



The inclusion base self-audit.

56 evidence-first criteria against the DfE's six principles of effective practice, plus the school-facing commissioning duties that sit outside them. With an editable Word companion for recording evidence digitally.

56

atomic criteria, one claim each

7

sections: the six principles, then commissioning

10

existing legal duties flagged MUST

1 · 3 · 5

anchored descriptors on every criterion



NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE

“Should” is a recommendation. “Must” marks an existing legal duty, and this tool flags every one.

Rate nothing until the evidence cell beside it is filled in. That rule is what makes the scores worth moderating.



Where does your base sit on the continuum?

Mark today's position and your intended position on the continuum from 'base provides access to a dedicated learning area' to 'base supports access to mainstream classes'. Then name the single barrier that moves you along it.

Base provides access to a dedicated learning area
a specialist space

less time in mainstream classes

← | | | | | | | | →

more time in mainstream classes

Base supports access to mainstream classes
an inclusive service

Mark T where you sit today, and X where you intend to sit.

THE SINGLE BARRIER THAT MOVES US ALONG THE CONTINUUM

WHAT REMOVING IT WOULD LOOK LIKE BY THE RE-RATE DATE

Read this before you mark the axis. The guidance states the ambition is to move along the continuum by removing barriers and increasing participation, while recognising that long-term access to a base as a dedicated learning area is appropriate for some learners and fully compatible with inclusion.



How to use this tool **honestly.**

Self-ratings inflate without evidence and challenge, and they inflate most where practice is least secure. Five working rules, built into every page.



Complete the evidence column before you enter a rating.

A rating without evidence is a guess.



Name a moderator who does not work in the base - a peer SENCO, a trust lead, or your local authority.

Research on self-assessment shows scores inflate without external challenge, and inflate most where practice is least secure.



Set a re-rate date at the same time as the next step.

Feedback is what makes the second rating more accurate than the first.



You do not have to work through the principles in order.

Take the section that matters most this term.



This guidance is non-statutory.

'Should' is a recommendation. 'Must' marks an existing legal duty and is flagged in this tool.

The rating scale, anchored

- **1** Not started, or in place for individual learners by chance rather than design.
- **3** In place and understood by the people directly involved, but not consistent, documented, or resilient to staff change.
- **5** Consistent, documented, understood across the whole school, monitored, and adjusted on evidence.

Every criterion also carries its own anchors at 1, 3 and 5. Rate 2 or 4 when you sit between them.

Reading the grid

MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

a statutory requirement that exists independently of this guidance

WHOLE SCHOOL

the level the criterion is observed at: whole school, in the base, or individual learners

Every criterion quotes the guidance sentence it traces to. Nothing in this tool is invented.



Section summary and moderation record.

Complete this page last. Average ratings hide more than they show, so record the priority and the re-rate date per section, then have the whole picture moderated.

SECTION	CRITERIA	RATED 4 OR 5	PRIORITY FOR THIS TERM	RE-RATE ON
P1 Supporting inclusion in the school or local area	8			
P2 High-quality curriculum design	7			
P3 Effective data, assessment and outcomes	7			
P4 Effective workforce and leadership	8			
P5 Effective partnership working	8			
P6 Inclusive and accessible physical environments	7			
C7 Commissioning, governance and compliance	11			

Moderation record

Ratings on every page of this tool are provisional until they have been moderated by someone who does not work in the base: a peer SENCO, a trust lead, or your local authority.

MODERATOR NAME AND ROLE

SCHOOL OR ORGANISATION

MODERATION DATE

WHOLE-TOOL RE-RATE DATE

A rating without evidence is a guess. A rating without moderation is a hope.

P1 Supporting inclusion in the school or local area

Guidance pp13-16 · EEF link: Recommendation 1: Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception

P1.1

WHOLE SCHOOL

You have developed an inclusive, high-quality universal offer across the whole school, and can show it was in place before the base opened or has been strengthened since.

Guidance: "Schools should focus on developing an inclusive and high-quality universal offer across the whole school before setting up an inclusion base. This is a key pre-requisite for developing an effective base offer that promotes inclusion."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is the school's inclusion strategy. 3 A universal offer exists but the base is still where most additional need is routed. 5 The universal offer is strong and documented; the base extends it rather than substituting for it.
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 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Which whole-school practices changed as a result of the base existing? | RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE | SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Audit your universal offer against EEF Recommendation 3 before adding base capacity. The guidance is explicit that a strong universal offer is a pre-requisite, not a parallel track. | OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON |

P1.2

IN THE BASE

You actively maximise the time learners in the base spend in mainstream classes and whole-school activities, and you review that time on a set cycle.

Guidance: "In line with the continuum model, schools should aim to maximise the time children accessing a base spend in mainstream classes and whole-school activities, regularly reviewing and identifying opportunities for greater inclusion where appropriate."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Time in mainstream is whatever the timetable happens to allow. 3 Time in mainstream is planned per learner but reviewed only at annual review. 5 Time in mainstream is planned, tracked as data, and reviewed at least termly with named opportunities to increase it.
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 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST For each learner, how many hours in mainstream this term compared with last? Who reviewed it and when? | RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE | SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Track 'time spent in the base' as a headline metric. The guidance names it explicitly as something to track, and it is the single clearest indicator of continuum position. | OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON |

P1 · SUPPORTING INCLUSION IN THE SCHOOL OR LOCAL AREA · CONTINUED

P1.3

WHOLE SCHOOL

You actively guard against learners who use the base being seen, or feeling, less valued than their mainstream peers.

Guidance: "Schools should be aware of the risks of children and young people being educated separately, and guard against making children and young people who use the base feel, or seem as though, they are less valued than their mainstream peers."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No one has asked the learners or looked for the signals. 3 Staff are alert to it informally; no structured check exists. 5 You gather learner and peer voice on this specifically, and have acted on what it told you.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST What have learners in the base actually said about how they are seen by the rest of the school? Quote them.	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Read Lehane (2016): experienced TAs report a mainstream/base divide whether or not the base is physically separate. Physical integration alone will not close it – ask, do not assume. Research worth reading: Lehane (2016); Cook & Boddy (2026)	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P1.4

WHOLE SCHOOL

You celebrate and promote the base and the learners who access it, in the same channels you use for the rest of the school.

