



Solihull's Statement of Intent for Education (2026)

Vision

"Learning for life"

"Education provides a strong foundation through which all adults can succeed in life, contribute meaningfully to society and flourish when in further education and employment"

It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, agency and confidence to unlock their potential by giving children and young people in Solihull...

a feeling of belonging

equity of access to high quality education

ability to achieve academically and personally

a chance to develop their knowledge and skills

ways to build their values and character

space to feel happy, safe and accepted and thrive

Introduction

Solihull is proud of its strong and collaborative education system. We remain committed to working together to ensure every child and young person has strong early foundations which they can build upon throughout their education journey - receiving the best possible education and support; despite the increasing pressures on schools, settings, staff and families.

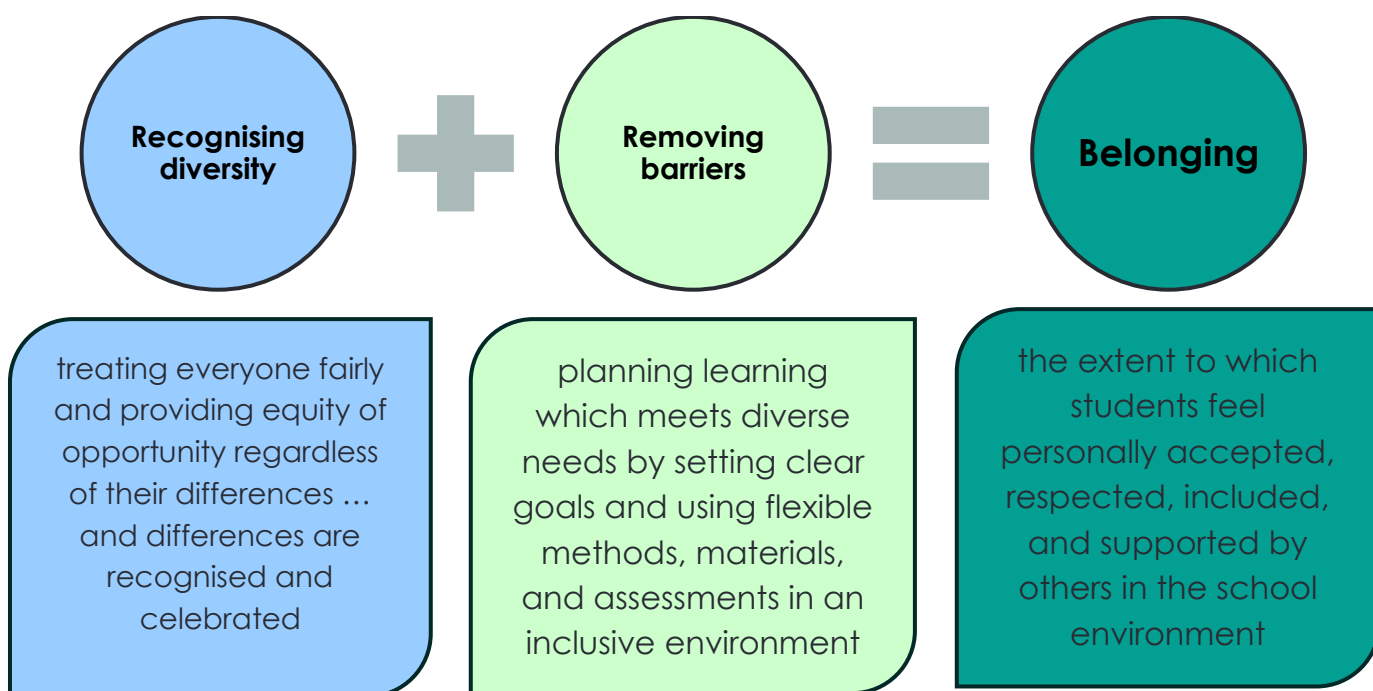
This Statement of Intent sets out our aspiration – our shared vision, values, and responsibilities for the future of education in Solihull. It reflects our commitment to building a cohesive, inclusive, and equitable system through partnership across schools, academy trusts, services, families, and the local authority.

