



SENDA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY ACT THREE YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

This SENDA plan also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Reviewed in: January 2025

Next Review Date: January 2028

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SECTION 1

Statement of Intent

In accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Equality Act 2010, it is our intention not to treat disabled pupils less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty) in matters of admission and education.

The Equality Act 2010 states that a pupil has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing.

As a preparatory school environment, we will continue to select pupils by ability and aptitude, but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with a disability.

SECTION 2

Information about our school environment

Access to the building: Alpha is housed in two converted Edwardian houses (with some additional outbuildings) in a built-up area close to the centre of Harrow. Parking is difficult, although there is

some disabled parking available in Tesco and the supermarket allows our parents to park when they drop off or collect children. Tesco is situated about 50 metres from the school, along a flat road with an even pavement. The pavement has dropped areas to assist mobility.

There are wide gates which provide good access from Hindes Road or Hamilton Road, but there is no disabled access to the front door, which is at the top of a flight of three steps.

Moving around the site: The building is not on one level, but there are ramps which provide easy access from the upper to the lower playgrounds. There is also external lighting and (as part of this plan) there is a portable ramp which would allow good access through double doors to the pre-prep block. This is stored to the east side of the sports hall.

There is an audible fire alarm and emergency lighting inside the building. There are braille fire signs in some areas for visitors with visual difficulties.

Problems with the building: Our main building is more than 125 years old and was not designed with disabled access in mind. Consequently, there are staircases, narrow hallways and doorways which would not allow wheelchair access. We do not have a disabled toilet facility and problems with limitations of space would make it difficult to create such a facility, whilst still providing sufficient toilets and recreational areas for other pupils in accordance with current legislation.

Travelling off-site: We regularly use an off-site sports facility and we arrange a number of outings each year. Travelling may be by coach, walking, public transport or our own minibus and school car. We replaced our minibus with one that has a reduced mobility facility and can accommodate a wheelchair. In addition, the school car would be able to accommodate a folded-up wheelchair.

Many of our outings are to venues which provide excellent disabled access. These would include theatres, cinemas, museums and other places of interest.

Pupils: Pupil's additional needs are anticipated on admission using information supplied by parents or other professionals. Appropriate adjustments are planned in consultation with parents and relevant staff, such as the school's Welfare Assistant, Class Teacher, SENDCO (Person in charge of Academic Enhancement), Catering Manager and external agencies, depending on specific needs.

Pupils' educational progress is regularly tracked and monitored by our teaching staff, who provide appropriate resources, work adaptations and support within the classroom as needed to enable each child to access the learning and make their best progress. Pupils who may need additional support are assessed for appropriate provision in accordance with our Learning Support Policy.

The school Welfare Officer is Mrs Jyoti Patel who will arrange relevant training and raise awareness for staff in connection with any medical condition management. The Welfare Officer will also monitor and manage any individual health plans which need to be put into place for pupils. Examples of current or previous conditions that have been catered for include colitis, asthma, eczema, sickle cell anaemia, diabetes, muscular weakness, food and other allergies.

Although Alpha cannot adequately cater for pupils who would need wheelchair access to all parts of the building or for pupils with severe learning difficulties, the school has been successful in

providing pupils with a variety of physical and learning disabilities with good access to the curriculum. Examples include mild hearing loss, visual impairment, mild dyslexia, dyspraxia, autistic tendencies or poor auditory/visual memory, in addition to the medical conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph. We have also put in place plans to assist pupils and adults with temporary conditions, such as a broken leg or arm.

The school will continue to make reasonable adjustments to provision, criteria, environment and practice where it is reasonable to do so to improve access for pupils with a disability to the education provided by the school. Examples of reasonable adjustments made for current and previous pupils include: enlarged print resources, photocopying worksheets onto coloured paper, providing colour overlays, use of multi-sensory computer programs and dyslexic-friendly programs, magnifiers, large-print text, visual cue-cards and timetables, portable sloping desks, tablets, laptops, step-ups to enable pupils with restricted growth to reach working areas, adapted writing implements and grips, adapted scissors and other implements, provision of small group and individual support and extra time for tests and tasks

SECTION 3

OUR THREE YEAR PLAN

This plan covers the period January 2025 – January 2028

At the moment, we have created a situation in which a disabled person could easily access the site through the Hindes Road or Hamilton Road gates and could move around the outside of the buildings using the ramps provided.

External lighting means that this is possible all year round and at any time of the day or night. A portable ramp provides access to the Pre-Prep block, which also houses the sports hall, where concerts and meetings are held.