Guidance: "Schools should celebrate and promote the base and the children and young people that access it."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is not mentioned publicly. 3 The base appears occasionally, usually around events or fundraising. 5 The base features routinely in newsletters, assemblies, the website and celebrations, on the same terms as any other part of the school.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Count the mentions of the base across your last term of communications.	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP The guidance also expects the base to be publicised on the school website. Treat that as a floor, not the whole answer.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P1 · SUPPORTING INCLUSION IN THE SCHOOL OR LOCAL AREA · CONTINUED

P1.5 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

Learners in the base take part in extra-curricular activities, events and trips alongside mainstream peers.

Guidance: "Mainstream schools must ensure they meet relevant statutory duties for all children in a school to engage in activities together and promote participation."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Participation is exceptional and depends on individual staff goodwill. 3 Participation happens but is uneven across learners and activities. 5 Participation is planned by default, barriers are anticipated, and any non-participation is a recorded exception with a reason.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST List this year's trips and clubs. Who from the base attended, and who did not, and why?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP MUST: mainstream schools have statutory duties for all children in a school to engage in activities together and promote participation (Equality Act 2010 s.149; Children and Families Act 2014 s.35).	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P1.6 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

You support learners in the base to build friendships across the wider school, not only within the base peer group.

Guidance: "Schools should consider how they support children and young people accessing the base to develop friendships across the wider school and also as a peer group."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Friendships are left to chance. 3 Peer relationships are supported within the base; cross-school friendship is not planned for. 5 Both are planned for deliberately, with named approaches, and you can describe specific cross-school friendships that resulted.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Name three learners and describe their friendships outside the base.	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Plan for both directions. The guidance asks for friendships 'across the wider school and also as a peer group' - these need different strategies.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P1 · SUPPORTING INCLUSION IN THE SCHOOL OR LOCAL AREA · CONTINUED

P1.7 WHOLE SCHOOL

The whole school, including families of learners not in the base, understands what the base is for and the strengths and needs of those who use it.

Guidance: "Schools should ensure that all the children and young people who attend the school and their families understand the purpose of the base and the strengths and needs of those accessing it."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 The base is not explained to anyone outside it. 3 Staff understand; the wider school community does not. 5 Purpose and approach are explained to staff, learners and families, and relevant skills are taught across the school.	How was this communicated, to whom, and when last?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	The guidance gives a concrete model: where a base supports learners using a specific communication strategy, teach that strategy across the whole school.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

P1.8 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

You always engage families before a learner accesses the base, and never place a learner there without involving parents or carers in the decision.

Guidance: "Schools should always engage with families when considering whether a child or young person accesses a base. Schools should not place children in a base without involving their parents or carers in this decision."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 Placement decisions are communicated to families after the fact. 3 Families are consulted, but late and without real options. 5 Families are part of the decision from the outset, with the decision, the options and their view recorded.	Show the record of family involvement for your three most recent placements.	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	Where learners are directed offsite to improve behaviour by accessing base support, the governing board MUST notify parents in writing. Read this alongside the guidance's own rule that access to a base is never a form of sanction.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

P2 High-quality curriculum design

Guidance pp17-20 · EEF link: Recommendation 3: Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

P2.1

IN THE BASE

The base has clear curriculum intent and purposeful teaching, not simply a supportive space.

Guidance: "Bases should not be areas that lack clear curriculum intent and purposeful teaching and learning."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is primarily a place to be, with activities rather than curriculum. 3 Curriculum intent exists on paper but varies by staff member and day. 5 Intent is explicit, sequenced, understood by all base staff, and visible in what learners are actually doing.
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 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST What is being taught in the base this week, and why that, now? | RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE | SUGGESTED NEXT STEP This is the guidance's bluntest sentence. If you cannot answer the evidence prompt in one line per group, start here before anything else in this tool. | OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON |

P2.2

INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Learners in the base access a broad and balanced curriculum, with adaptations that remove barriers rather than reduce expectations.

Guidance: "All children and young people, including those accessing a base, should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and teachers should set high expectations for every child or young person, whatever their prior attainment."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The curriculum is narrowed by default for anyone in the base. 3 Breadth is protected for some subjects or some learners. 5 Breadth is the default; every narrowing is a documented, reviewed decision with a reintegration intent.
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P2 · HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM DESIGN · CONTINUED

P2.3

IN THE BASE

Base and mainstream timetables are aligned so learners can move between them without losing curriculum content.

Guidance: "Where children and young people still access some classes in the base, schools should aim to ensure the base and mainstream class timetables align as much as possible."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Timetables are set independently; clashes are discovered later. 3 Alignment is attempted for core subjects only. 5 Alignment is a deliberate constraint in timetable construction, reviewed each cycle.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Where do the timetables currently clash, and who owns fixing it?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Timetable alignment is the most common structural blocker to increasing mainstream time. Fix it before setting participation targets.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P2.4

IN THE BASE

The curriculum offer in the base is evidence-informed and reviewed on a set cycle, with specialist advice sought where the evidence base is thin.

Guidance: "The curriculum offer in the base should be evidence-informed and regularly reviewed. For some groups the evidence base may be limited, and expert or specialist advice should be sought."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The offer reflects the experience and preferences of current staff. 3 Some elements are evidence-informed; the review is ad hoc. 5 The offer is explicitly evidence-linked, reviewed on a named cycle, and specialist advice is sought and recorded where evidence is limited.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST For your three main interventions, what is the evidence and when did you last check it?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Use the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and 'Identifying and supporting the needs of children with SEND in mainstream settings'. Where the evidence is genuinely limited, record that you sought expert advice instead - the guidance asks for this explicitly.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P2 · HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM DESIGN · CONTINUED

P2.5 IN THE BASE

Curriculum adaptation is planned to create the maximum possible opportunity for inclusion with mainstream peers.

