Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2021



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

"To love, serve and learn as Jesus shows us"

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Section 1 Introduction

Disability Discrimination Act

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 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 plan 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. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

The plan must be renewed every three years. The current time frame is 2018 - 2021.

Disability Equality Duty

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has been amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities, including schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The duty does not create new individual rights for disabled people. The duty provides a framework for schools to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. The duty thus reinforces the pre-existing duties under the Act. There are both general and specific duties. These duties are described in more detail in the next section.

The most important specific requirement is for public authorities, including schools, to have a Disability Equality Scheme. This requirement for schools comes into force in December 2006 (for secondary schools) and December 2007 (for other schools). This plan covers the requirements of the Scheme.

Section 2 Definitions and Duties

Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (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'.

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). An impairment does not of itself mean that a pupil is disabled. It is the effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities that has to be considered.

The test of whether an impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

A child's ability to memorise, concentrate, learn, speak, move is central to their education. An impairment that has a long-term and substantial effect on a child's ability to do these things may therefore amount to a disability.

<u>Long-term and substantial</u>

The expressions 'long-term' and 'substantial' are somewhat misleading. 'Long-term' is defined in the DDA as 12 months or more. Clearly this rules out conditions such as a broken limb which is likely to mend within that time. 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial' but it may helpfully be thought of as meaning 'having some substance.' The combined effect of these two terms is to include more people in the definition of disability than is commonly anticipated.

The definition in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is broad. It includes more pupils than many people think. There is a significant overlap with pupils with special educational needs, though the definition of special educational needs does not cover all disabled children, for example: pupils with medical conditions, disfigurements and other impairments may count as disabled but may not have special educational needs.

The existence of an impairment or condition does not depend on an official diagnosis. If the impairment is long-term and has a substantial adverse effect, it falls within the terms of the Act whether there has been an official diagnosis or not.

The Duties in Part 4

It is unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils. A school discriminates if:

- It treats a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification
- It fails, without justification, to take reasonable steps to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. This duty is often known as the 'reasonable adjustments' duty

The reasonable adjustments duty requires schools to think ahead, anticipate the barriers that disabled pupils may face and remove or minimise them before a disabled pupil is placed at a substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments may need to be made in admissions, exclusions and 'education and associated services,' a term that covers every aspect of the life of the school. A Code of Practice, published by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) provides guidance on the way that the duties operate.

In general it is the governing body of the school that is the 'responsible body' for the DDA duties and needs to ensure that everyone in the school, staff or volunteer, is aware of the duties owed to disabled pupils. To avoid discrimination against any disabled pupil, all staff need to implement the duties in relation to their area of responsibility.

If parents think that their child has been discriminated against, they have a right of redress by making a claim of disability discrimination to the SEN and Disability Tribunal. If the Tribunal finds that a school has discriminated unlawfully against a disabled pupil it can order any remedy that it sees fit, except financial compensation.

Disability Equality Duty

The changes to the DDA 1995 brought about by the DDA 2005 have brought about a change in focus from a reactive to a proactive attitude to disability. The Disability Equality Duty includes both general and specific duties. The DRC again provides Codes of Practice for public authorities and schools must have ‘due regard’ to the Codes.

Due Regard

"Due regard" comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. In all their decisions and functions schools should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance. This requires more than simply giving consideration to disability equality.
Disability equality will be more relevant to some functions than others. Schools will need to take care when assessing relevance, as many areas of their functioning are likely to be of relevance to disabled people.
Proportionality requires greater consideration to be given to disability equality in relation to functions or policies that have the most effect on disabled people. Where changing a function or proposed policy would lead to significant benefits to disabled people, the need for such a change will carry added weight when balanced against other considerations.
It will not always be possible for authorities to adopt the course of action which will best promote disability equality but schools must ensure that they have due regard to the requirement to promote disability equality alongside other competing requirements.

