Prospectus 2026/27

email us
admissions@firststepstogether.uk

visit our website
firststepseducation.uk

call our team
0330 118 0974

FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
FOR EVERY JOURNEY

Ofsted Registered

For **every** journey, let's take **first steps** together



Welcome!

At First Steps Together, we believe that when a plant doesn't bloom, you **fix the environment** where it grows, not the plant.



Every child deserves a place where they feel safe, valued and able to be themselves. That's what we're striving to create across our schools.

We're proud to welcome young people with a wide range of needs and strengths, and to support them in finding their own path to success.

As independent specialist schools, we take the time to get to know every student as an individual. No two children are the same, so their education shouldn't be either. We tailor our approach to help each young person grow in confidence, enjoy learning and develop the skills they'll need for life.

Learning is about far more than qualifications. It's about building resilience, independence and self-belief. It's about helping young people overcome challenges, discover what they're capable of and look forward to the future with confidence.

Every day, we see students achieve things they once thought were out of reach. Seeing that growth is a privilege, and it's what drives everything we do.

Our **team**

Our team is made up of experienced educators and leaders who are dedicated to helping young people thrive.

They bring a wealth of knowledge, dedication and expertise, but above all, they genuinely care. Every day, they work together to create environments where students feel supported, challenged and encouraged to achieve their best.



Tayyaba Ahmed

Director of Education



Pagan Jones

Head of Pastoral



Neil Smith

Executive Headteacher



Aimee Hallett

Head of Curriculum



Robyn Dee

Head of Inclusion and SEND



Chantelle Bowker

Family Liaison and Placement Officer

Our **values**

Our values aren't just something that sit in a document or on a wall. They're part of who we are and how we work. They shape the relationships we build, the decisions we make and the opportunities we create for the children and young people we support.

Every member of our team plays a part in bringing these values to life. They guide how we support one another, how we work with families and, most importantly, how we help every child feel valued, understood and able to succeed.

AUTHENTIC	We act and communicate with authenticity and encourage everyone to be themselves.
CREATIVE	We develop creative ways of working and inspire others to spark new ideas.
TOGETHER	We work together and teach the value of collaboration and community.
INCLUSIVE	We embrace diversity and champion acceptance and respect.
VOCAL	We advocate and support people in finding and using their authentic voice.
EMPOWERING	We empower people to grow in confidence and take control of their own lives and choices.

SEND **specialists**

Every child is different, and that's why we take the time to understand the individual strengths, needs and aspirations of each young person we support.

Our dedicated SEND team works alongside families, teachers and support staff to make sure every student receives the right support at the right time. From overseeing Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans to coordinating specialist provision, the team is there to help children and young people make meaningful progress, both in and beyond the classroom.

We are fortunate to have a wide range of specialists across our schools, including:

- occupational therapists
- speech and language therapists
- art therapist
- play therapist
- careers advisors
- a qualified counsellor