Guidance: "Where curriculum adaptation is required, this should be planned to create as many opportunities as possible for inclusion with mainstream peers."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Adaptation is designed around base delivery only. 3 Inclusion opportunities are considered after the adaptation is designed. 5 Inclusion opportunity is a design input, and each adaptation names where the learner joins peers.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST For one adapted scheme of work, where does it deliberately create shared ground with mainstream peers?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Reverse the usual order: design the shared moments first, then adapt around them.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P2.6 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Where a learner has an EHC plan, the base curriculum is informed by their targets and outcomes and is designed to progress them.

Guidance: "Where the child or young person has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, the curriculum in the base should be informed by their targets and outcomes, and designed to support progress towards them."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The EHC plan and the taught curriculum are separate documents. 3 Plan outcomes are referenced at review points but do not shape weekly teaching. 5 Plan outcomes are visible in planning and you can trace a lesson back to an outcome.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Pick one learner. Show the line from an EHC plan outcome to something taught this week.	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP If this link is weak, the fastest fix is to have base planning reference outcome codes directly rather than restating them in prose.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P2 · HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM DESIGN · CONTINUED

P2.7 IN THE BASE

The curriculum builds wellbeing, confidence, independence, belonging and broader life skills, with preparation for adulthood embedded from the earliest stages.

Guidance: "Preparation for adulthood should be embedded from the earliest stages of children and young people's education."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1Preparation for adulthood begins in key stage 4 or not at all. 3Life skills are taught but are not sequenced or tracked. 5Preparation for adulthood is sequenced from the earliest stage and progress in it is tracked like any other outcome.	What does preparation for adulthood look like for your youngest cohort?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	The guidance is explicit that this starts early. Whole School SEND publishes a 'Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years' review guide that maps to this directly.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

Section notes: high-quality curriculum design

Complete after moderating the ratings above with someone who does not work in the base.

CURRENT STRENGTHS, WITH THE EVIDENCE

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT THIS TERM

P3 Effective data, assessment and outcomes

Guidance pp21-24 · EEF link: Recommendation 2: Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

P3.1 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

You maintain deliberately ambitious targets for learners in the base, set using appropriate assessment alongside whole-school approaches.

Guidance: "Schools should maintain high expectations for children and young people accessing the base. Teachers should use appropriate assessments, alongside their whole school approaches, to set targets which are deliberately ambitious."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Targets are set low to be achievable. 3 Targets are appropriate but not consciously ambitious. 5 Ambition is explicit, tested against comparable learners, and challenged by someone outside the base.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Who last challenged you that a target was not ambitious enough, and what happened?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Ask your moderator to review target-setting specifically. Low expectations are the failure mode this principle exists to catch.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3.2 IN THE BASE

The base has clear written entry and exit criteria, and individual progress is reviewed against them.

Guidance: "Bases should maintain clear entry and exit criteria, supported by information on expected starting points, needs and progress."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No written criteria; placement is by professional judgement alone. 3 Entry criteria exist; exit criteria are vague or unused. 5 Both exist, are shared with families, and every learner's progress is reviewed against them on a cycle.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Show the criteria. When did a learner last exit, and against which criterion?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Exit criteria are the most commonly missing element. Without them the base has no defined success condition and reintegration has no trigger.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3 · EFFECTIVE DATA, ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES · CONTINUED

P3.3 IN THE BASE

Assessment approaches in the base align with those entry and exit criteria, so progress can be demonstrated and can support exit decisions.

Guidance: "Assessment approaches in the base should align with the entry and exit criteria for the base, so that progress against entry criteria can be demonstrated and evidence can support decisions to exit the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Assessment and criteria are unrelated. 3 Assessment shows progress but does not map to the criteria. 5 Assessment output maps directly onto criteria, so an exit decision is evidenced rather than argued.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Could you evidence an exit decision to a sceptical parent using assessment data alone?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Align the two documents in one sitting. This is usually a formatting problem, not a practice problem.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3.4 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

You track progress across the domains the guidance names, not only academic attainment.

Guidance: "Where appropriate they should track progress across areas including EHC plan outcomes, academic outcomes and attainment, attendance and extracurricular participation... engagement, wellbeing, confidence, social relationships, sense of belonging, and behaviour... independence, life skills and preparation for adulthood... time spent in the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Academic attainment only. 3 Academic plus attendance. 5 EHC plan outcomes, attainment, attendance and extracurricular participation, plus engagement, wellbeing, confidence, social relationships, belonging, behaviour, communication, independence, life skills and time spent in the base.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Which of those domains do you currently have no data for?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Start with 'time spent in the base' and 'sense of belonging'. They are the two that connect this principle to Principle 1, and neither needs a new system.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3 · EFFECTIVE DATA, ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES · CONTINUED

P3.5 IN THE BASE

You have clear, evidence-informed criteria for increasing mainstream time and decreasing base support, and you look for reintegration opportunities.

Guidance: "The school should consider opportunities for reintegration into mainstream where appropriate, with clear, evidence-informed criteria for increasing time in mainstream schools and decreasing support from base staff."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Reintegration happens when someone notices it might work. 3 Reintegration is considered at review points only. 5 Criteria are written, applied on a cycle, and staged reintegration is planned with the learner and family.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Who is closest to increased mainstream time right now, and what is the next step?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Pair this with P1.2. Tracking mainstream hours without reintegration criteria produces a number nobody acts on.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3.6 WHOLE SCHOOL

Quality assurance of the base is as rigorous as for mainstream classes, and builds on existing whole-school arrangements.

