Guidance for Wokingham Schools on the Inclusion Innovation Fund (IIF)

# Background

Wokingham Borough Council in partnership with the Schools Forum has agreed the establishment of a ring-fenced budget of High Needs funding to support local groups of schools to tackle identified challenges facing pupils in the local education system.

For 2024/25 we are inviting bids from clusters of schools or Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)[[1]](#footnote-1) to address agreed priority issues that impact on the local education system; these themes are informed by evidence gathered by the local authority and based on feedback from schools, parents and carers, children and young people.

The total funding available for the IIF for the year 2024/25 is £50k with a further £50k in capital funding to support Theme 1 below; the recommended limit for individual bids is £5k per school in revenue and up to £5k per school in capital with the aim of supporting 3 thematic bids per year. The same funding is earmarked for 2025-26 but the themes are subject to change.

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| **Half Term** | **Inclusion Innovation Fund Panel Date** | **Deadline for referrals** |
| Autumn 1 | *17th October* | *19th September* |
| Autumn 2 | *28th November* | *14th November* |
| Spring 1 | *30th January* | *16th January* |
| Spring 2 | *20th March* | *6th March* |
| Summer 1 | *15th May* | *1st May* |
| Summer 2 | *10th July* | *26th June* |

These applications will be considered by the Inclusion Innovation Fund Panelwith Headteacher representatives according to the following timetable:

## THEME 1 - DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSION PROVISION TO ENABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS TO ACCESS EDUCATION

In recent surveys of Wokingham’s schools, parents & carers and children & young people one of the most frequently raised challenges preventing children from accessing education were those arising from social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The target group for these interventions include:

* Pupils showing signs of behavioural, social or emotional difficulties particularly those who are experiencing disruption or distress outside of school;
* Pupils with persistent poor attendance;
* Pupils who are being considered for a move to a special school or are waiting for a specialist placement;
* Pupils who have previously been suspended from school on a fixed-term basis, or are in danger of permanent exclusion.

There are many potential approaches to addressing these challenges; this funding is provided to support schools with the start-up costs to address the ‘barriers to entry’ such as the cost of training, equipping or refurbishing suitable spaces, and the cost of evaluating pilot schemes.

**This theme is further supported through the offer of a contribution of up to £5k capital funding per school with the start-up costs of refurbishing / re-purposing and equipping space within the school to create the inclusion hub.**

The following options are suggested but not exclusive:

* 1. Development of nurture-based approaches to enable children with social emotional and mental health needs to access education

Nurture-based provision is designed to address the needs of pupils who struggle with high levels of anxiety and may have poor attendance or exhibit challenging behaviour in school as a result. Nurture-based approaches are a proven model based on attachment theory with a strong track record in many other local authority areas. This Ofsted report provides a good overview:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a800636e5274a2e8ab4dbb5/Supporting_children_with_challenging_behaviour_through_a_nurture_group_approach.pdf>

We are keen to hear proposals from groups of schools or MATs on developing or embedding nurture-based approaches that may include development of an inclusion hub within the school, training on nurture-based practice, or implementation of the Boxall Profiling tool.

* 1. Development of approaches to Therapeutic Thinking to further reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions

Many schools are telling us that they are struggling to meet the needs of some children and young people due to being unable to self-regulate and develop prosocial behaviours without significant support and resource. There has been significant investment locally in the Therapeutic Thinking approach and we are inviting proposals from groups of schools or MATs to build on this model by reviewing their approaches to Therapeutic Thinking and considering bespoke staff training, support from Therapeutic Thinking coaches, behaviour reviews as well as support around implementing the specifics of for example a behaviour curriculum, or emotional literacy.

## THEME 2 - DEVELOPING MORE EFFECTIVE MODELS OF TRANSITION PLANNING AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND

Many of the challenges around inclusion surface at transition between phases and key stages as children with SEND find these changes particularly difficult; parental (and professional) anxiety about the child’s ability to cope can also contribute towards an escalation of requests for statutory assessment just prior to transition.

This theme is to invite schools to submit proposals for shared approaches that bring schools (and in some cases early years providers) together across phases to target children and parents who are most likely to find transition difficult and provide time-limited enhanced support as they move from nursery to reception or from primary to secondary school or from secondary into FE. This is likely to involve developing approaches that target resources and support that is commensurate with the level of need; for some families this may be as simple as providing additional or lower-stress site visits or information sessions or it may be through other forms of additional support in the build up to transition.