Belonging

Children and young people who feel like they belong are more likely to thrive, engage in learning, build positive relationships and thrive emotionally, socially and academically. Belonging features heavily in strong schools and settings.

We are focused on creating a sense of belonging for everyone through:

- promoting **equity, diversity, and inclusion** in all settings
- designing learning environments and approaches using **Universal Design for Learning** and **relational approaches** to anticipate and remove barriers
- working together to ensure **presence, participation, and progress** for everyone in the education community



Shared Responsibilities

There will be an equal partnership and also collective responsibility between schools and academies, parents and families, children and young people, trusts and the local authority.

- **Schools and academies:** deliver high-quality, inclusive education and safeguard their pupils. Ensure best use of resources to achieve pupil outcomes.
- **Academy trusts:** accountable to the Department for Education for the education of pupils within their academies. They operate with autonomy from, but in partnership with, the local authority.
- **Local authority:** provide strategic oversight of the education of all children and young people within Solihull; ensuring fair access and championing inclusion and SEND.
- **Parents and families:** actively participate in their children's education and development to achieve strong home-school partnerships.

Well established networks, such as Solihull School's Strategic Accountability Board (SSSAB), school collaboratives, SENCo network, moderation groups and peer networks promote collaboration and strengthen ways of working across.

We will build a system rooted in relational practice; where trust, collaboration and shared accountability underpin every interaction. To do this we will:

Communicate clearly with honesty and kindness	Assume positive intent and stay open-minded	Listen to understand, not just to reply
Ensure all voices are heard equally	Speak with accountability, not blame	Approach difficult conversations with respect
Protect confidentiality and seek consent	Share decisions and own the outcomes	Reflect regularly and practice self-awareness

Education Offer

Solihull schools and settings will align their offer around six core themes:



Presence

ensuring that all children and young people are supported to attend their school; and on time



Participation

creating a climate within school where all children and young people feel welcome and valued so they belong



Progress

developing policies and practices that maximise the achievement and ambitions of all children and young people



Curriculum & Skills

delivering a broad, balanced curriculum with life-ready skills to enable positive progression



Collaboration

strengthening partnerships across schools, settings and services so resources have the biggest impact



Community

working with families and services to support children and young people's holistic development

These all require support from staff, children and young people, parents and families and wider services to be provided in the best way to maximise outcomes. Belonging comes when factors **within school**, **between schools** and **beyond school** are well connected.

Context

We have a well-regarded education system supported by strong collaboration between schools, services, and the local authority.

There are 83 schools across primary, secondary, special and alternative provision; with a mix of schools maintained by the local authority, managed by a single academy trusts (SAT) or multi-academy trusts (MAT):

- 59 primary schools (23 maintained, 5 SAT and 31 MAT)
- 15 secondary schools (3 SAT, 12 MAT)
- 6 special schools (4 maintained, 2 MAT)
- 3 alternative provision schools (1 maintained, 2 MAT)

The [education sufficiency strategy](#) ensures children can access the right setting at the right time, and in their local community. Key pressures include:

- housing growth driving demand for new schools and expanded provision;
- falling birth rates leading to surplus places elsewhere; and
- increasing specialist provision demand requiring expansion of special schools and enhanced mainstream inclusion.

An alternative provision strategy is being developed which reflects the needs of children and young people in Solihull.

The [education strategic plan](#) sets out borough-wide led by the local authority. This responds to the financial challenges facing education and links to the dedicated schools grant management plan aimed at improving financial stability of high needs spend. This includes the CAIPE (Collaborative Approach to Improving Pupil Experience) matched-funded programme aimed at improving pupil's presence, participation and progress whilst reducing unnecessary and costly escalation of need.

