



St. Thomas' CE Primary School Accessibility Policy

Adopted by St Thomas'

September 2024

Approved by Governors

7th October 2024

Review Date

September 2027

School Statement

We believe that St Thomas' CE Primary School is a successful school and meets the diverse needs of our school community. In order to build on our strengths we are committed to providing an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum, and quality teaching and learning, which will enable all our children to achieve to the best of their individual ability. We regard education as a lifelong process. We acknowledge that each person has unique value as an individual, and through an inclusive environment we will strive to provide equal opportunities regardless of learning needs, disability, gender, or social background.

Definitions

"A person suffers a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long term adverse affect 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 considers certain medical conditions when they have a long term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

At St Thomas' we recognise that we must:

Fulfil our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

"Since September 2002, it has been unlawful for school and LAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services."

Associated services being:

- Preparation for entry to school
- The curriculum
- Teaching and Learning
- Class organisation

- Timetabling
- Grouping of pupils
- Homework
- Access to school facilities
- Activities to supplement the curriculum
- School sports
- School policies
- Break and lunchtime
- The serving of school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Assessment and examination arrangements
- School discipline and sanctions
- School Clubs and activities
- Educational visits
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies

Ensure that we do not treat disabled pupils less favourably.

Ensure that we take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

Ensure the Governing Body publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans.

Overall Planning Duty

There are three main strands of planning duty:

- **To improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the intent to which the disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services;**

This strand of planning covers aids to improve the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education. The physical environment includes such things as steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, ventilation, floor coverings, signs and furniture. Aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, widening doorways, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting and blinds.

Physical aids to access education cover things such as ICT equipment, enlarged computer screens and keyboards, switches, specialist desks and chairs for children with motor co-ordination and poor hand/eye skills, such as specialist pencils and pens.

- **Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum:**

This strand of 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 progressively improve access to the curriculum for all disabled pupils, although many adjustments to access will be dependent on individual needs and maybe provided through the SEND framework. The accessibility strategies and plans will ensure that schools are planning and preparing to respond to the particular needs of individual pupils.

- **Improve the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities.**

This part of the planning duty covers the planning to make information normally provided by the school in writing, such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about the school and its events, available to disabled pupils. This will include alternative formats such as Braille, audiotape 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 pupils' disabilities and pupils' and parents'/carers' preferred formats.

Related School Policies

Equality for disabled pupils is included as an implicit aim in all our policies and is supported by other policies such as:

- Teaching and Learning
- Equal Opportunities
- Behaviour Policy
- Admission Policy/Criteria
- School Improvement Plan
- SEND Policy
- Exclusions

School's Aims and Objectives

At St Thomas' we aim to include all our pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this include:

- Having high expectations for all our pupils.
- Finding ways in which all pupils can access the full curriculum, including sports, music and drama.
- Ensuring that all extra-curricular and outside activities are planned in such a way that all pupils, regardless of disability can participate.
- Ensuring that the admissions policy and criteria do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or disadvantage them in any way.
- Ensuring that teaching strategies ensure that there are no barriers to learning, or participation, for pupils with disabilities.
- Raise awareness of disability amongst all staff through training.
- The provision of written information for pupils with disabilities in a form which is accessible to them.
- Use of language which does not offend and make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language.
- By examining all resources to ensure that there are positive images of disabled people as part of the fabric of the school.

Guidelines

Actions to ensure equality for pupils with disabilities:

We will undertake an audit of specific needs. The audit will be designed to identify targets in the following areas:

- Building requirements.
- Resource requirements.
- Individual Education Plans for learning.

An action plan will then be drawn up to address all areas identified under the headings above and made known to the wider school community.

The Disability Access Leader, all staff and SEND Governor will have responsibility to monitor and further develop good practice.

Monitoring Process

We recognise that it is essential to monitor the ongoing work as identified in the action plans to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not being disadvantaged. The action plans will be updated as necessary as a result of such monitoring.

Areas to be monitored include:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Rewards & Sanctions
- Exclusions
- Response to teaching styles/subject area
- Groupings
- Extra-curricular activities
- Homework
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Governing Body representation
- Parents attending Consultation Evenings
- Parental involvement in the wider life of the school (productions/sports days/open days).

Conclusion

St Thomas' considers itself to be an inclusive school where **all** pupils' are treated as individuals and given equal opportunities to access all aspects of school life. We strive to continually improve all areas of our provision and value the contribution all groups of children bring to the rich tapestry that is St Thomas'.