What does inclusive teaching look like?

Inclusive Education · https://inclusionactionontario.ca/docs/what-does-inclusive-ed-look-like/

Good inclusive teaching involves many changes to the regular classroom to fully include all students in the neighbourhood classroom. The first requirement is "universal design for learning" to ensure materials are accessible to all, designed for a wide range of students in mind; followed by removing any unnecessary barriers; and lastly, accommodating the remaining needs.

For students with disabilities, accommodation includes accessible materials, with differentiated instruction; adapted materials; alternative assessment options; physically accessible buildings, including classrooms modified for sensory needs, varying types of seating, opportunities to move, and quieter space options. A key feature is peer mentoring and peer supports. Good inclusive teaching will use school teams and co-teaching models to support the classroom teacher. It is not done "over there", "down the hall", "in some other school" by "special educators". It is a shared responsibility of the whole school community to include students with disabilities.

The Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education, at Western University, describes inclusive schools as having the following characteristics:

- Welcoming, accepting atmosphere; no assumptions about students' abilities
- High expectations for staff members and students
- Providing opportunities for participation in the classroom and school setting
- Encourage development of relationships through seating setups, role models and buddy relationships

Most of all, inclusive education requires a celebration and respect for all differences and diversity. For a more in-depth look at building inclusive schools - across race, income, gender, and disability - IAO recommends the Centre's video series on building inclusive schools. For a more in-depth introduction of intersectionality and disability within the school system, read this post from Oregon State University.