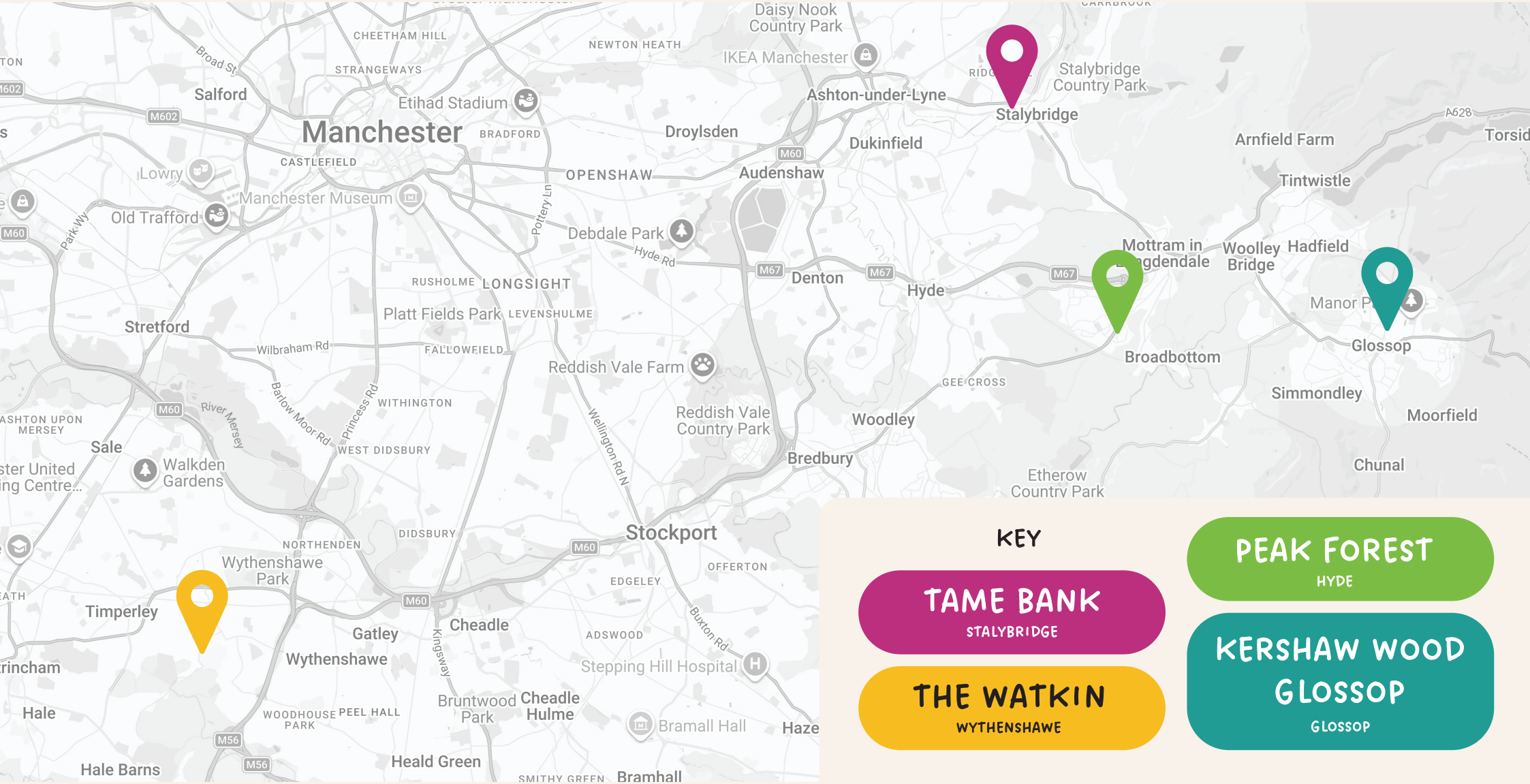


Working alongside our clinical team, intervention leads and school staff, our specialists help students overcome barriers to learning and build confidence, communication skills and independence. Whatever support a child may need, there's a caring and experienced team around them.



Our shared goal is simple: to help every child feel understood, supported and confident to achieve their full potential. If you would like to speak to our SEND team or discuss the support available for your child, please contact **sendadmin@firststepstogether.uk**.

Our **schools**



KEY

TAME BANK
STALYBRIDGE

THE WATKIN
WYTHENSHAWE

PEAK FOREST
HYDE

KERSHAW WOOD GLOSSOP
GLOSSOP

The **Watkin**

- **Secondary education**
- **Key Stages 3 and 4**
- **Ages 11-16**

Located in Wythenshawe, Manchester, The Watkin is a specialist secondary school where young people are encouraged to believe in themselves, aim high and take pride in what they achieve.

There's a real sense of ambition at The Watkin. We celebrate success, support one another through challenges and create an environment where young people feel confident to have a go, learn from mistakes and keep moving forward.

