches and understand how SEMH may influence classroom behaviour.
Assessment 2: Summative Assessment & Homework	Challenge & mastery (Annika - HPA)	Explore how assessment can identify deep understanding rather than merely task completion.
Curriculum 2: The Wider Curriculum, PSHE, Careers & SRE	Identity, belonging & representation (Alex - Identity)	Understand that inclusive curriculum design affects participation, safety and learner identity.
Working with Expert Colleagues & Stakeholders Tackling Bullying & Discrimination	Multi-agency working & family engagement (Hannah - Young Carer)	Appreciate the importance of collaboration between school, family and external services.
Supporting Learners with SEMH Needs	SEMH-responsive teaching (Megan - SEMH)	Move beyond behaviour management towards proactive support for emotional wellbeing.
Supporting Learners with EAL	Language development (Ibrahim - EAL)	Develop practical strategies that support curriculum access while maintaining academic challenge.
How Children Learn 2: Metacognition & Self-Regulated Learning	Self-regulated learning (Annika - HPA)	Explore how highly attaining pupils benefit from explicit metacognitive instruction rather than increased workload.
Behaviour 3: Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)	Trauma & relationships (Reece - LAC)	Understand how trauma can affect behaviour, trust, memory and engagement in learning.
Data	Attendance & progress (Kieran - Attendance)	Learn to interpret attendance, attainment and progress information with contextual understanding.
Group Work	Participation in collaborative learning (Theo - ASD)	Consider how group work may create both opportunities and barriers for autistic learners.
KS2 & Transition	Transition & literacy continuity (Freya - Dyslexia)	Consider how schools anticipate potential barriers before pupils experience difficulty.
Post-16 Education	Belonging, aspiration & progression (Alex - Identity)	Explore how inclusion extends beyond access to lessons and supports future pathways, identity and participation.

Identity, Belonging & Inclusion

Some profiles include specific lived contexts but are designed to help trainees understand broader principles of inclusion.

For example, Alex's profile focuses on identity, belonging, and feeling safe in the classroom (within a context of gender identity). This enables trainees to explore how:

- A pupil's sense of identity shapes participation and engagement
- Classroom culture influences confidence and contribution
- Inconsistent expectations or language can create barriers

These principles apply more widely to any pupil who may feel:

- Uncertain about belonging
- Visible or different from peers
- Sensitive to peer or adult response

This ensures that inclusion is addressed as a whole class and whole school responsibility, rather than linked narrowly to specific labels. The Inclusion Spotlight recognises that inclusion extends beyond additional needs and encompasses belonging, representation, identity and safety.

Delivery Model

Typical Structure: 10-15 minutes embedded within Core Training

Activities may include:

- Discussion prompts
- Reflection tasks
- Scenario analysis
- Adaptive teaching planning

Trainee Outcomes

As a result of this approach, trainees develop the ability to:

- Recognise a wide range of barriers to learning across different contexts.
- Understand inclusion as both pedagogical and systemic.
- Adapt teaching without lowering expectations.
- Make informed decisions about behaviour, curriculum, and assessment.
- Plan proactively for a diverse range of learners.

Trainees are therefore better prepared to meet the needs of all pupils as they enter the Early Career Teacher phase.

Evaluation & Quality Assurance

The effectiveness of the Inclusion Spotlight is considered through:

- Trainee reflection and professional discussion
- Mentor feedback and observation focus
- Trainee confidence and readiness for independent teaching
- Evidence of adaptive teaching in planning and classroom practice, captured through progression against relevant Mid Essex ITT assessment indicators at internal monitoring points throughout the training year.

This ensures that inclusion is evaluated in terms of observable practice and pupil access to learning, rather than intention alone.

Alignment

This approach aligns with the expectations of the [ITE Inspection Toolkit](#) and the [ITTECF](#) by:

- Embedding inclusion across the curriculum rather than isolating it
- Ensuring coherent sequencing and progression
- Supporting trainees to apply theory to practice
- Preparing trainees to teach all pupils effectively

It also reflects the [SEND Code of Practice](#), which emphasises:

- High-quality teaching as the first response
- Removal of barriers to learning.
- Inclusive mainstream provision.

Summary

Our Inclusion Spotlight is a carefully sequenced part of the Core Training curriculum that enables trainees to develop, revisit, and apply inclusive teaching practice over time. It reflects our CORE values by sustaining focus on pupil need, foregrounding potential, drawing on research, and ensuring that inclusion has a direct impact on classroom practice and pupil learning.

The Inclusion Spotlight cohort and curriculum mapping will be reviewed annually in response to curriculum evaluation, trainee feedback and programme priorities.

Notes:

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AI-generated pupil profiles: All pupil names, images and profiles used within this project are AI-generated and entirely fictional. They do not represent real pupils, and no individual can be identified from the information provided. Any resemblance to an actual person is coincidental.