The [additional needs strategy](#) ensures children and young people with additional needs or special educational needs (SEND) can get the support they need across education, health and care services. Solihull has more children and young people with identified SEND needs:

- 3.8% of children and young people (aged 0-25) have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP)
- 4.37% Solihull school children have an education, health and care plan
- 15.1% of Solihull school children and young people receive SEND support

The [Education quality and improvement plan and offer for schools](#) identifies how the local authority will work with maintained school, academies and other stakeholders to drive school improvement and support school leaders in developing borough wide collaboration. This includes a detailed attendance plan.

Solihull benefits from a strong network of school-led centers of excellence which provide professional development to attract, develop and retain the best teachers and leaders. These include the [Teaching School Hub](#), the [Research School](#) and a number of [Curriculum Hubs](#).

Solihull schools are working together in a number of ways. This includes:

- supporting children to have access to a [Smartphone free childhood](#) to help foster a childhood free from the pressures and risks associated with smart phones and social media;
- working collaboratively across primary and secondary phases to develop more cohesion between the curriculum and skills development through the Cradle to Career initiative
- creating, and sharing, evidence-based best practice through collaboration between mainstream and special schools and sharing best practice events. Schools continue to share resources created whilst working with the University of Derby

The wider children's services partnership provides essential support to schools and their children and young people and families. Many aspects of this are set out in the [early help strategy](#) and [exploitation reduction strategy](#). [Togetherness](#) (previously Solihull Approach) training is being cascaded across the partnership, and with schools, to provide a consistent model for approaching childhood development and emotional wellbeing. The offer is facing a major overhaul as the implementation of the Families First Programme progresses.

The regional improvement for standards and excellence ([RISE](#)) aims to break the link between young people's backgrounds and their future success. RISE advisors are working with some of our schools to drive higher standards against the national priorities of attainment (English and maths focus), attendance, quality of the reception year and mainstream inclusion.

Current outcomes

Presence:

- In the 2025/26 autumn term, attendance remained steady at 93.3%. Attendance in primary exceeds national average but persistent absence in secondary is just below. Children less likely to attend regularly include those with EHCPs, those in Years 8-11 and those living in North Solihull.
- Overall absence rates and persistent absence for the 2024/25 autumn and spring terms have improved slightly from the same period in the previous year and are broadly in line with national rates.
- In December 2025, 660 children were attending alternative provision. 75% had an identified SEND need, with highest levels of primary need in SEMH (38%) and ASD (21%). Successful reintegration back into mainstream education continues to slowly increase each year; reaching 15 in 2024/25.
- In 2025 more 16-17 year olds continued into education, employment or training in Solihull, including those with SEND (93.6% total and 90.1% SEND)

Participation:

- In 2024/25 Solihull schools had lower suspension rates (8.17) but a higher exclusion rate (0.19) than regional and national comparators.
 - Exclusions are particularly high for children with EHCPs, children in Year 7 and those from a white and black Caribbean heritage.
 - Fewer children who are in receipt of free school meals receive suspensions (12%) or permanent exclusions (60%) in Solihull than seen nationally.
- In 2025, 7% of primary aged children and 12% of secondary aged children with EHCPs attended mainstream schools outside the borough.

Progress:

- Despite a dip in 2025, more children continued to achieve the expected level in the phonics check (84%) than nationally (80%). Most significant drops were for children with an EHCP and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- At Key Stage 2 in 2025 more children continued to meet expected standards in reading, writing, and maths (66%) than nationally (62%).
 - There are continued improved outcomes for children with an EHCP.
 - Whilst children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve in line with those nationally, there has been a local decline for this group.
 - Children from most ethnic groups achieve in line with, or above, those nationally with the exception of white and Asian and white and black Caribbean children.
- At Key Stage 4 in 2025 young people continued to achieve above national comparators, with those achieving above a Grade 4 or 5 much in English and Maths combined much higher (73% and 57% respectively).

Next Steps

We are waiting for the government to publish the education [white paper](#) which is likely to set out some key measures and actions for schools and the wider education system. These will drive our future activities.