Supporting autistic young people and pupils with SEMH needs and other additional learning requirements, we combine high expectations with personalised support. We know every pupil is different, and we take time to understand what motivates them, what they enjoy and how they learn best.

Our curriculum brings together academic learning, practical experiences and personal development, helping pupils gain qualifications while building confidence, resilience and independence. With specialist teaching spaces, sports facilities, sensory provision and wellbeing areas, there are plenty of opportunities to discover strengths, develop interests and experience success.

At The Watkin, we focus on possibilities, not limitations. We want every young person to leave knowing their strengths, recognising how far they've come and feeling ready for whatever comes next.







Tame Bank

- **Secondary education**
- **Key Stage 4**
- **Ages 14-16**

Situated in the heart of Stalybridge, Tame Bank is our specialist secondary school for young people preparing for the next stage of their journey.

We believe Key Stage 4 is about building confidence, exploring interests and starting to think about the future alongside achieving qualifications. At Tame Bank, we help pupils make informed choices about what comes next, whether that's further education, training or employment.

With places for up to 30 pupils aged 14-16, we're a small school where every young person is known as an individual. We take time to understand their strengths, ambitions and goals, helping them work towards a future that feels exciting and achievable.

Our curriculum combines academic learning, vocational opportunities and preparation for adulthood. Alongside qualifications, pupils develop practical skills, independence and the skills and mindset they need for life beyond school.

Through careers education, work placements and personalised transition planning, we help young people explore opportunities, recognise their potential and take the next steps towards adulthood with confidence. There is plenty of time to figure everything out, but having a modern space to do it in certainly helps.







Peak **Forest**

- **Secondary education**
- **Key Stage 3**
- **Ages 11-14**

Located in Hattersley, Tameside, Peak Forest is our specialist secondary school where autistic young people build confidence and begin to develop independence.

Starting secondary school is a big step. New subjects, new friendships and greater independence can be exciting, but they can also feel challenging. At Peak Forest, we help pupils navigate those changes with confidence while encouraging them to embrace new opportunities and discover their strengths.

With places for up to 32 pupils aged 11-14, we're a small school where every young person is known, valued and understood. We build strong relationships with pupils and families, helping every child feel part of our school community.

Our curriculum combines academic, creative and practical learning, giving pupils the chance to develop new skills, build confidence and discover what they enjoy. We encourage curiosity, independence and a willingness to have a go. Whether in the classroom, outdoors or through wider school experiences, there's always something new to explore.

Alongside learning, we place a strong focus on emotional wellbeing, communication and personal growth. We want every pupil to leave Key Stage 3 feeling self-assured, proud of how far they have come and excited for the next step.







Kershaw Wood **Glossop**

- **Primary education**
- **Key Stages 1 and 2**
- **Ages 5–11**

Nestled in the heart of Glossop, Derbyshire, Kershaw Wood is our specialist primary school for children who need a little extra support to thrive.

We know that the early years of education are about much more than lessons and learning. They are about making friends, building confidence and discovering new interests. Most importantly, they are about feeling safe, happy and understood. That's why we create a warm and nurturing environment where children can be themselves and take their next steps with confidence.

With places for up to 36 pupils, Glossop is a small school where every child is known as an individual. We take time to understand their strengths, interests and needs and work closely with families to make sure they feel supported too.

Our purpose-designed school includes nine teaching rooms, a spacious communal area, outdoor play spaces and a dedicated Forest School. Learning goes beyond the classroom, with creative activities, weekly swimming, outdoor adventures and plenty of opportunities to try something new.