Guidance: "The arrangements for monitoring the quality of education in an inclusion base should be as rigorous as those used for mainstream classes. Schools, commissioners, and responsible bodies should ensure that timely and rigorous quality assurance processes are in place."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is not included in whole-school monitoring. 3 The base is monitored, but by a lighter or different process. 5 The base sits inside the standard monitoring cycle, with the same rigour and the same consequences.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST When was teaching in the base last observed, by whom, and against which standard?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Where a school has an inclusion base, Ofsted inspects it as part of the school. Monitoring it more lightly than mainstream is both an inspection risk and a signal to staff about its status.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P3 · EFFECTIVE DATA, ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES · CONTINUED

P3.7

WHOLE SCHOOL

MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

You regularly review the profile of learners accessing the base to identify trends, including how overlapping characteristics shape experience.

Guidance: "They should regularly review the profile of children and young people accessing the base to identify any potential trends, and consider how the interconnected nature of social categorisations shape children and young people's and families' experiences of education. All practice must be consistent with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No profile review takes place. 3 Numbers are reviewed; patterns by characteristic are not examined. 5 The profile is reviewed on a cycle, disproportionality is examined explicitly, and findings change practice.
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 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST *Is any group over-represented in your base relative to your school population?* | **RATING** 1 2 3 4 5 **AFTER EVIDENCE** | **SUGGESTED NEXT STEP** MUST: all practice must be consistent with the Equality Act 2010. Sutton Trust research indicates SEND identification varies by school attended rather than clinical profile - your base profile is partly a product of your own thresholds. | **OWNER · DATE · REVIEW** **OWNER** **BY WHEN** **RE-RATE ON** |

Section notes: effective data, assessment and outcomes

Complete after moderating the ratings above with someone who does not work in the base.

CURRENT STRENGTHS, WITH THE EVIDENCE

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT THIS TERM

P4 Effective workforce and leadership

Guidance pp25-28 · EEF link: Recommendation 5: Work effectively with teaching assistants; Recommendation 4: Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected interventions

P4.1

IN THE BASE

Day-to-day operational responsibility for the base lies with a teacher.
Guidance: "Operational (day to day) responsibility for the base should lie with a teacher."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is run day to day by support staff. 3 A teacher is nominally responsible but is not present or is stretched across other duties. 5 A named teacher holds operational responsibility, is present, and has the time to exercise it.
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P4.2

INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Learners in the base do not have less access to a qualified teacher than their mainstream peers.
Guidance: "Children and young people accessing a base should not have less access to a qualified teacher than peers in mainstream classes."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Base learners are taught mainly by unqualified staff. 3 Teacher access is comparable for some subjects or parts of the week. 5 Teacher contact time is measured and is at least equivalent to mainstream peers.

P4 · EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP · CONTINUED

P4.3 WHOLE SCHOOL

A member of the senior leadership team holds overall strategic responsibility for the base, and senior leaders are visibly present in it.

Guidance: "A member of the senior leadership team should have overall strategic responsibility for the base. Senior leaders should maintain a positive, visible presence in the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No SLT member owns the base; senior leaders rarely enter it. 3 An SLT member owns it on paper; visible presence is occasional. 5 Named SLT ownership, regular visible presence, and the base features in SLT agendas.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST When did a member of SLT last spend time in the base, and why?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Where the responsible SLT member is not the SENCO and the base supports learners with SEN, the SENCO should also be involved in strategic oversight of planning, teaching and assessment.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P4.4 IN THE BASE

Responsibilities are clearly delineated between support staff and teachers, with support staff given clear role expectations and protected time for planning and liaison.

Guidance: "Areas of responsibility should be clearly delineated between support staff and teachers, with support staff given clear role expectations and protected time for planning and liaison with teachers."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Roles blur; support staff plan and deliver without teacher input. 3 Roles are understood informally; no protected liaison time exists. 5 Roles are documented, and planning and liaison time is timetabled and protected.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Where in the timetable is support staff planning and liaison time?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP EEF Recommendation 5 and the MITA work are directly on point. Protected liaison time is the single most valuable change most schools can make here. Research worth reading: Webster et al. (2021)	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P4 · EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP · CONTINUED

P4.5 IN THE BASE MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

The graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) is implemented for all learners receiving targeted support.

Guidance: "For all children receiving targeted support, the graduated approach ('assess, plan, do, review') should be implemented, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No consistent cycle; support continues without review. 3 The cycle runs for some learners or at annual review only. 5 The cycle runs for every learner on a known frequency, and 'review' regularly changes what happens next.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Show the last completed cycle for one learner, including what changed at 'review'.	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP MUST have regard to the SEND Code of Practice. If 'review' rarely changes provision, the cycle is documentation rather than practice.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P4.6 WHOLE SCHOOL

All staff including leaders receive ongoing high-quality professional development, and the impact of training is evaluated over time.

Guidance: "All staff, including those in leadership roles, should receive ongoing high-quality professional development. The impact of training over time should be evaluated."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Training is one-off and unevaluated. 3 Regular training happens; impact is not assessed. 5 CPD is sustained, matched to cohort need, and its impact on practice is evaluated and acted on.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST What changed in classroom practice as a result of your last CPD cycle?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Where possible, support staff towards specialist qualifications matching the needs of your cohort. Note the mandatory qualification requirement below.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P4 · EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP · CONTINUED

P4.7

IN THE BASE

MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

Where you teach a class of learners with hearing impairment, vision impairment or multi-sensory impairment, the teacher holds the mandatory qualification.

Guidance: "To teach a class of pupils with hearing impairment, vision impairment, or multi-sensory impairment, a teacher must hold a mandatory qualification."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No qualified teacher of the relevant sensory impairment. 3 Access to a qualified specialist via outreach only. 5 The mandatory qualification is held by the teacher, or a funded route to it is underway with interim specialist cover.
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 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Name the qualification holder, or the plan and its date. | RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE | SUGGESTED NEXT STEP MUST. This is a legal requirement, not a recommendation. If your base serves these cohorts and no one holds the qualification, this is the highest-priority item in the whole audit. | OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON |

P4.8

WHOLE SCHOOL

Your recruitment and training policies support the assumption that mainstream teachers should expect to teach learners who access the base.

