



Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

**Coproduction in action
A Parent Carer Resource**

Shropshire Primary Schools



Celebrating every mind.
Connecting every learner.
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin ICB



What was the PINS Project?

The PINS project (Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools) brought together education staff, health professionals, and Parent Carers to strengthen inclusion across 35 Shropshire primary schools.

It focused on improving staff understanding, adapting environments, and developing whole-school approaches so neurodivergent children could thrive. A core element was parent carers sharing their lived experience and working with schools to explore alternative approaches that better support pupils.

What Did Parent Carers Tell Schools?

Parent Carers shared their experiences of what helps children thrive and what can make school more difficult. Some of the key themes included:



Communication Matters

Many families said that communication between home and school is one of the most important factors in a child's success.

Parent Carers valued:

- Being listened to
- Honest and open conversations
- Consistent communication
- Staff understanding their child's individual needs
- Positive relationships built on trust



Anxiety Can Be Hidden

One of the strongest messages from families was that anxiety is not always visible. Many children:

- Mask their difficulties at school
- Appear to be coping when they are struggling
- Avoid asking for help
- Find it difficult to explain what is causing their distress

This means that schools and families need to work together to understand what may be happening beneath the surface.



Every Child's Experience is Different

The project highlighted that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. Children may experience:

- Sensory differences
- Social communication challenges
- Anxiety
- Difficulties with change and transitions
- Different learning styles

Understanding the individual child is essential.



Sensory Needs Are Important

Families explained that sensory differences can have a significant impact on a child's day.

Examples included:

- Clothing textures
- Noise levels
- Busy environments
- Lighting
- Crowded spaces

Small adjustments can sometimes make a big difference to a child's comfort and ability to learn.

What Did Schools Do?



Schools created opportunities for Parent Carers to:

- Share experiences
- Identify priorities
- Suggest solutions
- Review proposed changes

Rather than discussing lots of topics at once, meetings focused on one issue at a time. This allowed for deeper conversations and more meaningful action. Schools then sought feedback from the wider school community before implementing changes.

What worked well?

The project showed that positive change happens when:

- ✓ Parent carers are treated as experts in their child.
- ✓ Schools listen without judgement.
- ✓ Families feel safe to share both positive and difficult experiences.
- ✓ Decisions are made together rather than for families.
- ✓ Children and young people's voices are considered alongside those of adults.

What Does This Mean for Families?

The PINS project reinforces an important message:

Your experiences, observations and ideas are valuable. When schools and families work together as partners, children are more likely to feel understood, included and supported.

PINS demonstrated that effective inclusion is not about finding a single solution for every child. It is about listening, understanding individual needs, building strong relationships and working together to create school environments where all children can belong, participate and thrive.

"Nothing about us without us" applies to SEND families too – the best decisions are made when children, young people, parent carers and schools work together.