Although access to the site is relatively straightforward, it is difficult to reach the front door. We have examined a number of options (including temporary ramps and a permanent ramp) but there was no straightforward or cost-efficient method. We shall ask the school surveyor to update us on possibilities during the course of this plan, but in order to allow a disabled person to notify us that they wish to gain entry or require assistance, we have provided a bell at an appropriate height that can be reached at the bottom of the front steps and will alert the office staff. The entrance, and other areas of the school, are also monitored by CCTV.

To extend access to the school office, we will ask the school surveyor for suggestions and costings. The most likely possibility is access through the door which adjoins the 'quiet area' (on the Hamilton Road side of the building) and then gain entry to the main office via the door by the Headmaster's office. There is a downstairs toilet which may be suitable for conversion to allow disabled access.

Class Teachers, the SENDCO (Person in charge of Academic Enhancement) and the Senior Leadership Team will continue to review the needs of individual pupils and will provide reasonable support (individual or group) and auxiliary aids to enhance access to the curriculum. The school

will continue to work with outside agencies, such as optometrists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, etc. and will implement their recommendations for individual children.

We will continue to develop the use of IT to enhance the provision of information and multi-sensory learning.

Physical Access

| Action | Timescale | By Whom |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Ensure that reduced mobility access is taken into account if replacing the school car and mini bus. | Reviewed when a new car is required. | Buildings Committee |

Curriculum Access

| Action | Timescale | By Whom |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Class Teachers provide support and differentiation in the classroom. | Ongoing | Class Teachers |
| SENDCO (Person in charge of Academic Enhancement) and Senior Leadership Team review children needing additional support (individual or group), auxiliary aids and adaptations. The child is assessed for learning difficulties and appropriate provision is planned. | Ongoing, depending on individual needs | Person in charge of Academic Enhancement and SLT |
| Liaise with outside agencies according to the needs of individual pupils | Ongoing, depending on individual needs | Person in charge of Academic Enhancement/ Class Teachers |

Information Access

| Action | Timescale | By Whom |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Use of iPads and Laptops to help and enhance multi-sensory learning | iPads were integrated in our curriculum in 2019. | IT Coordinators |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Expand multi-sensory learning resources available for home/school use. | Ongoing. Commit to annual IT refresh programme | IT Coordinators/ SLT |
| To look into developing Parent and Pupil Portals | Ongoing | SLT and IT Coordinators. |

SECTION 4

Conclusion

The design and location of our site presents serious difficulties in extending provision to disabled pupils who would require wheelchair access throughout the building. In designing our 3-year plan, we have tried to be realistic in terms of what is possible and what is reasonably practicable.

Given the fact that we operate on a limited site and that improving disabled access often involves taking up more space, one ever-present conundrum for us to solve is that by improving provision for one group of pupils we may be damaging the educational experience of others. Nevertheless, we will regularly review the options available and any new building projects will be planned with disability access in mind. The most recent example of this was when the old Reception classroom was restructured to house a small nursery and the raised platform area at the back was lowered to a single level. In 2019 we removed two low walls from the front area of the school, which helped provide a clearer route to the front entrance. In 2021 we also placed 'grab rails' to the entrance of our Dining Hall to aid access. We have included PIR lighting at the Entrance of the school to enhance our health and safety features.

To further our safety and visibility around the school, we upgraded our playground lights and the lights in the 'quiet area', which have had a positive impact for all, particularly in the dark winter nights at the end of the school day and at club dismissal time. In the summer of 2024, we upgraded our wifi system to enhance elements of communication and IT access around the school.

There is also the question of finance. Each year the Buildings Committee is authorised by the Board of Governors to maintain and improve the building within a given budget. We also budget each year for capital projects, but the same conundrum presents itself when deciding upon building projects. If, for example, we find a way to build a ramp from Hindes Road to the front door which might help an occasional child or visitor to the school, the cost of this project might prevent us from carrying out work elsewhere which would benefit the vast majority of our children who are already our pupils and whose parents are providing the finance for the project through their fees.

That said, Alpha is a caring school and is one that prides itself on providing pupils, staff, parents and visitors with a welcoming environment. Wherever possible, we would like to find ways to overcome some of the obvious difficulties which we face and we feel that a gradual year-on-year approach is one which is most likely to be successful in the end. This is the thinking behind our previous efforts which have allowed us to improve entry to, and movement around, the site, to develop our external lighting and to improve our fire signage.

Indeed, we pride ourselves on our policy of inclusion which applies to all of our pupils and we intend to ensure that no pupil at Alpha is excluded from any aspect of the curriculum, if it is reasonably practicable to achieve this aim.