

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided)

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY 2017-18

Vision Statement

The School recognises that its purpose is to provide the best possible quality of learning experience and environment for the children in its care.

We want St Matthew's School to be renowned for its academic success, its sporting endeavours, its musical and creative flair, its Christian ethos and values and its family atmosphere.

We want the School to be a valued part of the community.

The staff and governors are committed to developing the children's potential to its full.

The staff are committed to pursuing professional excellence, while aiming to develop their own potential to the full.

We should like the children to be noted for being happy, self-motivated, industrious, smart, polite, well behaved and caring.

We believe the partnership between home and school is fundamental in achieving these aims.

School Aims

- develop a sympathetic understanding in its pupils of the Christian faith.
- employ staff that are willing to support the school's Christian ethos.
- use prominent Christian symbols to emphasise our status and ethos.
- stimulate and develop the children's use of language and number to enable them to communicate effectively and to enjoy adult life and the world of work.
- develop in the children qualities of mind, body, spirit, feeling, imagination, artistic impression and aesthetic sensitivity.
- enable the children to achieve good health and physical development through physical education.
- enable the children to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes and Christian values so as to work towards a just and caring society, to be able to respect one another and our differences.
- develop the children's natural curiosity about the world around them through science and technology.
- develop the children's social skills to enable them to work collaboratively, enjoying confident personal and work relationships.
- maintain high standards of behaviour, dress, courtesy and self-control.
- help children develop a positive self-image and the confidence to manage opportunities of developing their own talents and personalities so as to live as independent, self-motivated members of our School family.
- encourage a sense of pride and ownership in St Matthew's Church of England Primary School.

Equal Opportunities

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins, abilities and needs of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect. All pupils have the right to be given opportunities and access to the full curriculum regardless of ethnicity, gender, social circumstances, ability, disability, age, nationality or citizenship. Pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

The school aims to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils:

- When planning teachers set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve.
- All staff are aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths which will influence the way they learn.
- Teachers plan their approach to teaching and learning so that all pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively.
- Specific action is taken to enable the effective participation of pupils with disabilities.

The definition of disability is

“A person suffers 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.”

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

We recognise:

- Our duty under the Disability Discrimination Act ('95) as amended by the SENDA (2001) *“from September 2002, it will be unlawful for schools and LEAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services”*
- Schools and LAs must:
 - not treat disabled pupils less favourably; and
 - take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty)
- that Local Authority and school governors have the duty to publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans

Scope of the Plan

This plan covers all three main strands of the planning duty:

1. Improving the physical environment of school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services.

This strand of the planning duty covers aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

The physical environment includes things such as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture.

Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept key boards, switches, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor coordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils

In maintained schools the provision of a special piece of equipment or extra assistance will be made through the SEN framework and to a lesser extent through the planning duty which applies to all schools. The distinction between auxiliary aids and services provided through the SEN route and those provided under the planning duty is that the SEN duties relate to the individual, whereas the planning duty relates to the provision of aids or services in terms of the population (and future population) of the school. For example, a pupil with visual impairment might have low vision aids provided through the statement of SEN but the school might as a general measure provide blinds and adjustable lighting through the planning duty.

2. Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in schools' curricula.

This strand of the planning duty will help to improve access to a full, broad and balanced curriculum. It covers a range of elements including ensuring that teaching and learning is accessible through school and classroom organisation and support, especially deployment of staff, timetabling, curriculum options and staff information and training.

Schools will be expected to plan to improve progressively access to the curriculum for all disabled pupils although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and may be provided through the SEN framework. The accessibility strategies and plans will help to ensure that schools are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

3. Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities

This part of the duty covers planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to disabled pupils. This will include alternative formats such as Braille, audio tape and large print and also the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or sign language, through a recognised symbol system or ICT. This information should also be made available within a reasonable time frame and take account of the pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents' preferred formats.

Other related school policies

Equality for disabled pupils is included as an explicit aim in all of the school's policies and is supported by the school's other policies including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy/Criteria
- School Development Plan
- Policy for School Trips and Excursions
- SEN Policy
- Exclusions

Aims

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School aims to include all pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this will include:

- having high expectations of all pupils
- finding ways in which all pupils can take part in the full curriculum including sport, music, and drama
- planning out-of-school activities including all school trips and excursions so that pupils with disabilities can participate
- setting admissions policy and criteria which do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or treat them unfairly
- devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for pupils with disabilities
- planning the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of pupils with disabilities
- raising awareness of disability amongst school staff (teaching and non-teaching) through a programme of training
- providing written information for pupils with disabilities in a form which is user friendly.
- using language which does not offend in all its literature and make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language.
- examining our library and reading books to ensure that there are examples of positive images of disabled people

Actions to ensure equality for pupils with disabilities

1. We shall undertake a disability audit using the DfES checklist followed up by recommendations from the diocese and LA support services as appropriate.
2. As a result of the audit, we shall:
 - write an action plan which includes targets
 - make the policy and targets known to all teaching and ancillary staff, pupils and parents
 - monitor the success of the plan
 - review the Plan annually (the SEN Committee)
3. The school will set up a working party to monitor and further develop good practice.
4. Track pupil progress of children with SEN and report to the governing body annually.

Monitoring

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School recognises that monitoring is essential to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged, and that monitoring leads to action planning.

We will monitor:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Rewards
- Sanctions
- Exclusions
- Response to teaching styles/subject
- SEN Register
- Effects of the Literacy & Numeracy Strategies
- Extra-curricular activities
- Homework
- Parents attending consultation meetings

Publications for Guidance

Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils	Issued to all schools in June 2002 (DfES Publications)
Schools Disability Code of Practice	Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
SEN Code of Practice	DfES
DfES Guidance on Inclusive Schooling	DfES
National Curriculum 2000 Inclusion Statement	DfES
DfEE: Access for disabled people to school buildings (BB91)	The Stationary Office

This policy will be reviewed in June 2018