



Disability Access Plan – September 2020 – September 2021

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Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) introduced a legal requirement on all schools to increase accessibility for disabled students. This requirement is now included in the Equality Act 2010. All schools are required to produce a written Accessibility Plan.

The School's policy is to meet all legal requirements in this area and take reasonable steps to accommodate students with disability, who satisfy the entry requirements of the school. This Accessibility Plan therefore sets out how the School is planning to meet the needs of disabled students and increase accessibility for them.

This Plan will be made available to interested parties at all reasonable times, as required under the legislation. It covers the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Definition of Disability

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. References to 'disabled people' includes students, employees, governors, parents and carers and other members of the wider community that might use school premises for leisure or other activities. The definition of disability covers a broad spectrum of impairments including:

- long term illnesses
- hearing or sight impairments
- mobility difficulties
- mental health conditions
- learning difficulties/disabilities

As dyslexia is a protected condition under the Equality Act, all our pupils are afforded protection under the Equality Act. Several of our children also have a diagnosis of dyspraxia, meaning they find physical co-ordination and movement harder.

We advise parents of children with physical disabilities to discuss their child’s requirements with the school before he or she is assessed so that we can make adequate provision for him/her. Parents should provide a copy of a medical report to support their request, for example, for large print material or other special arrangements.

Our current position

Our site is a compact site in Abingdon, comprising a Victorian Villa, detached bungalow, outside play areas and assorted temporary buildings. Our most recent assessment identified accessibility issues associated with the age of our primary building.

In line with many schools, we communicate with our parents and wider community via email, our parent portal and website. We publish documents as part of our admissions process and to maintain regular communication with our parents and other stakeholders. We are conscious that many of our parents and wider community may have more difficulty than some in accessing information provided to them.

As a specialist school, we deploy strategies daily to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum to the greatest extent possible and are always looking for ways of increasing access to our provision.

Progress since our last plan

As a school for children with additional needs, we are always looking at ways to improve our accessibility. Since our last plan in February 2017, we have made the following progress against the objectives we set ourselves in that plan:

Progress against the objectives in our last plan

Objective – improve access to our physical environment		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Install a pedestrian walkway to the entrance	April 2017	Complete
Disabled car parking space with sign	April 2017	Space has moved subsequently to a more suitable location
Directional sign by school gates showing the location of the disabled parking	April 2017	Complete

Objective – improve access to our physical environment		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Pedestrian walkway at back	October 2019	Canopy installed to improve walkway
Ensure all outside steps have contrasting nosing	April 2017	
Disabled access route sign shown clearly at the front of school	April 2017	Complete
Offer a seat with arms for disabled visitors at the front of the school		Not yet achieved due to space constraints in reception
Ensure all missing bulbs and fluorescent tubes are replaced as soon as possible as part of on-going maintenance programme	Ongoing	Lighting always considered as part of accessibility and energy efficiency drives.
Purchase portable induction loop for the use of hard of hearing visitors and install appropriate signage	February 2017	Located in reception
Ensure that corridors are kept clear and circulation routes should be kept clear of obstructions such as sports equipment, deliveries and stationery	Ongoing	Ongoing
Consider how to improve the visual contrast in school when carrying out maintenance or refurbishment	Ongoing	Visual impact considered in internal works.
All signs replaced with lower case	April 2017	Dyslexic friendly font adopted. Signage is dyslexic friendly
Uniformly sign all classroom doors	April 2017	Complete
Incorporate tactile signs in future	Not yet implemented	To be implemented if necessary
Ensure that sports facilities are accessible to disabled pupils/parents	Liaison with Tilsley Park	Sports facilities and equipment continually under review
Constantly make people aware that there is a danger with a door without a vision panel	October 2018	All doors apart from toilets now have vision panels.
Make frequent checks on doors to ensure that they are not too stiff and can be easily opened	Ongoing	Latest full fire door check November 2019
Arrange disability awareness and etiquette training and manual handling training	Ongoing	Ongoing training programmes according to identified need.
Improve signage to accessible toilet	April 2017	Complete
Exit routes should be regularly checked for obstacles	Ongoing	Ongoing

Objective – improve access to our physical environment		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Purchase a picnic table for wheelchair users		Not yet implemented – need not arisen

In addition to the objectives we set ourselves in February 2017, we have made the following additional adjustments to improve accessibility within our school.

Improve access to our physical environment

Objective – improve access to our physical environment		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Upgraded our minibuses to models with easier access	February 2019, January 2020	New minibuses February 2019, January 2020
Increased the space allocated to Mental Health support, ensuring that all students have the support they need to access education, with a dedicated hub, increased therapy support	January 2019	Ongoing project to ensure that mental health concerns are not a barrier to learning.

