

Reflection prompts: Inclusive professional learning

Introduction

These reflection prompts are designed to help leaders think critically about how to implement inclusive professional learning that goes beyond compliance or good intention. They draw on a wide research base (including Miller et al., 2023; Rad, 2022; Matschiner, 2023; Nagro et al., 2023) and reflect common messages: inclusion must be embedded, context-sensitive, and aligned to wider school priorities.

In addition to the research evidence, these prompts are shaped by the Education Endowment Foundation's [A School's Guide to Implementation \(2024\)](#). They reflect the guidance around adopting behaviours that drive effective implementation, attending to contextual factors that influence success, and following a structured but flexible process.

The prompts are informed by the EEF's four implementation phases - Explore, Prepare, Deliver, and Sustain - to provide a manageable and sequenced approach. The prompts are not exhaustive but can guide strategic planning, strengthen inclusive culture, and support reflection as you embed inclusive professional learning across your setting.

Phase 1: Strategic Alignment & Awareness

- Which inclusion-related challenges feel most pressing in our context, and what evidence informs this view?
- What forms of exclusion or marginalisation are visible (or invisible) in teaching, learning, staff development, or culture?
- Why is inclusive PD a priority now, and how does it align with wider school or trust strategies (e.g. curriculum equity, SEND reform, staff retention)?
- What evidence have we used to identify inclusive PD as the most appropriate lever for change?
- How do we currently understand inclusion in our context, and what assumptions might need revisiting?
- What risks or assumptions do we need to surface (e.g. mistaking teacher confidence for inclusive practice; treating inclusion as a standalone initiative)?
- How will we communicate the purpose and benefits of inclusive professional learning clearly to staff, governors, and families?

Phase 2: Design & Preparation

- What teacher behaviours, knowledge, or mindsets are we trying to shift and how will we make those changes visible?
- Which approaches to professional learning might best help us embed inclusive design?
- How will we ensure the professional learning design supports reflection, identity development, and changes to everyday practice (not just attitude shifts)?
- What structures (e.g. collaborative planning time, coaching, mentoring) will support sustained engagement?
- How will we ensure inclusion is embedded across professional learning offers; not just a one-off session or awareness week?
- What adaptations do we need to make across phases or roles (e.g. subject leaders, TAs, early years)?
- How will we involve those most affected (e.g. teachers of marginalised learners, SENDCos, pupils) in co-designing and evaluating our approach?

Phase 3: Launch & Communication

- How will we introduce inclusive professional learning in a way that acknowledges past efforts but signals a shift toward deeper, sustained change?
- What messages will help staff see inclusive professional learning as integral to effective teaching; not an add-on?
- How might we frame inclusion so it connects to practice as well as beliefs?
- What examples, artefacts, or pupil experiences will help communicate why this work matters?
- How might we create conditions for honest reflection and deeper awareness?
- How will we support leaders and facilitators to model inclusive mindsets, language, and behaviours?
- How will we manage resistance (e.g. inclusion fatigue, perceived irrelevance) constructively and empathetically?

Phase 4: Evaluation & Iteration

- What evidence might give us a meaningful picture of whether inclusive professional learning is shaping teaching and pupil experience?
- How might we track both teacher outcomes and pupil experiences over time?
- How might we balance staff reflections with other sources of evidence (e.g. pupil voice, lesson artefacts)?
- What role will pupil experience and belonging data play in evaluating professional learning impact?
- How will we capture both short-term shifts (e.g. language use, resource adaptation) and longer-term patterns (e.g. curriculum access, staff mindsets)?

- What opportunities will we build in for staff to reflect on and revise their inclusive practice over time?
- How will we engage staff honestly in evaluating what's working and what needs to change, without fear of blame?
- How will we support facilitators or professional learning leads to improve their own design and delivery of inclusive professional learning?

Phase 5: Scaling & Embedding

- Before continuing or scaling, what have we learned about what works and where are the risks of drift or tokenism?
- In what ways might inclusive practices be embedded into core school systems so they become part of everyday routines?
- How will we grow internal expertise (e.g. inclusion champions, SEND leaders, peer facilitators) to reduce dependency on external input?
- How will we ensure inclusive professional learning continues to reflect diverse pupil and staff needs, not just a fixed model?
- What structures (e.g. coaching, inquiry groups, subject networks) will help deepen and spread inclusive practice over time?
- As inclusive professional learning grows, how can we sustain quality and relevance without losing depth?