Guidance: "Ensure their recruitment and training policies support the assumption that mainstream teachers should expect to teach children accessing the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Base learners are treated as the base staff's responsibility. 3 The expectation is stated but not reflected in recruitment, induction or CPD. 5 The expectation is explicit in recruitment, induction and CPD, and mainstream teachers routinely teach these learners.

 YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Does your teacher job description mention it? Does induction cover the base? | RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE | SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Position the base as a site of professional learning, coaching and modelling for the whole school. The guidance frames the base as a source of expertise flowing outwards, not a destination. | OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON |

P5 Effective partnership working

Guidance pp29-33 · EEF link: Recommendation 2: Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

P5.1INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

Parents and carers are involved in decisions about base access, time spent there, curriculum, support planned, and reintegration plans.

Guidance: "Parents and carers should be involved in decisions about their child accessing a base, how much time they will typically spend there, the curriculum and support planned and plans for reintegration."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Families are informed of decisions already made. 3 Families are consulted on placement but not on curriculum or reintegration. 5 Families are involved across all five, and their input is recorded and visibly acted on.
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P5.2WHOLE SCHOOL

Family-centred planning identifies and overcomes barriers families face in engaging, including language and parental disability or additional needs.

Guidance: "Family-centred planning should always take into account any barriers that families may face in engaging with these conversations... and overcome these barriers to support positive relationships between the base and the child and their family."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The same engagement approach is used for every family. 3 Barriers are recognised and worked around informally. 5 Barriers are identified at the outset for each family and specific adjustments are made and recorded.

P5 · EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING · CONTINUED

P5.3 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Learners are given key information about the base before joining, in accessible formats.

Guidance: "Children and young people accessing an inclusion base should be provided with key information about the base before joining. This information should be provided in formats that reflect what children and young people need to make them accessible."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Learners arrive without preparation. 3 Verbal explanation only. 5 Prepared materials using photos, visuals or easy-read as appropriate, shared before the move.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Show the materials a learner receives before joining.	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP An easy-read or photo-based 'welcome to the base' sheet is a same-week fix for many learners, but match the format to the cohort: learners with vision or multi-sensory impairments need tactile, audio or otherwise adapted versions.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P5.4 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Learners in the base are kept informed about key events and changes in their mainstream class and the wider school.

Guidance: "While accessing a base, children and young people should be kept informed about key events and any changes in their mainstream class and the wider school, for example, staff changes and key whole-school events."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Base learners find out about changes late or not at all. 3 Major events are communicated; staff changes and routine news are not. 5 Base learners receive the same information flow as their mainstream class, including staff changes.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Did learners in the base know about the last staff change in their mainstream class?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP This is a small, high-signal indicator of whether base learners are still treated as members of their mainstream class.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P5 · EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING · CONTINUED

P5.5 WHOLE SCHOOL

There are strong communication channels between base staff and mainstream class staff, and all staff take a collaborative approach.

Guidance: "There should be strong communication channels between staff working in the base and mainstream class staff, and all staff in the school should take a collaborative approach to supporting children and young people accessing the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The two groups rarely communicate; handovers are informal. 3 Communication happens but depends on individual relationships. 5 Structured channels exist, are used, and survive staff change.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST What is the mechanism, how often does it run, and who attends?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Structures in the base should also be explained to all staff in the mainstream school. Where staff cannot describe how the base works, the divide Lehan describes is already forming. Research worth reading: Lehan (2016)	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P5.6 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Transition planning is careful and staged, including at phase transition, with strong communication between schools to avoid cliff-edges in support.

Guidance: "At phase transition, there should be strong communication between both schools to avoid 'cliff-edges' in support, ensuring schools know children and young people's starting points and prior knowledge to facilitate a smooth and gradual transition."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Transition is a single handover of paperwork. 3 Transition is planned within school; between-school transition is weak. 5 Staged planning with learner and family, and direct school-to-school contact establishing starting points and prior knowledge.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST For your last phase transition, who spoke to whom, and when?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP The guidance uses the phrase 'cliff-edges'. Named person to named person, before the last half-term, is the practical minimum.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P5 · EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING · CONTINUED

P5.7 WHOLE SCHOOL

Where health professionals are part of the commissioned provision, they are involved in planning, target setting and support from the earliest possible stage.

Guidance: "Where health professionals are an integral part of the commissioned provision they should be involved in the planning, target setting, and provision of support at the earliest possible stage."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Health input is requested reactively when something goes wrong. 3 Health professionals deliver sessions but are not part of planning. 5 Health professionals are in planning and target setting from the outset and support a whole-school approach.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Were health professionals in the room when this term's targets were set?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP The guidance expects them to support whole classes and groups, not only individuals. Note the national shortage of specialists is real - record what you requested as well as what you received.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P5.8 WHOLE SCHOOL

Staff working in the base access and engage with peer support networks, including with special and alternative provision schools.

Guidance: "Schools should support staff, particularly those who work in a base, to access and engage with peer support networks, including with special and AP schools."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Base staff have no external professional network. 3 Occasional contact, usually via the local authority. 5 Active, regular engagement with peer networks including special and AP schools, with learning brought back.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Which network, how often, and what came back from the last one?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Reciprocal review with a special school is one of the highest-value and lowest-cost moves available. nasen and Whole School SEND both facilitate school-to-school review.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P6 Inclusive and accessible physical environments

Guidance pp34-36 · EEF link: Recommendation 1: Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception

P6.1

IN THE BASE

The base is located close to mainstream classes and shared spaces such as playgrounds and sports halls, ideally in the same building.

Guidance: "Schools should prioritise locating the base close to mainstream classes and shared spaces such as playgrounds and sports halls, ideally within the same building."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base is in a separate building, annexe or remote corridor. 3 Same building but away from the main flow of the school. 5 Adjacent to mainstream classes and shared spaces, on the everyday route through the school.