Improve access to information

Objective – improve access to information		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Improved accessibility of our website with High Contrast and Read aloud functionality	September 2019	Improved integration with Microsoft Edge
Implemented a standard dyslexic friendly font throughout our communications templates	July 2018	
Embedded the Elklan programme for accessible communication throughout the school, in order to ensure that we use accessible language, tone and communication skills	Ongoing	Commenced September 2018. Whole staff trained, with catch up sessions for new staff in INSETs

Improve access to the curriculum

Objective – improve access to our curriculum		
Action	Date achieved	Comments
Implemented Office365, including Immersive Reader throughout the school	September 2019	Further implementation to follow – BYOD programme planned, student functionality to build on
Increased the staff and space allocated to Mental Health support, ensuring that all students have the support they need to access education, with a dedicated hub, increased therapy support. Trained a member of staff as an ELSA.	January 2019	Ongoing project to ensure that mental health concerns are not a barrier to learning.
Overhauled our IEP and EHCP processes to ensure that pupils receive the support and access arrangements they need to fulfil their potential	Ongoing	Significant changes autumn 2019
Employed a Teacher of the Deaf, qualified in sign language	January 2018	
Purchased 30 Scanning Pens for use in class and in exams	September 2017, October 2018	
Implemented a GCSE curriculum for students unable to access external exams in mainstream	July 2018	

Objectives under this plan

We have set ourselves the following objectives to achieve during the lifetime of this plan. We will review our progress against these objectives annually.

Improve access to our physical environment

Objective – improve access to our physical environment					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Install new playground with secure fencing and an improved playing surface to increase participation in sports	Summer 2020	Bursar	Funding, planning permission, construction programme	Successful completion of project	
Construct additional internal space to allow an increased focus on Mental Health support	Summer 2020	Bursar	Funding, planning permission, construction programme	Successful completion of project	
Focus on lighting and physical access of new space to minimise barriers to learning	Summer 2020	Bursar	Awareness, funding	Successful completion of project	
Improve our internet access in school by securing a leased line so that online access is adequately supported throughout the school	March 2020	Bursar	Additional cost for upgraded facility	In situ	
Review the physical infrastructure of our IT to ensure that it meets the future needs of the school, thereby giving access to online accessibility resources	July 2020	Bursar	Increased bandwidth, IT infrastructure, IT equipment		

Improve access to information

Objective – improve access to information					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Update our admissions paperwork and website to make it clear that it can be provided in an alternative format (large format, audio, braille) if necessary	July 2020	ECS/KJ	Staff review time	If implemented	

Objective – improve access to information					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Consider website accessibility as part of any website upgrade	February 2023	ECS/KJ	Upgrade budget possible. Assess our website using a tool such as accessibility-services.co.uk		
Implement new parent portal via Schoolbase, with improved access via mobile devices, notifications etc	March 2020	ECS/LH/DK	Schoolbase training, parent support & training	Parent communications perceived as better when compared with survey results autumn 2019	

Improve access to the curriculum

Objective – improve access to the curriculum					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Continue to invest in IT and in particular assistive technology.	September 2023	AD	IT budget, knowledge, training		
Increase the resource allocated to Mental Health, to adequately support pupils in accessing the curriculum through the allocation of additional space and staff resource	September 2020	KJ	Funding, planning permission, construction programme summer 2020	Successful completion of project	
Introduce a BYOD policy so that all children have access to the accessibility tools brought by IT (including Office 365 Immersive Reader) both in and out of school	September 2020	AD/KJ/SG	Time, policies, support from Class Technology. Making IT infrastructure ready for increased volume of users, training	Successful implementation of BYOD policy.	

Objective – improve access to the curriculum					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Adapt the National Curriculum to suit and accommodate our students	Ongoing	All teaching staff	Time, policies, long, medium and short term plans, liaison between subject and one to one teachers,	Successful implementation of planning, students' progression	
Specialised one to one teaching sessions (five weekly) for our Year 3 to 8 students as a unique addition to our teaching timetable	Ongoing	One to One teachers	Time, planning,	Successful implementation of planning, students' progression	
Specialised Study Skills/Learning Support programme for our Year 9, 10 and 11 students as a unique addition to our teaching timetable	Ongoing	Study Skills team	Time, liaison with KS4 subject teachers	Successful implementation of planning, students' progression	
Design a specific GCSE programme for our Year 9, 10 and 11 students	Ongoing	KS4 staff	Time, planning, training,	Successful implementation of planning, students' progression	
Offer workdays within the school holidays to support GCSE revision for our Year 11 students	Ongoing	KS4 staff	Time	Students' progression	
Offer homework clubs to our KS4 students, to enable extra specialised help with revision and school work	Ongoing	KS4 staff	Time	Students' progression	
Offer specialised Outreach programme, both at the Unicorn School and at other schools	Ongoing	CR, LC-S	Time, planning	Successful visits to other schools, successful	
Cover disability awareness during INSET and other staff training	Ongoing	AD	INSET time, training budget for external training	Staff confident that they have the knowledge and confidence to handle disability issues in school	

Objective – improve access to the curriculum					
Action	By when	By whom	Resources required	Success criteria	Comments
Ensure trips and visits are accessible to all	September 2020	AD	Updated policy, staff training	No pupil is excluded from taking part in a trip due to a disability or health condition	
Develop a "Life Skills" programme for pupils who need additional support with daily tasks outside of the classroom	September 2020	FC/JC	TA time, SENCO oversight	pupil tracking indicates that pupils build on confidence and ability	
Train a member of staff as a MIE trainer to support with assistive technology in school (pupils & staff)	December 2020	SG	Time, training	Trainer status successfully achieved	

Created Bursar, Director of Teaching & Learning
Reviewed Headteacher
Next review September 2021