The General Duty

The general duty requires schools to consider the six issues listed in the Introduction in all actions which they take. The key task is to consider the promotion of disability equality and making sure it is, over time, mainstreamed into all school functions. This includes activities inside and out of the classroom as well as all other aspects of school life eg extended schools, school lettings, employment etc.

The general duty requires schools not only to have due regard to disability equality when making decisions about the future. They will also need to take action to tackle the consequences of decisions in the past which failed to give due regard to disability equality. This is best approached by working towards closing the gaps in outcomes.

The general duty will build on existing responsibilities under disability legislation in relation to schools, including the duties to make reasonable adjustments, and to plan strategically to increase access to schools over time. Schools can implement the general duty by actively reviewing all their policies, procedures and planned access improvements to remove barriers with a view to greater recruitment and retention of disabled staff; and greater participation of disabled pupils, disabled parents and disabled people in all aspects of school life, in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

Schools will use the framework of the specific duties to structure their information gathering and action planning in relation to the duty. Involving disabled people and where appropriate both disabled parents and parents of disabled children in setting the school development plans and conducting the daily running of the school is likely to be necessary for the general duty to be effectively met.

The Specific Duty

The specific duty regulations require authorities, including schools, to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it. In Warrington it makes sense to combine the Disability Equality Scheme with the Accessibility Plan.

- a school should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
- a school should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
- the Scheme should include a statement of:
    - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
    - the authority's methods for impact assessment
    - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the "action plan")
    - the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions
    - the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes
- a school must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information
- a school must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

Section 3 Vision and Values

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.

Our commitment to equal opportunities is informed by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement. The school aims to:
- set suitable learning challenges;
- respond to pupils' diverse needs;
- identify and overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School makes all children feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment.

Section 4 Accessibility at St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

St Vincent's Primary School's governors and staff will have regard to the "Code of Practice for Schools" issued by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) concerning the DDA. The school will also follow the guidance issued by the DfES in 2006 entitled "Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings."

The school will ensure that all staff and governors are aware of the implications of the DDA and, through training and development opportunities, embed the good practice across all aspects of school life.

Our school works hard to achieve its vision. Some of the successful outcomes from previous plans are listed below:

- *Educational Visits preparation is completed through "Evolve", and where appropriate, risk assessments include strategies for overcoming barriers to access of activities for disabled pupils.*
- *SEND, Inclusion and Equality policies have been reviewed and updated to ensure that the curriculum is fully inclusive*
- *Disabled parking is now available on the school car park.*
- *Facilities for disabled pupils and parents have been updated in KS1 and the disabled toilet*
- *Materials are adapted for pupils as needed e.g. large print, coloured backgrounds*
- *The School Website now provides information relating to Equality, Inclusion, Disability Equality and Accessibility*
- *Progress and attainment of children with SEN, disabilities, and other barriers to learning is analysed*

At St Vincent's Catholic Primary School we try to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to achieve. We make 'reasonable adjustments' to our practices and policies to meet the requirements of the DDA. We do recognise that there is always room to improve and the Action Plan shows our wish to continue to develop our practice.

On ‘access to the curriculum,’ we have incorporated inclusive developments through national strategies, through local initiatives and through in-school developments. Lesson observations include aspects of inclusion in teaching and learning.

On ‘physical environment,’ we have done what we are able to within the resources available. We have a desire to improve the environment in a way which promotes inclusion for all pupils and will continue to do so subject to resources being available.

On ‘information,’ we have tried to use a range of formats to meet differing needs. Visual signs are used in appropriate places for all pupils, and particularly for those who need visual cues to help them. We are aware of services to produce alternative formats if necessary.

We use our information systems to monitor our progress as a school and the progress of disabled children within the school to ensure that we are helping all children achieve.