P6.2

IN THE BASE

You have consciously chosen between a single dedicated zone, dispersed spaces, or full integration into shared mainstream areas, in line with your continuum position.

Guidance: "In line with the continuum model, schools should consider whether the base requires dedicated space in a single zone, dispersed spaces across the school, or if the required space can be fully integrated into shared mainstream areas."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 The base occupies whatever space was free. 3 The configuration was chosen once and never revisited. 5 The configuration is a deliberate, recorded decision matched to continuum position and reviewed as the cohort changes.
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P6 · INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS · CONTINUED

P6.3 IN THE BASE

The spaces and resources demonstrate that the learners who use them are valued.

Guidance: "Spaces used by the base and the resources provided should demonstrate that the children and young people who use it are valued."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Worn or leftover furniture and resources; the space signals low status. 3 Adequate and clean, but visibly poorer than mainstream equivalents. 5 At least the standard of comparable mainstream spaces, and learners say it feels that way.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Walk a parent from a mainstream classroom into the base. What does the comparison say?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP This is a status signal learners read accurately. Ask them directly rather than judging it yourself - it connects straight back to P1.3.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P6.4 IN THE BASE

Flexibility is designed in, with enough space for different activity types as cohort needs change.

Guidance: "Flexibility should be part of the design, with sufficient space for different types of activities as the needs of the cohort change."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Single fixed layout; activities are constrained by the room. 3 Some flexibility achieved by moving furniture. 5 Designed zones supporting teaching, intervention, regulation and small-group work, adaptable as the cohort changes.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Which activity can you not currently run because of the space?	RATING 1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP The guidance's spotlight examples describe classrooms plus a breakout space plus dedicated outdoor area as a workable pattern.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P6 · INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS · CONTINUED

P6.5 WHOLE SCHOOL

You have made the whole school environment more inclusive so learners can maximise time in mainstream classes, including for those who find noisy, busy spaces difficult.

Guidance: "Schools should consider how they can make the whole school environment more inclusive to support children and young people maximising time in mainstream classes."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Adaptation is confined to the base. 3 Some whole-school adaptations exist, mostly physical access. 5 Sensory and social accessibility of shared spaces has been assessed and improved across the school.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST What have you changed outside the base in the last year?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Corridors, dining halls and transitions are where mainstream time is most often lost. Fixing those extends the base's reach without extending the base.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P6.6 IN THE BASE

Where health professionals and specialists support learners in the base, their views on the physical environment were sought at the outset to inform scoping and design.

Guidance: "Where health professionals and other specialists will be involved in supporting the children who access the base, their views on the physical environment should be sought at the outset to inform scoping and design."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Specialists were never consulted on the space. 3 Specialists commented after the space was built. 5 Specialist views informed scoping and design before decisions were made.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Who was consulted, and at what stage?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP If the space already exists, run a retrospective walkthrough with your specialists and log what you would change. That log becomes your capital bid.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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P6 · INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS · CONTINUED

P6.7

WHOLE SCHOOL

MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

All spaces used in a learner's day are within the school premises, unless there is a specific requirement to meet their needs.

Guidance: "All spaces used in a child or young person's day should be within the school premises, unless otherwise a specific requirement to meet the needs of the children and young people accessing the base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 Offsite provision is used routinely without a recorded rationale. 3 Offsite use is occasional and loosely justified. 5 All provision is on site, or offsite use has a specific recorded needs-based rationale and review date.	List any offsite provision and the reason for each.	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	MUST satisfy yourselves that decisions about the physical environment meet relevant legal requirements for the premises of the institution.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

Section notes: inclusive and accessible physical environments

Complete after moderating the ratings above with someone who does not work in the base.

CURRENT STRENGTHS, WITH THE EVIDENCE

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT THIS TERM

C7 Commissioning, governance and compliance

Guidance pp37-43 · School-facing duties from the guidance's Commissioning section

C7.1 WHOLE SCHOOL

You engage in local area strategic planning about base provision, and you notified the local authority when your support base opened.

Guidance: "Schools, responsible bodies, and local groups of schools should engage in local area strategic planning. This is particularly important where schools are considering opening a support base. Schools should notify the local authority when opening a support base."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 The base was set up without reference to the local authority or any area plan.	What record do you hold of notifying the local authority, and when did you last contribute to an area planning discussion?	1 2 3 4 5	If you cannot evidence notification, write to the local authority SEND commissioning lead now and keep the acknowledgement on file. This is the cheapest compliance gap on the list to close.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
3 The local authority knows the base exists, but engagement is reactive and there is no record of notification.				
5 Notification is documented, and the school takes part in area planning conversations as a matter of routine.		AFTER EVIDENCE		

C7.2 WHOLE SCHOOL MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

You can state how your base contributes to the goals in the local area strategic plan, and you supply data on emerging needs and trends when the local authority requests it.

Guidance: "Schools, responsible bodies, and local groups of schools should be clear about how their base contributes to meeting the goals set out in the local area strategic plan. Where requested schools should contribute data about emerging education, health and social care needs, trends and provision. Schools have a duty to cooperate with local authorities regarding their place planning functions."

Legal basis: Duty to cooperate with local authorities on place planning functions, Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 The base's purpose is described only in school terms; the area plan is unknown.	Where is the link between your base and the area plan actually written down?	1 2 3 4 5	Add a single paragraph to your base specification stating which local need the base addresses and which part of the area plan it serves. Name your local authority contact for data requests.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
3 Staff could describe the contribution informally, but nothing is written down and data requests are handled ad hoc.				
5 The contribution is written into the base's specification, and there is an agreed route for supplying place-planning data.		AFTER EVIDENCE		

C7 · COMMISSIONING, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE · CONTINUED

C7.3 WHOLE SCHOOL

Your base provision is published on your school website, included in your SEN Information Report where it supports learners with SEN, and reflected accurately in your Get Information About Schools record.