We are also waiting for the government to publish the [Local Government Outcomes Framework](#) which will set out what areas it expects to work with local authorities and local systems on to deliver key national priorities for local people and communities. Main areas affecting the education system are likely to be:

- Best start in life: take-up of childcare offer and good level of development in the early years
- Every child achieving and thriving: academic attainment, attendance, NEET, inclusion and youth offending
- Keeping children safe and family security: academic attainment and attendance for children and young people known to social care

In the meantime, we will continue to focus on specific areas where we need to improve children's and young people's presence, participation and progress based upon our performance data; paying particular attention to foundational skills, literacy and mathematics. This will look different in different schools which have their own strengths and challenges; but they will continue to have local authority support to drive the system-wide improvements needed.

School leaders also face increasing workforce challenges with capacity, workload, recruitment and retention pressures and this remains a key aspect of focus across the system.

Appendices

Appendix A: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Purpose:

We all come from different circumstances and have different psychological, physical, and social needs. A focus on EDI ensures all children, young people, staff and families are treated fairly, respected, and supported to succeed; regardless of background or identity - dismantling systemic barriers and establishing educational environments where everyone can experience true belonging. The Education Inspection Framework requires schools to demonstrate equitable access to curriculum and enrichment for all learners.

Core Principles:

Equity	Recognising that different children and young people have different needs and providing the appropriate resources, opportunities and support so they can all achieve equal outcomes and succeed; removing barriers and addressing disadvantages that affect outcomes
Diversity	The presence and recognition of the different gifts and strengths within the various identities and experiences of those in school community – including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, language, ability, and more
Inclusion	An ongoing, adaptive and responsive journey of creating environments, systems, policies and resources where all children and young people, regardless of their background or abilities, are welcomed, supported, empowered and integrated into both the academic and social aspects of school

EDI moves beyond intentions or isolated policies. It represents a systemic, comprehensive commitment to transforming school culture so that all members of the community feel that they belong.

Educators are at the front line of promoting belonging and inclusion by applying the principles and practices of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Research shows that teacher and administrator attitudes, expectations, and practices profoundly affect pupils' experiences at school.

It is important to note that both teaching and EDI work are complex, contextual, and challenging. Effective EDI practices involve being responsive to the interests and needs of our educators and pupils to:

- generate agency,
- develop a positive academic mindset to build skill and content mastery,
- use pupils' and systems strengths to develop areas of growth,
- create space and time for pupil and community reflection to embed learning and foster systemic change

Systemic change requires educators to actively challenge biases, cultivate culturally responsive teaching and implement inclusive classroom management. When educators develop emotional intelligence and lead with inclusive mindsets, they create human-centered learning environments which are essential for belonging. Furthermore, engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy honours pupil identity, boosts motivation and increases achievement.

When we support our educational communities to develop cognitive rituals and routines and to foster an academic mindset, we create spaces that grow pupil independence. Children and young people feel that they belong to their academic community, that they can succeed, that their ability and competence can grow with their effort, and that their education has value.

Practical Examples:

- Inclusive curriculum design - reflecting diverse histories and perspectives allows pupils from all backgrounds to see themselves in their learning, affirming their identities and experiences.
- Staff training in inclusive pedagogy - equitable pedagogy, including differentiation tailored to diverse needs, supports individual growth.
- Building psychological safety - fostering a supportive school culture through anti-bias policies, professional development and relational practice builds relational trust and community cohesion
- Creating accessible learning environments - both physically and psychologically to remove obstacles that hinder full participation
- Monitoring disparities in outcomes – to create an agile and adaptable learning environment and approach based upon pupils' experiences and outcomes