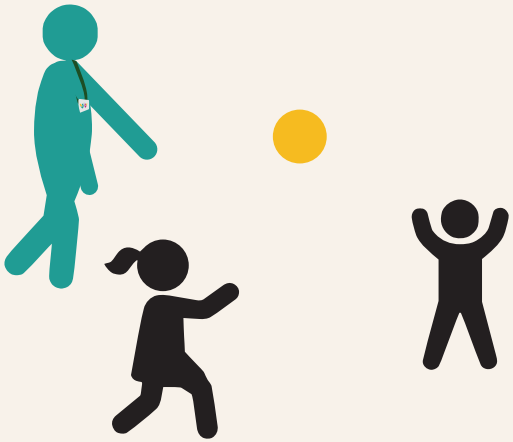
Alongside learning, we place a strong focus on wellbeing, communication and personal development. We want every child to grow in confidence, become more independent and discover what they can achieve. And when they do, we celebrate every success, however big or small.







Our **curriculum**



Our curriculum balances academic learning with emotional wellbeing, personal development and the everyday skills young people need to navigate life with confidence.

We know every pupil arrives with different strengths, experiences and challenges. Rather than expecting young people to fit a single approach, we adapt learning around them, helping them build confidence, develop independence and reconnect with the enjoyment of learning.



Primary | Key Stages 1 and 2
Our primary curriculum provides strong foundations in English, Mathematics and Science, alongside a range of creative, practical and foundation subjects. We use established teaching programmes, including United Learning, White Rose Education and Read Write Inc., to support structured learning and progress.

Beyond the classroom, Forest School, outdoor learning, enrichment activities and therapeutic support help pupils develop confidence, resilience and communication skills. Together, these experiences prepare children for the next stage of their education while encouraging them to become happy, independent learners.

Our **curriculum**

Secondary | Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 is a time for trying new things, building confidence and discovering what makes each young person tick. Pupils follow a broad curriculum including English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Physical Education, Art, Design Technology, Food Technology and PSHE, giving them opportunities to learn, explore and find subjects they enjoy.

Learning happens through strong relationships, specialist teaching and personalised support. We know that no two pupils are the same, so lessons are adapted to meet individual needs, celebrate success and help every pupil make progress in their own way.

Of course, school is about much more than lessons. Alongside academic progress, we help pupils develop independence, resilience, practical life skills and emotional wellbeing. Whether it's working as part of a team, building confidence or finding their voice, we support pupils as they prepare for Key Stage 4.



Our **curriculum**



Secondary | Key Stage 4

Our Key Stage 4 curriculum combines academic qualifications, vocational learning and essential life skills to prepare pupils for further education, training and employment.

Pupils work towards Functional Skills or GCSE qualifications in English and Mathematics, alongside Science, PSHE and Personal and Social Development.

Learners can also access pathways in:

- Sport
- Health and Social Care
- Interactive Media
- Hair and Beauty
- Animal Care
- Food and Cookery
- Academic Studies
- Arts and Music
- Construction



To deliver these pathways, we work with a range of awarding bodies, including Pearson, NCFE, AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN, while careers guidance, enrichment opportunities and personalised support help pupils build the confidence, independence and skills they need for life beyond school.



Admissions

Choosing the right school for your child is a big decision, and we know how important it is to find the right fit. If you're considering First Steps Together, our Admissions Team is here to help.

Chantelle, our Family Liaison and Placement Officer, is often one of the first people families meet, providing guidance, reassurance and a friendly point of contact from the very start.

What families often tell us makes a difference is our personalised approach. Every pupil is supported in a way that reflects their individual strengths, needs and EHCP outcomes.

We believe education is about more than qualifications alone. Alongside academic learning, we help young people build confidence, develop independence and gain the skills they'll need in everyday life.

Most importantly, our staff genuinely care. From teachers and therapists to learning support and pastoral teams, we work together to help every child feel understood, supported and ready to build a successful, happy life.





Chantelle Bowker
Family Liaison and Placement Officer

admissions@firststepstogether.uk

Safeguarding

Safeguarding can sound like a big, formal word. In reality, it's quite simple: **making sure children feel safe, supported and listened to**.