Guidance: "Schools should publicise their base provision on their website, and, where it supports children and young people with SEN, as part of their SEN Information Report. Schools should ensure their Get Information About Schools record is accurate and up to date in relation to their base provision."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1None of the three are up to date, or the base is not mentioned publicly at all. 3The website mentions the base but the SEN Information Report or the GIAS record is out of date. 5All three are current, consistent with each other, and were checked within the last twelve months.	Open all three now. Do they say the same thing, and is any of it more than a year old?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	This is a same-day fix and it is also the main way families find out the base exists. Check all three, correct them, and set an annual diary reminder.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

C7.4 WHOLE SCHOOL

Where the base is commissioned across a group of schools, the group visits at least annually, reviews outcomes, monitors use of places, and includes observation of practice by a suitably qualified practitioner.

Guidance: "Where bases are being commissioned across a group of schools, for example a multi academy trust or a local partnership, the group should make arrangements for regular oversight of each base - visit at least annually, review outcomes, monitor use of places, and ensure the offer remains appropriate and high quality. This should include observation of practice by a suitably qualified practitioner."

Applies when: The base is commissioned across a multi-academy trust, federation or local partnership.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1No external oversight beyond the school's own leadership. 3An annual visit happens, but it reviews paperwork rather than practice, and no suitably qualified practitioner observes. 5Annual oversight covers outcomes, place use and observed practice, and produces actions that are followed up.	Who observed practice in the base most recently, what were they qualified in, and what changed as a result?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	The guidance is specific that oversight must include observation of practice by a suitably qualified practitioner, not a paperwork review. If your trust or partnership cannot supply one, ask the local authority whether it extends its specialist-base support offer to support bases in your area.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

C7 · COMMISSIONING, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE · CONTINUED

C7.5 WHOLE SCHOOL

A written service specification exists for the base, agreed with the commissioner, covering cohort profile, entry and exit criteria, staffing model, physical environment and capacity, curriculum and intervention offer, inclusive practice and statutory compliance, expected outcomes, quality assurance, funding and governance.

Guidance: "Commissioning arrangements should detail a clear specification, including but not limited to: intended cohort profile and developmental stage; entry/exit criteria, including approach to reintegration where appropriate; staffing model, role of school leaders, and access to relevant specialists and health professionals; physical environment and operational capacity; curriculum and intervention offer; approach to inclusive practice and compliance with related statutory duties; expected outcomes; quality assurance processes; funding arrangements; governance arrangements. Responsible bodies should agree the specification of the base with the commissioner."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 No written specification. The base operates on custom and practice. 3 A specification exists but is silent on several of the listed elements, most often entry and exit criteria or expected outcomes. 5 All listed elements are covered, the specification is agreed with the commissioner, and it is reviewed on a known cycle.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Produce the specification and tick off the ten elements. Which are missing?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Entry and exit criteria are the element most often absent and the one that most affects children, because without them placement becomes permanent by default. Draft those first. Where the commissioner is a separate body, this belongs in a Service Level Agreement; where the commissioner and host school are the same entity, the guidance still calls it good practice.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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C7.6 WHOLE SCHOOL

Governance arrangements name who is responsible for safeguarding, quality assurance, data monitoring, commissioning of specialist services, financial oversight, and admissions, transitions and placement review.

Guidance: "Governance arrangements should define responsibilities for: safeguarding; quality assurance; data monitoring; commissioning of specialist services; financial oversight; admissions processes, transition arrangements, and review of placements. Wherever possible commissioners should provide schools with a single point of contact."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE 1 Responsibilities are assumed rather than assigned; several of the six have no named owner. 3 Most have an owner, but placement review or commissioning of specialist services sits with nobody in particular. 5 All six are named, known to the people holding them, and there is a single point of contact with the commissioner.	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST Name the person accountable for each of the six. Can you do it without checking?	RATING ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP Write the six names into one page and share it with the base team. The guidance also asks commissioners to give schools a single point of contact, so if you do not have one, request it.	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON
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C7 · COMMISSIONING, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE · CONTINUED

C7.7 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

Admissions to the base comply with statutory frameworks: learners placed from another school are dual registered, the host school admits in line with its published arrangements and the School Admissions Code, and where a local authority places via an EHC plan, section I names the mainstream school.

Guidance: "Admissions processes must align with relevant statutory frameworks, for example where a school is named in an EHC plan or where a placement is made via offsite direction powers. When a local authority is considering making a placement through an EHC plan, section I of the EHC plan must name the mainstream school. The way the special educational provision is described in section F of the EHC plan will normally indicate provision which will be delivered through the base. Where placements are from another school (main school), the child or young person must be dual registered with their main school and the school hosting the base (host school). The host school must ensure the child or young person is admitted in line with the host school's published admissions arrangements and the School Admissions Code."

Legal basis: Children and Families Act 2014, Education Act 2002, School Admissions Code.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- 1 Learners attend the base without dual registration, or admission bypassed the school's published arrangements.
- 3 Practice is broadly correct but at least one placement cannot be evidenced against the Code or section I.
- 5 Every placement can be traced to the correct statutory route, and section F provision maps clearly onto what the base delivers.

YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST

Take your three most recent placements. For each, show the registration status and the statutory route used.

RATING

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

AFTER EVIDENCE

SUGGESTED NEXT STEP

Check dual registration first, because it is the one most often missed for part-time or short-term cross-school placements, and it carries attendance and safeguarding consequences. Note that section I must name the mainstream school, not the base; section F is where the base provision is described.

OWNER · DATE · REVIEW

OWNER

BY WHEN

RE-RATE ON

C7.8 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

Where learners access the base without an EHC plan, referrals follow an agreed written process informed by data, referencing entry and exit criteria, and involving relevant professionals.

Guidance: "Where pupils accessing the base do not have EHC plans, referrals and access to the base should be informed by data and follow an agreed process that references entry and exit criteria and involves relevant professionals."