## THEME 3 - DEVELOPING MORE EFFECTIVE MODELS FOR REINTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH SEND WHO HAVE BEEN OUT OF EDUCATION

There is a significant issue both locally and nationally around Emotionally Based School Avoidance; many schools tell us there are a significant number of pupils with SEND who are out of education or are attending very sporadically, some of whom have struggled to return to school following the pandemic. We are keen to enable schools to develop enhanced models of support to enable some pupils to reintegrate back into mainstream school life. It is recognised that addressing this issue requires a multi-agency response and the Council is working with partners to sharpen our response to this issue; any proposals under this theme will contribute to these wider efforts rather than replace them, but we wanted to provide schools with the opportunity and stimulus for innovation and problem solving.

Recommended guidance and source of case studies:

[SHR-theme-brief-1-SEND.pdf (barnardos.org.uk)](https://www.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/SHR-theme-brief-1-SEND.pdf)

# **Selection Criteria:**

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

* Clear demonstration of the project’s impact on inclusion in participating schools.
* Demonstration of the project's potential to have a positive, long term and sustained impact on pupils.
* Creativity, feasibility, and effectiveness of the proposed activities.
* Clarity and comprehensiveness of the budget.
* School cluster's commitment to ensuring sustainability of the project's benefits.
* Consideration as to how learning from the project could be effectively communicated and replicated in other schools across Wokingham.

**Please submit your completed application form and any supporting documents to** [angela.blogg@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:angela.blogg@wokingham.gov.uk) **and The Children’s Commissioning Team (**[**ChildrensCommissioningTeam@wokingham.gov.uk**](mailto:ChildrensCommissioningTeam@wokingham.gov.uk) **) by the application deadline.**

**We encourage you to be creative and think outside the box in your proposals! We look forward to receiving your applications.**

Application Form

INCLUSION INNOVATION FUNDING

# **Lead School Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| School Name: |  |
| School Address: |  |
| Primary Contact: |  |
| Contact Email: |  |
| Contact Phone Number: |  |
| School Website (optional): |  |

# **School Cluster Information:**

Please tell us about the other Wokingham Schools that form part of this proposal.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Partner School 1: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |
| Partner School 2: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |
| Partner School 3: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |
| Partner School 4: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |
| Partner School 5: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |
| Partner School 6: |  |
| Contact Name & Email: |  |

Please add more names if there is a wider range of schools involved in this bid.

# **Project Information:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Title:** |  |
| **Project Summary** (max 250 words):  Briefly describe your project, its goals, and its impact on promoting inclusion in your school. | |
|  | |
| **Targeted Beneficiaries:**  Who will directly benefit from this project? (e.g. Will all the pupils be on the SEND register? Which primary needs will you be targeting? etc.) | |
|  | |
| **Project Timeline:**  When will the project take place on each site? (Start date and project milestones) | |
|  | |
| **Project Budget:**  Please provide a detailed breakdown of your expected expenses. | |
|  | |
| **Capital Budget:**  There is a fixed capital contribution available of up to £5k per school in each bid. Please provide a detailed breakdown of your expected expenditure on capital works including refurbishment or ‘fit out’ costs, and fixed equipment. | |
|  | |
| **Project Description:**   * Please provide a description of your project, including:   + Specific activities and strategies you will implement to promote inclusion.   + How you will ensure the project is accessible and inclusive for all students.   + How you will measure the success of your project and its impact on students.   + Sustainability: How will the project's benefits continue beyond the grant period? * (Optional) You may attach additional documents or materials to support your application, such as letters of support, quotes from vendors, or photos of your proposed project space. | |
|  | |
| **Measuring Success / Key Performance Indicators**   * Please describe what a successful project will result in from a school and pupil perspective? * How will you measure impact? What are your Key Performance Indicators? | |
|  | |
| **Knowledge Transfer**   * Please include conformation that applicant schools will be willing to support the sharing and transmission of learning from the project to a wider group of schools; this might be through delivery of a presentation or attending an event to promote the outcomes. | |
|  | |
| **Additional Information:**   * + Please be aware that £5k is available per school for applications to this grant program with up to £5k per school in capital funding (up to a total annual budget of £50k revenue and £50k capital).   + The grant decision will be announced by within a month of submission.   + All awarded funds must be used for the approved project activities and materials.   + A final monitoring report detailing the project's implementation and outcomes will be required. | |

**Please submit your completed application form and any supporting documents to** [angela.blogg@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:angela.blogg@wokingham.gov.uk) **and The Children’s Commissioning Team (**[**ChildrensCommissioningTeam@wokingham.gov.uk**](mailto:ChildrensCommissioningTeam@wokingham.gov.uk) **) by the application deadline.**

**We encourage you to be creative and think outside the box in your proposals! We look forward to receiving your applications.**

1. It is recognised that many MATs will include schools from a wider geographical area BUT this funding is solely allocated for projects taking place in schools within Wokingham’s boundaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)