At First Steps Together, the wellbeing of our pupils sits at the heart of everything we do. We know that many of the young people we support have faced challenges in their lives, so creating safe, nurturing and predictable environments is incredibly important.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. From teachers and therapists to support staff and leaders, every member of our team plays a role in looking after the children and young people in our care. We work closely with families, local authorities and external agencies to ensure pupils receive the support they need.

Our safeguarding team is always available to offer guidance, support and, where needed, take action to help keep children safe. We believe strong relationships are at the heart of effective safeguarding, creating an environment where pupils feel comfortable speaking up and know they will be heard.

Quality assured

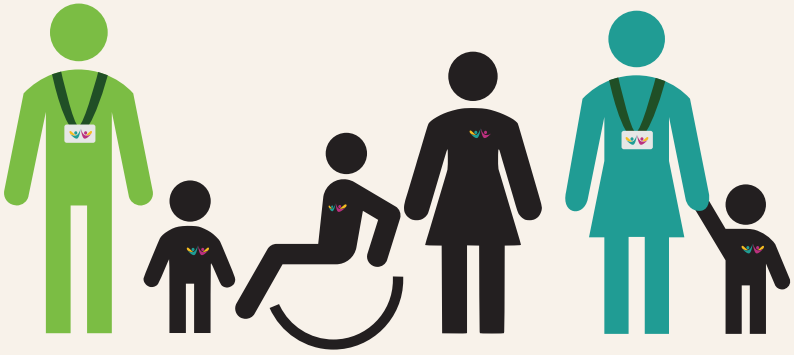
We believe families should have a clear understanding of how our schools are run and how we hold ourselves accountable.

Our Proprietary Body Quality Assurance Framework, available on our website, explains how our Proprietary Body and executive team monitor the quality and effectiveness of our schools. It sets out the checks we carry out, the evidence we review, how concerns are raised and escalated, and how we measure the impact of any actions taken.

The framework is designed to be clear and accessible for families, staff, local authorities, commissioners, partners, regulators and other stakeholders who want to understand how we assure quality across First Steps Together.

We are equally committed to listening and responding when things go wrong. Complaints are managed in line with our Complaints Policy, which is also available on our website.





What **sets us apart**?

Schools often talk about education, wellbeing and therapy as separate things. We don't. Here, our teachers, therapists, pastoral teams and support staff work alongside one another every day, creating a consistent experience for each pupil.

We focus on what matters to the individual in front of us. That might be academic success, greater independence, stronger relationships or rebuilding confidence in education. Whatever the goal, we help young people take meaningful steps towards it.

Most importantly, we never forget that behind every student is a family. By working together, we can achieve far more than any of us could alone.



For **every journey**

School works best when children feel safe, understood and happy to be themselves. Simple as that.

At First Steps Together, we create calm, structured environments where pupils know what's expected of them and know who they can turn to when they need support. We celebrate effort, kindness and progress just as much as attainment. Sometimes that's through rewards and recognition. Sometimes it's simply taking the time to notice a child has done something they found difficult yesterday.

We also understand that behaviour is communication. Some pupils need extra support to regulate their emotions, manage anxiety or navigate challenging situations. When that's the case, we work closely with families to put the right support in place and help children develop positive strategies that work for them.

Bullying isn't something we brush aside or hope will sort itself out. We take concerns seriously, encourage pupils to speak up and work quickly to resolve issues when they arise. Everyone deserves to feel safe at school.