Section 5 Involvement

The following groups/individuals were consulted in the process of initially writing this plan:

Parent with physical disabilities
Pupils with SEND
School Council
Teaching staff
Non teaching staff
Governors

Section 6 Management, Coordination and Implementation

The Resources Committee will have overall responsibility for oversight and monitoring of this plan and acting in accordance with their terms of reference.

The Headteacher has the lead responsibility for the management and implementation of this plan.

All members of staff at the school share responsibility for ensuring all learners are fully included in all aspects of school life

Monitoring of the following will be needed:

- Numbers of disabled learners, parents and staff
- Progress of disabled learners
- The involvement of disabled learners in extra curricular activities

Evaluation of developments during period of last plan:

Action	Evaluation
• All educational visits are planned and manged using "Evolve", and where appropriate, risk assessments include strategies for overcoming barriers to access of activities for disabled pupils.	*All children have access to educational visits and reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that children with disabilities can participate fully.*
• The school contextual information and cohort information is regularly reviewed and updated	*Any children who have barriers to learning through SEN, disability or for other reasons are easily identified early to ensure that they have full access to the school and curriculum, enabling them to achieve their full potential*
• SEND, Inclusion and Equality policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the curriculum is fully inclusive	*The curriculum is fully inclusive of all children including those with disabilities, underpinned by clear policies to promote equality and inclusion.*
• Disabled parking is available on the school car park.	*Disabled parking available provides easier access to school for parents and pupils with disabilities*
• Materials are adapted for pupils as needed e.g. large print, coloured backgrounds	*Pupils have access to the full curriculum through adapted materials.*
• The School Website provides regularly updated information relating to Equality, Inclusion, Disability Equality and Accessibility	*As a school we are fulfilling our responsibility to promote equality and ensure inclusion. This documentation is available publicly on the school website or from school directly.*
• Progress and attainment of children with SEN, disabilities and other barriers to learning is analysed	*Progress is closely monitored so that intervention can be planned to ensure that pupils with SEN and disabilities make expected progress from their individual starting points.*

Information about the progress of this plan will be available via the minutes of the Governing Body meetings and will be reflected in the School Improvement Plan.

Useful Resources and Websites

DfES (2006) *Implementing the DDA in schools and early years settings*
Disability Rights Commission (2002*)* *Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Part 4: Code of Practice for Schools*
Disability Rights Commission (2005) *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales)* [often referred to as the *Code of Practice on the Disability Equality Duty*]

http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/
http://www.drc-gb.org/
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/schools/accessibility
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/senstrategy/
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/

ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL: Action Plan 2018 – 2021

Strand 1: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

Task	Actions	Team(s) Responsible	Timescale	Monitoring	Outcome at review
Ensure staff are fully aware of the requirements of current SEN, disability and equality legislation and guidance and provide CPD as necessary to fully meet the needs of children in the school	• Requirements and updates shared with staff through staff training, meetings and briefings • Accessibility and equality information in Staff Handbook	Headteacher SENDCO	Regular training and updates	Staff meeting minutes Staff Handbook	
Continue to identify strategies to overcome potential disability access barriers when planning Educational Visits	• All staff to ensure that all pupils are able to access all educational visits, reporting progress to the headteacher	Headteacher Governing Body.	As needed	Report on outcomes passed to headteacher throughout risk assessment process and Evolve website	
Ensure the curriculum is fully inclusive	• When carrying out monitoring activities, gather information relating to inclusion	Headteacher	Termly monitoring	Reviewed curriculum documents Lesson observations and other monitoring	
Ensure that appropriate curriculum/time allocations / variations are in place on a needs basis	• Apply for additional time or other access arrangements as required	Y6 teachers Headteacher	On-going	Record of children allocated extra time/readers	
Develop a broad and balanced curriculum which enables all children to achieve	• During planning of the curriculum ,ensure a range of experiences to support learning and progress • Monitor teaching and learning in relation to inclusion	Class teachers Headteacher	Half termly	Monitoring of planning and teaching and learning	
Monitor participation of SEND children in extra curricular clubs	• Carry out annual survey of SEND children's participation levels clubs; • Report to headteacher	Senior Leadership Team	Annually	Records or participation levels	