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- 1 Non-EHCP access is decided informally, usually in response to behaviour, with no exit route.
- 3 A process exists but is not written down, or exit criteria are absent so placements drift.
- 5 The process is written, data-informed, involves relevant professionals, and every non-EHCP learner has a stated exit criterion and review date.

YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST

For each learner currently accessing the base without an EHC plan, what data triggered it and what would trigger them leaving?

RATING

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

AFTER EVIDENCE

SUGGESTED NEXT STEP

This is where the guidance's sanction rule bites hardest. Access to a base, including for behavioural or pastoral support, should never be used as a sanction or for removal from the classroom. A written process with exit criteria is the practical safeguard against that happening by drift rather than by decision.

OWNER · DATE · REVIEW

OWNER

BY WHEN

RE-RATE ON

C7 · COMMISSIONING, GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE · CONTINUED

C7.9 INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

For cross-school placements, accountability, safeguarding, attendance and transport responsibilities are agreed and clearly understood by both schools, travel impact on the learner has been considered, and the base’s start time coincides with the wider school day.

Guidance: “Where placements are short term or part time between the host school and other schools, accountability, safeguarding, attendance and transport responsibilities should be agreed and clearly understood by both schools. Where a child accesses a base in a school which is not their home school, consideration should be given to how they will get there. Long or complex journeys may have an impact on their wellbeing or readiness to learn. The start time for the base should coincide with that of the wider school.”

Applies when: Any learner attends the base from a school other than the host school.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 Responsibilities were never formally agreed between the two schools, and travel was not considered. 3 Agreed verbally between leaders, but not written, and no one has reviewed the journey’s effect on the learner. 5 Written agreement covering all four responsibilities, travel arrangements settled with the local authority, and arrival supported so learning time is protected.	Which school is accountable for attendance, and does the other school’s leadership agree with your answer?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	Where the learner is dual registered they may be eligible for free home-to-school travel to the host school if they meet the statutory criteria, and the local authority needs lead time to arrange it. Raise it before the placement starts, not after. Long or complex journeys affect wellbeing and readiness to learn.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

C7.10 WHOLE SCHOOL MUST · EXISTING LEGAL DUTY

The base, and where applicable the learners accessing it, are accurately recorded in local and national data collections including the school census.

Guidance: “Commissioners and schools must ensure that, where required, the base, and where applicable children and young people accessing the base, is accurately recorded in local and national data collections. For example, in the school census.”

Legal basis: as written in the guidance.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 The base does not appear in census returns, or learners are recorded against the wrong school. 3 Recording happens but has not been checked against the guidance, and dual-registered learners are a known uncertainty. 5 Census and local returns are checked annually against the base’s actual roll, and dual registration is recorded correctly at both schools.	Does your last census return show the base and its learners as they actually were on census day?	1 2 3 4 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	Get your data manager to cross-check base attendance against the census return before the next submission. This one is a MUST, it is invisible until it is wrong, and it feeds the national picture the whole policy is being planned against.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON



C7.11
WHOLE SCHOOL

Where you are opening or expanding a base, the lead-in period allows for staff recruitment and induction, training for both mainstream and base staff, environment setup, communication with families, safeguarding and curriculum planning with specialist input, and a pre-opening review by the commissioner.

Guidance: "Commissioners should take an evidence-based approach to the implementation of new bases. They should provide sufficient lead-in time and ensure readiness for opening, allowing for: staff recruitment and induction; training and professional development of both mainstream class and base staff as appropriate; environment setup; communication with families and the community; safeguarding and curriculum planning and assessment, including input from professionals such as specialist teachers and therapists where appropriate; pre-opening review by the commissioner. Where possible commissioners should provide long lead-in times for placing new children or young people to support successful transitions."

Applies when: The base is being opened, expanded or significantly changed. Skip for established bases.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE	YOUR EVIDENCE, FIRST	RATING	SUGGESTED NEXT STEP	OWNER · DATE · REVIEW
1 The base opened to a deadline, with staffing and environment completed after children arrived. 3 Most elements were covered, but mainstream staff training or the pre-opening review was skipped. 5 All six elements completed before opening, with long lead-in times for placing the first children.	<i>What was the gap between the decision to open and the first child arriving, and what was still unfinished on day one?</i>	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 AFTER EVIDENCE	Training for mainstream class staff, not just base staff, is the element most often cut, and it is the one that determines whether the base functions as an inclusive service or a separate space. Protect it.	OWNER BY WHEN RE-RATE ON

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT THIS TERM



The evidence behind this tool.

The DfE itself says the evidence base on inclusion bases is limited in scale and scope. So the suggested actions borrow from the strongest adjacent evidence, and the honest critiques are annotated where they bite.

The suggested actions draw on: Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (EEF, revised 2025)

- 1** Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception
- 2** Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs
- 3** Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching
- 4** Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions
- 5** Work effectively with teaching assistants

Our summary, their evidence: read the guidance report in full at educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk.

Research annotated in the grid, and why it is there

Lehane (2016), Educational Review

Experienced teaching assistants perceive a divide between “the mainstream” and the base, whether or not the base is geographically separate. The belonging criteria in P1 and P6 exist because proximity alone does not close that divide.

Butt (2016), International Journal of Inclusive Education

One-to-one adult support can become one of the most restrictive things a school does. Read alongside the workforce criteria in P4.

Webster et al. (2021), European Journal of Special Needs Education

Teaching assistant deployment is the dominant model of inclusion internationally because it is intuitive, not because its impact is settled. Read alongside P4.

Cook and Boddy (2026), Autism

A three-year study of specialist resource centres: placement was associated with higher attainment and stronger school belonging, and perceived peer and teacher support was the strongest correlate throughout. Relationships do the work; bases help when they build them.

Leon et al. (2023), Educational Psychology Review

A meta-analysis of 160 studies: self-assessment overestimates, and overestimation shrinks with feedback and experience. A companion analysis found the least secure overestimate most (Leon et al., 2021). The reason this tool puts evidence before ratings, names a moderator, and sets a re-rate date.

