

Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under part 4 of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability;
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This scheme sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

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

It is a requirement that the school`s accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

The DDA defines 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. In the DDA, “substantial” means “more than minor or trivial”. “Long term” means it has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition of SEN includes many, but not necessarily all, disabled children: a disabled child has special educational needs if they have a disability and need special educational provision to be made for them in order to be able to access the education which is available locally.

Part 5a of the DDA requires schools to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, which sets out how the school will:

- Eliminate harassment related to a disability
- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take active steps to take account of disabled people`s disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

The scheme covers pupils, staff, parents and users of the school.

Our Vision and values.

The religious character of St. Peter`s provides a distinctive ethos and guiding principles that inform all policy and practice.

We aim to communicate our deep respect for the integrity of every person and our strong commitment to developing every member of the school community, both pupils and staff, to his or her full potential. Our core values are built around providing a secure, collaborative and purposeful learning culture, where all pupils and staff are valued, cared for, listened to and challenged to be the best they can be. We are equally ambitious for our disabled pupils and staff. Our response to the needs of our disabled pupils is a vital part of personalising learning for all.

St. Peter`s Catholic School is committed to providing the best quality provision for disabled pupils and adult members of the wider community. We want to ensure that all children have full and equal access to the National Curriculum that prepares them for life beyond school. The same applies to the extended curriculum beyond the school classroom. The school will work to remove barriers in every area of the life of the school and this will be part of the school`s wider commitment to equal opportunities.

It is our intention that all staff will feel a sense of ownership to the plan and the next three years will provide an opportunity to remind staff of the three key duties towards disabled pupils and their responsibility to remove barriers to learning for disabled pupils.

St. Peter's Catholic School has the disadvantage of having a cramped site which has several levels. Significant additions have been added over a number of years resulting in split levels, two storeys and flights of stairs that restrict access. Some of the corridors are narrow with congested bottle necks. Wherever possible alterations made to the original building now give disabled access. The most recent substantial new build was built with a lift to give full access to every floor.

The school has a successful record of achieving the best possible outcome for the pupils it supports. The team of Learning Support Assistants and learning mentors have a range of skill in terms of both expertise and experience in dealing with difficulties across the SEN spectrum. They deliver appropriate and professional support in all areas.

This provision is further enhanced by the Pupil Support Centre which gives intense help and support for those children who are in danger of not meeting the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. The curriculum has been planned to give flexible opportunities for those children who require an alternative curriculum. Additional support with literacy and numeracy is given in class by Learning Support Assistants and Sixth Form students. Some Learning Support Assistants may be used to assist with mobility around the school. Some pupils attend vocational courses off site and receive support when in school to access their curriculum. The school works with outside agencies whenever appropriate to utilise their expertise to support pupils.

Information from data and analysis of need.

The disability Discrimination act defines a disabled person as someone who has ` a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.`

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and and also hidden impairments. In the DDA `substantial` means `more than minor or trivial`.

`Long term` means it has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, diabetes or epilepsy where the effect of the impairment on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities is adverse, substantial and long term.

The definition can include a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Impairment does not mean that a person is disabled. It is the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal every day activities that has to be considered.

Currently approximately one percent of pupils would meet the above disability definition. Consideration must be given in regard to any members of staff who may be affected. We have several parents, siblings and grandparents who would also meet these criteria.

Over the last two years the attendance of pupils with disabilities has largely been at least commensurate with the school average if not above average, the exceptions being pupils with serious medical issues. No person with a disability has been excluded in that same period.

Section Two

Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum.

The school has a number of priorities over the next three years:

- A review of the 14 – 19 curriculum with the introduction of the vocational diplomas.
- Revised KS3 curriculum to enable greater flexibility.
- To continually develop and disseminate best practice in teaching and learning to enhance learning, enjoyment and achievement.
- The continuing development of skills and competencies within our school community and our partnerships with external agencies.

- Promote social and emotional skills using the whole school SEAL approach.
- Further development and use of ICT to support and enhance learning opportunities.

Improvements to the physical environment.

There is a continuous programme of refurbishment to the school and where appropriate, issues of access are considered as integral, so that gradually all doorways are ramped. When the pupil Support area was refurbished the toilet was redesigned to be suitable for disabled access and use. Refurbishment also incorporated improved lighting in classrooms and a hearing loop was included in the refurbishment of the general office and reception.

To facilitate easier access to the curriculum for disabled pupils a ground floor ICT room is planned as part of the ongoing curriculum development. This will also enhance MFL provision because the language lab facility can be included at ground floor level to match the provision already in place. The external doors and corridor doors are difficult for wheelchair users to negotiate so the possibility of electrically operated locks is to be investigated.

Recent improvements include:

- Remodelling of the front entrance, giving full disabled access to the reception area, the Religious Education classrooms and the Learning Support room.
- Remodelling of the car park area at the front of school, providing designated disabled parking area as well as enhanced environment and ease of access to building which now facilitates independent movement for wheelchair users.

Ongoing works include:

- maintenance of rails to ramps at the huts
- Painting on outside steps

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

- There will be a clear school policy that all disabled pupils will receive all handouts, worksheets etc in size 12 font as a minimum requirement. Where necessary special arrangements are made if an individual pupil requires a larger size.
- Coloured overlays are available for pupils who require them and an alternative coloured paper can also be used for pupils to work from.
- Exploring alternative formats for the School prospectus and Parents` Handbook is to be investigated, resourced and planned.

Management, coordination and implementation.

The governing body is ultimately responsible for the implementation of this plan and reviewing it regularly by means of reports from the Headteacher and the appropriate member of the senior Leadership Team. Curriculum issues will be reviewed by the governors` curriculum committee and asset management will be the responsibility of the finance committee.

The management and monitoring of this plan must fit in with existing line management and school development planning systems. The needs of individual pupils will be reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary and the SENCO will liaise with the Headteacher if further resources are required. The plan will be reviewed each year as part of the annual school self review. The Bursar will review the asset management plan and report to the leadership Team. All of this will be reported to the appropriate Governors committee.