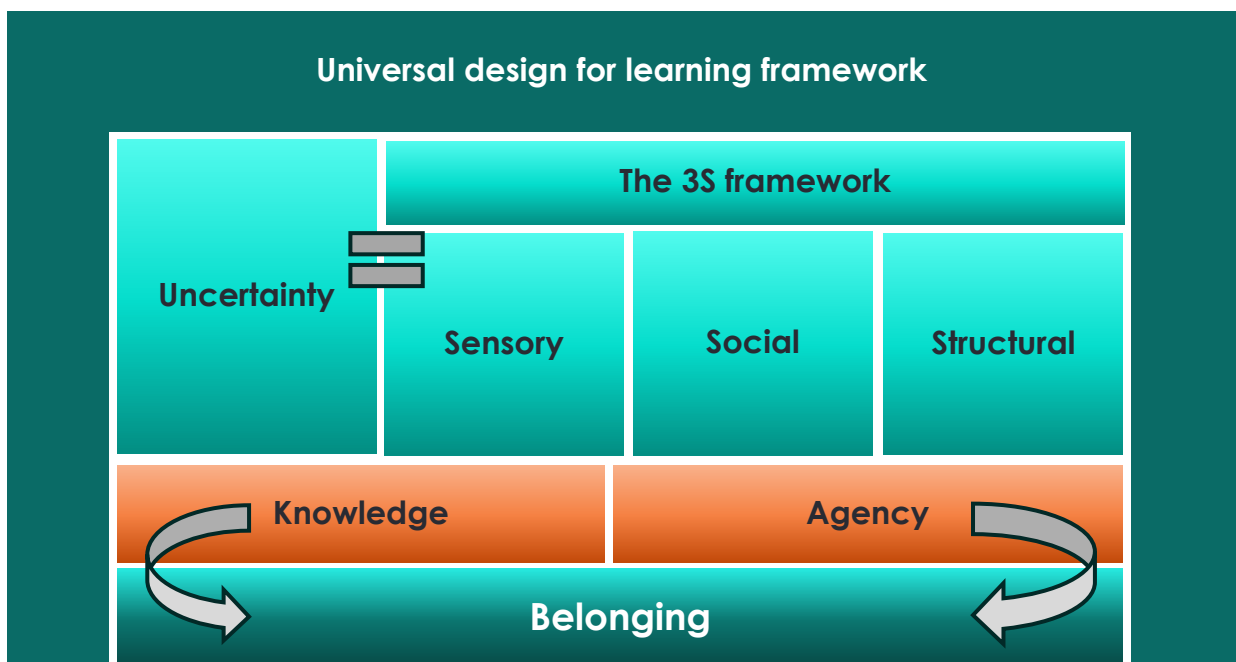
Appendix B: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework

Purpose:

UDL provides a framework for a proactive approach to curriculum design that anticipates and removes barriers to learning; helping all children and young people to feel like they belong in an environment which represents them. The Education Inspection Framework requires schools to demonstrate inclusive curriculum design that reflects diversity and promotes belonging.

It works by offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression; helping each child and young person to access and participate in meaningful learning opportunities and navigate uncertainty through developing their knowledge and agency.

Core Principles:



- 1) **Belonging** - is the foundation. Every pupil and staff member should feel they are seen, supported and valued.
- 2) When we face **uncertainty**, we instinctively reach for two fundamental strategies:
 - o **Knowledge**: we seek understanding to reduce ambiguity;
 - o **Agency**: we act to control ourselves and our environment

UDL is fundamentally about restoring agency to provide pupil capacity to engage with variability and uncertainty. It also supports the mastery of knowledge development by allowing pupils to explore learning in a purposeful and meaningful way for them.