SHINING STARS

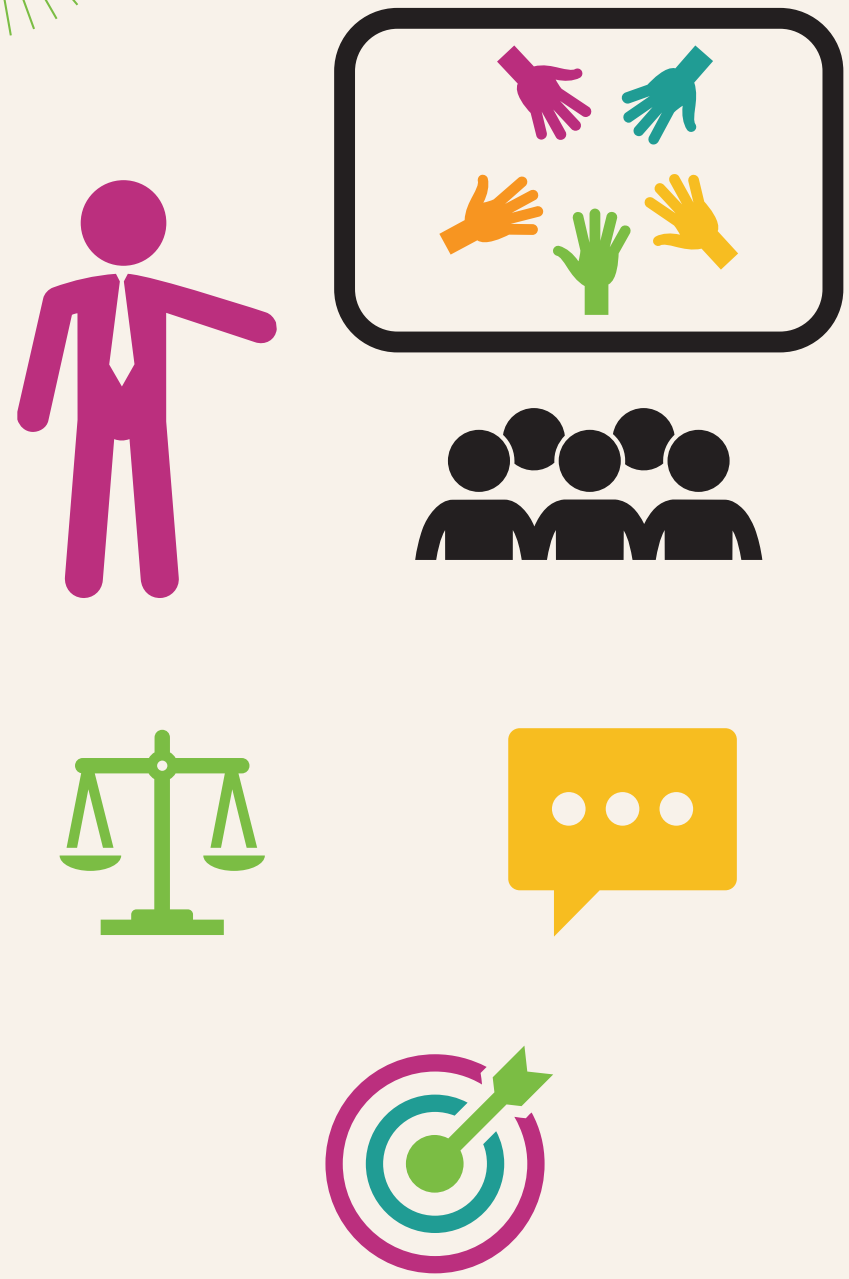
For **every journey**

We want our pupils to have a voice too. A real one. Through school councils, classroom discussions, pupil voice activities and everyday conversations, children are encouraged to share ideas, express opinions and help shape the life of their school. After all, they're the people who spend the most time there.

Alongside learning, many pupils benefit from specialist support, including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, counselling and targeted interventions. These services help remove barriers, build confidence and support wellbeing both in and out of the classroom.

We also help pupils understand the world around them. Through assemblies, PSHE, Rights Respecting Schools work and wider school activities, children learn about respect, responsibility, fairness and the importance of treating others with kindness. Big lessons. Important ones.

Because while qualifications matter, so does learning how to be part of a community, make good choices and believe in yourself.





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EDUCATION

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