

St. Mark's School Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan

3 year period covered: 2017 - 2019

Introduction

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010 sets out the requirements in relation to schools for an accessibility strategy which increases the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, improves the physical environment for disabled pupils and improves the delivery of information for disabled pupils.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas required:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

Schools also have a duty towards disabled staff and towards the general public. As such, the DES widens the school's responsibilities to take account of all disabled people, students, staff, parents and visitors. All disabled people connected to the school will be asked to participate in the positive promotion of disability and in the elimination of discrimination. Reference is therefore made to disabled people and not disabled students unless there is the need to specifically identify a particular group e.g. students in the classroom.

The DES is also coordinated with the duties in such areas as race, health and safety and human rights. The DES is a key part of the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy.

The school takes "reasonable adjustments" to ensure all disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. To make these reasonable adjustments we:

- Plan ahead
- Identify potential barriers
- Work collaboratively with disabled people
- Identify practical solutions through a problem solving approach
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills
- Monitor the effects of the adjustments and this policy
- Recognise the importance of home-school partnership and look to parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity if they or their child has a disability.

- Consider the effect of any proposed change upon all members of the school community and the available resources.

Definition of Disability

A disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments. An impairment does not mean a student is disabled. It is the effect this has on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. There is an overlap with SEN but not all disabled students will have special needs, e.g. those with asthma, heart problems, cancer etc. Not all SEN students have a disability.

To test whether impairment affects normal day to day activities is whether it affects one or more of the following:

Mobility	-	getting to and from school or going on school visits.
Manual dexterity	-	holding a pen, throwing a ball, playing an instrument.
Physical coordination	-	washing, dressing, taking part in PE.
Ability to lift objects	-	to carry a bag
Continence	-	going to the toilet.
Speech	-	communicating with others or understanding what they saying
Hearing	-	hearing what people are saying or on a DVD or tape.
Vision	-	being able to see clearly (with glasses/contact lenses)
Memory	-	concentrating on and understanding information
Perception of danger	-	touching hot objects, crossing roads safely

The purpose and direction of the school’s DES: vision and values:

Inclusion at St. Mark’s is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. It also ensures that we recognise and celebrate the differences that exist amongst us, that we treat all people fairly and that we strive to eliminate discrimination wherever it exists. This is a whole school policy – equality applies to all members of the school community, students, staff, governors, parents and community members.

It is based on the values expressed in this school’s vision statement.

The community of St. Mark’s believes that every individual is created by God, and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and fulfil their potential.

These aims are designed to ensure that the school meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, disability, ability, sexual

orientation, age and social circumstances. We strive to include and engage all students and to prepare them for full participation in a diverse society. This school will take steps to:

Promote equality of opportunity and access
Promote racial equality and good race relations
Oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination
Ensure students with a disability have access to the school buildings and to the curriculum

For the DES we will especially eliminate discrimination, harassment related to disability, promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to take account of disabled people's disabilities.

Information from pupil data:

A key starting point for the school's DES will be an assessment of:

- the nature of the school population
- the nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities.

The following questions need to be asked:

Who is in the school?	students, parents, staff and governors, visitors
Who is disabled?	students and adults presently in the school
Who is not at school?	absent students and adults through illness, excluded students
Who might we expect in the future?	new intake from Year 6 and stray intake through the year. Other information, such as local/national information on trends in the school and adult population.

- We will consider the profile of disabled students coming into the school and of those who may not have been admitted to the school up until now;
- Detailed information on how well disabled students are accessing the curriculum:
 - RAISEOnline and FFT data at KS2,3,4 and 5.
 - Patterns of attendance and exclusion.
 - Participation in extra-curricular activities, school trips and sports college events.
- Issues such as bullying, peer relationships, medicines, role models.

We will also analyse the impact on disabled people in the way the school is organised, looking at:

- The physical environment and accessibility of the school site.
- School policies and procedures and the effect these have upon students and adults, staff, parents and visitors.
- The way information is provided.
- Priorities in the School Development Plan.
- Outcomes of Every Child Matters
- Gathering information on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled staff.

Consultation

The DES should be informed by:

- the views and aspirations of disabled children and young people themselves;
- the views and aspiration of disabled staff;
- the views and aspirations of the parents of disabled students;
- the views and aspirations of other disabled people or voluntary organisations;
- the views of all staff who have responsibilities in the DES re: disabled students and adults;
- the priorities of the local authority.

Consultation will need to be organised in a way that is accessible to the particular groups who are being consulted and to show how the views of these different groups have influenced the DES.

Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum:

This is achieved through the School Development Plan which includes Curriculum focus as well as Premises focus on accessibility and the requirement for making reasonable adjustments. The school will also draw upon the expertise of external partners e.g. speech and language therapists, ICT and in conjunction with partner schools. There will also be valuable contributions from SLT, subject leaders, curriculum planning and timetabling, Pupil Progress Leaders, the use of Learning Support and the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants, the Premises director and School Caretaking team, advice and support from the LA, student involvement and the use of the School Council, and consultation with parents.

The DES and Accessibility Plan will set high expectations for disabled people as disabled students make significant progress, staff become accomplished at providing for and supporting disabled students and other adults feel the positive benefit of the policy and practice.

For disabled students consideration must be given to particular groups. This would include:

- PE for students with a physical impairment
- Sex education for students with inherited conditions
- Music for deaf and hearing impaired students
- Easy language or recorded information for students with learning difficulties
- Pictures and symbols for students with communication difficulties
- Large print for visually impaired students
- The height of desks in science and DT for wheelchair users
- Classroom organisation so disabled students can freely move around
- Clear signs for visually impaired students especially health and safety advice
- Lighting that supports lip reading and visually impaired students
- The self esteem of disabled students by promoting positive images of disabled people in books, teaching materials and the wider curriculum
- The elimination of bullying towards disabled students
- Where required timetable lessons on the ground floor for students with disabilities to ensure safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

For disabled parents the production of school information in different formats:

- Braille
- Large print
- Audio copies

The consideration of disabled adults visiting the school

- Reception and PAC (**Physical Activities**) facilities for wheelchair users and deaf people
- Safe floors securely fixed and not over polished
- Clear signs

Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services:

An environment that welcomes diversity and difference and a school that learns how to improve access for disabled people will be good for all.

- improvements to lighting, signage, colour contrast, the acoustic environment, floor coverings;
- improvements to toilets, washing and changing facilities;
- changes to the layout of the playground and other common areas;
- the provision of ramps and lifts and improvements to doorways;
- the provision of particular furniture and equipment to improve access.
- enlarged computer screens and keyboards
- established quiet areas

Funding for improvements to the physical environment of the school may come from a variety of different sources:

- School Access Initiative funding may be needed for major capital works. This has to be coordinated with the local authority's priorities;
- Devolved formula capital funding can meet the costs of some of the priorities;
- Delegated funding can be used to meet the costs of particular equipment that may need to be provided for disabled students e.g. large key calculators when the Maths Dept buys its calculators
- Access to Work scheme where alterations need to be made to improve access for disabled staff

Improving the delivery of information to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled:

Information for disabled students – provided in writing for students who are not disabled might include:

- handouts, timetables, worksheets, notices, information about school events.

Improving the delivery of information might include making information available in:

- Braille, large print, simplified language, on audiotape, on videotape, through sign language, using a symbol system.

The school's Teaching and Learning policy and how students' work is marked and assessed also needs review.

Implementation

Management, coordination and implementation

The DES and Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years. It is reviewed and reported upon every year alongside the SEN and Inclusion policies to the governing body.

The school undertakes an annual evaluation and moderation of SEN and Inclusion at the end of each academic year. This includes the performance of disabled students in terms of academic progress and participation in the wider curriculum and school life.

The School Development Plan ensures the DES is an essential part of the school's action on disability. It also ensures other school policies e.g. Teaching and Learning, Health and Safety etc incorporate disability and accessibility issues.

The DES and Accessibility Plan is also designed to coordinate with other services and agencies.

Leadership of the DES will be via the Governors' SEND Committee.

Allocation of Resources will be the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Premises.

Review, December 2016.

The following issues were considered:

Have we had any effect and have disabled students and adults seen a difference?

Are staff more confident with disability issues and students?

Are more parents satisfied with arrangements for disabled people?

Are disabled students achieving more, in assessments and in the social life of the school?

Is the school more accessible?

Is the academic performance of students with disabilities analysed and outcomes taken into consideration when planning for School Improvement and Development.

Outcome, December 2016

Disabled students are achieving in line with their potential and with their peers.

The School Development Plan takes into consideration the needs of disabled students and adults.

Audits of students, parents and staff's views should be undertaken.

The school continues with its programme of improving accessibility to the site.

The school has appointed a Finance director who line manages Premises and who is a member of the SLT.

Review, December 2019.

The following issues to be considered:

Have we had any effect and have disabled students and adults seen a difference?

What training has been undertaken by staff, including SLT, the Premises team, the SEND Department, the Student Welfare team, the School Council, support and teaching staff and the Governing Body?

Are staff more confident with disability issues and students?

Are more parents satisfied with arrangements for disabled people?

Are disabled students achieving more, in assessments and in the social life of the school?

Is the school more accessible?

Is the academic performance of students with disabilities analysed and outcomes taken into consideration when planning for School Improvement and Development.

October 2018