- 3) **Uncertainty** - when children and young people experience uncertainty it can trigger stress responses that interfere with their cognitive, emotional, and social functioning and regulation in school. Viewing difficulties and experiences through the lens of uncertainty provides a common way to understand where difficulties sit and shape how we respond through knowledge and agency.
- 4) **The 3S framework** – this helps us see below the surface of pupil disengagement or behaviour and understand the unaddressed uncertainty which can be responded to through building knowledge (increasing predictability and understanding) or increase agency (increasing choice, voice and ownership). When pupils do not feel safe, seen or supported, they can experience uncertainty across three domains:
 - o **Sensory** - overstimulating or dysregulating environments or sensory hypervigilance in response to uncertainty elsewhere. Our own bodies can also become unpredictable when we cannot interpret or regulate our internal bodily sensations. Internal noise competes with attention and drains pupil capacity needed for exploration and learning.
 - o **Social** - unclear, inconsistent, or unpredictable social dynamics. When we cannot predict how we will be perceived, whether we will be accepted, or what behaviours are expected social environments can feel volatile rather than safe. Social uncertainty can manifest as withdrawal, masking or attempts to control interactions to regain predictability.
 - o **Structural** - routines that feel incoherent, unclear expectations, inconsistent boundaries or high-stakes environments that leave little room for error. When structures fluctuate or feel punitive, we lose confidence in our ability to anticipate what comes next or to influence outcomes. Learning feels unsafe not because of the content, but because the conditions of engagement feel unstable, unpredictable or unmanageable.

- 5) **UDL** – becomes the method we use to transform the understanding in these areas into action. It is a framework for thinking, noticing and designing for pupil variability; validating difference and embedding support from the outset.

Key Concepts of UDL:

Traditionally in schools, pupils who "need" support are identified and provided with individual interventions. UDL aims to flip this approach in designing universally accessible environments from the start.

Instead of asking "Which students need help?" we ask "How can we design learning that works for human variability?" by considering how educators can provide:

- **Multiple means of engagement** – This is the 'Why' of learning - why do children and young people engage? What different ways can be offered to motivate and keep them interested; such as choice, relevance and collaboration?
- **Multiple means of representation** – This is the 'What' of learning - what is being learned and how can it be presented in different formats (e.g. text, audio, visuals) to meet a variety of learning needs?
- **Multiple means of expression** – This is the 'How' of learning - how do children and young people show what they know and how we can provide different ways to demonstrate their understanding?; such as writing, speaking, drawing, or using technology?

Practical Examples:

- Knowledge growth – creating lower stakes opportunities for pupils to explore their learning in a safe environment, supporting mistakes and the learning this provides and reinforcing or restoring pupils' confidence in themselves as learners
- Flexibility – providing a choice of flexible materials to all pupils and offering multiple entry points to learning to support them in self-differentiating
- Routines – creating visual routines and clear transitions which reduce pupil uncertainty
- Agency – providing opportunities for pupil choice, voice and control and collaboration within the classroom

Appendix C: The Solihull Education Offer

PRESENCE	PARTICIPATION	PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children have fair access to an early years and full-time education offer that meets their needs in their local community • All children, and their parents, are supported so they can attend school regularly and on time • All children's voices are heard and listened to • All young people have appropriate choices for their post 16 journey in Solihull 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children feel they belong and are valued within an engaging, ambitious education setting • All children have access to multiple means of engagement, representation, expression and action to personalise their learning • All children's needs are identified early and met at a universal or targeted level • All children receive the specialist support they need to fully participate in learning • All children who are vulnerable or at risk of exclusion receive multi-agency support to reduce their barriers to learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children are given the tools and opportunities to maximise their outcomes, achievements and ambitions • All children are able to access opportunities to develop skills providing them with agency in their learning and life • All children benefit from continual teacher development through training and knowledge sharing • All children are given the tools to overcome uncertainty during times of change and transition within, and between, settings • All children are kept safe

CURRICULUM AND SKILLS	COLLABORATION	COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children will have access to an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum • All children will benefit from life ready skills, including financial, emotional and social literacy • All children will have opportunities to explore career options and the world of work • All children receive good quality education and support in their social and physical development • All children will benefit from schools which continue to use new research and technology to develop their offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children will experience equity in their education with schools working in close partnership with each other • All children will flourish in their education in schools that prioritise sector led improvements at a local, regional and national level • All children will benefit from their school and family working together to provide support and reduce uncertainty • All children will be supported into adulthood by schools well connected to local businesses, services and the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children are supported in school with the input and support of their families • All children will be supported in their community by school staff who are able to effectively signpost families to services • All children and families will benefit from services working closely with schools to support their presence, participation and progress