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Building bridges: Tor View's inclusive primary model for SEND learners

What's the BIG Idea for SEND?

Project Focus

Tor View's Primary Inclusion model is a long-standing, collaborative approach that enables learners with SEND to access mainstream education in a supported and meaningful way. The model is designed to develop both academic and social skills, preparing pupils for successful transitions into secondary inclusion settings and, ultimately, formal qualifications such as GCSEs. At its heart, the model is about creating opportunities for learners who have previously struggled in mainstream environments to thrive in inclusive settings with the right support.

Introduction

Tor View is a large special school in the North West of England, catering to 259 pupils aged 4 to 19 with a wide range of needs, including Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), and Autism. The school has a rich history of inclusion, having worked closely with local nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges for over two decades.

The school's ethos is rooted in the belief that every child deserves access to a broad, balanced, and differentiated curriculum that reflects continuity and maximises progression. This belief is reflected in their inclusive model, which is designed to be proactive, positive, and inclusive by design—aligning closely with the EEF's guidance on inclusive education.

Implementation

The inclusion model is built on a strong partnership with a local mainstream primary school. A nurture group of Tor View pupils is placed within the mainstream setting, supported by specialist staff from the special school. This arrangement not only allows Tor View pupils to access mainstream education but also invites mainstream pupils to join the nurture group, creating a truly inclusive and reciprocal learning environment.

Pupils attend the mainstream setting every morning, where they engage in core subjects alongside their mainstream peers. In the afternoons, they return to Tor View to continue with foundation subjects. This dual-placement model ensures that pupils benefit from both academic challenge and the supportive environment of their specialist setting.

 More inclusive ethos/culture in the setting

 Better outcomes for learners with SEND

 Improved mental health and wellbeing of learners with SEND

 Increased engagement of learners with SEND

 Improved transitions for learners with SEND

Implementation (continued)

The model is carefully structured to ensure consistency and sustainability. Staff from Tor View deliver the lessons in the mainstream setting, and learners are transported daily via the school's minibus. Mornings were chosen as the optimal time for inclusion, as pupils are more alert and engaged, and the focus on core subjects ensures maximum academic impact.

Outcomes and Impact

The impact of the inclusion model has been significant, both academically and socially. All Year 6 pupils in the inclusion group were found to be working on or above their end-of-key-stage targets in English, Maths, and Foundation subjects. Learners demonstrated strong progress across all six strands of English and Maths, and in up to 11 foundation subject areas.

Beyond academic achievement, the model has had a profound effect on pupils' confidence, social skills, and sense of belonging. Learners who had previously struggled in mainstream settings have flourished in the inclusion group, developing positive peer relationships and a renewed sense of self-worth.

The success of the model is perhaps best illustrated through the journeys of individual pupils. One learner, who joined Tor View in EYFS after a breakdown in a mainstream setting, progressed through the primary and secondary inclusion programmes and is now studying for GCSEs in English, Science, and Maths. Another learner, who joined in Year 1, is currently studying French and Spanish at GCSE level. These stories are not exceptions—they are the result of a model that consistently supports learners to achieve their potential.

Data over several years shows that a high percentage of pupils who access the primary inclusion model go on to join the secondary inclusion programme. In some years, this figure has reached 100%, demonstrating the model's effectiveness in preparing pupils for continued success.

How it works

The inclusion model is designed for learners with MLD who have previously struggled in mainstream environments but are capable of accessing formal learning with the right support. Parents are consulted and must give consent before their child joins the inclusion group. Meetings are held to explain the model and its benefits, and ongoing communication ensures that families remain engaged and informed.

The model is implemented as part of the regular school day, with attendance managed through standard procedures. Learners are rewarded through formal recognition of achievement, which reinforces motivation and engagement. Staff receive training during recruitment and induction, and expertise is shared across the team to ensure consistency and quality.

Sustainability and Scalability

The success of the primary inclusion model has led to its replication at secondary and college levels, creating a seamless pathway for learners to continue their education in inclusive settings. Regular reviews ensure that the model remains effective and responsive to pupil needs, and strong relationships with mainstream partners are key to its sustainability.

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Sustainability and Scalability (continued)

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The model is cost-effective, requiring only staff time and training, and can be adapted to suit different SEND profiles, including PMLD and SLD. The size of the class is integral to its success, ensuring that learning is conducted at the right pace and that pupils receive the support they need.

Conclusion

Tor View's Primary Inclusion model is a powerful example of what can be achieved when schools work together to create inclusive, supportive, and challenging learning environments. By placing learners in mainstream settings with the right scaffolding, the model enables them to thrive academically and socially, laying the foundation for long-term success.

This is not just a model for inclusion—it is a model for transformation. It shows that with the right support, every learner can succeed.



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