Strand 2: Improving the physical environment

Task	Actions	Team(s) Responsible	Timescale	Monitoring	Outcome at review
Review Access Plan	• HT and governors to evaluate current plan and complete reviewed plan in 2019	Headteacher Governing Body	Annually Full review Autumn 2021	Access Plan Reviewed and published	
Continue with programme to widen all doorway openings to minimum width required	• Ensure door widening rolling programme is part of premises development plan	Headteacher	Ongoing	Increased number/all of doorways widened and in use Rolling programme in place for any remaining doors	
Ensure facilities for disabled pupils and parents are maintained	• Regular visual inspections of facilities and maintenance records by premises committee • Actions required planned for	Headteacher Governing Body	Ongoing inspection Termly	Minutes of H&S / premises committees Consultation with disabled membersof school community	
Identify and implement appropriate healthcare plans / multi agency referral systems / CAF's	• Ensure all outcomes of plans are implemented across school	SENDCO	Ongoing	Record of healthcare plans / referrals	
Maintain up to date training to support the needs of pupils with disabilities, SEN or health needs	• Ensure Headteacher/ Governors /SENDCO needs are audited and CPD accessed as required • Provide training for all staff as necessary	Headteacher Governing Body SENDCO	Ongoing	School record of actions taken	

Strand 3: Information for disabled pupils which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

Task	Actions	Team(s) Responsible	Timescale	Monitoring	Outcome at review
Identification of a range of communication strategies - written, audio, Braille, translation, *large print* etc to meet individual pupil's needs	• Ensure that information is provided in the most appropriate format for every individual pupil's needs	Class teachers SENDCO Headteacher Governing Body	Ongoing	Appropriate materials available for pupils	
Consider colours/contrasts/fonts used in lessons	• Raise awareness of this issue with staff. • ensure all communication in lessons is in line with guidance provided	Class teachers SENDCO	Ongoing	Lesson observations. Discussions with teachers	
Update prospectus to ensure that information relating to disability is made explicit and is current	• Include statement related to access to information in prospectus	Headteacher	Annual	Reviewed prospectus available	
Maintain website to ensure that information relating to disability and equality is made explicit	• Ensure access to Disability Scheme and Accessibility Plan	Headteacher	At least termly	Monitoring of Website	
Ensuring all visitors are aware of School Policies / Protocols via Equality Statement	• Review guidance for visitors/volunteers • Induction/information for all volunteers/visitors	Headteacher and School Governing Body.	1st April 2009	Equality Statement displayed clearly for all to see at various locations throughout the school. Records of induction Attention drawn to all staff and minuted.	

Strand 4: Disability Equality Duty - Whole school actions

Task	Actions	Team(s) Responsible	Timescale	Monitoring	Outcome at review
Consult learners, parents and other users of the school on accessibility issues	• Use parent questionnaire to consult on access/ information issues • Meeting with disabled members of school community to identify priorities	Headteacher	As required based on contextual analysis	All stakeholders have input into school development planning process	
Staff and governor training to ensure up to date knowledge and understanding	• Ensure that all staff and governors are aware of their responsibilities for this plan. • Access wider training as required	Headteacher Training Link Governor	TBA as soon as possible	All stakeholders aware of their responsibilities	
Monitor progress of learners with SEN, disabilities or other barriers to learning	• SENDCO to analyse progress	Headteacher SENDCO	Termly	Learners with disabilities continue to make good progress	
Promote and raise awareness of disability and equality within school	• Curriculum focus week: anti-bullying • Disability awareness raising activities or focus days • Develop the PSHE curriculum to include learning about disability, equality and inclusion	Headteacher SENDCO PSHE coordinator School Council	Focus activities, days and weeks	Evaluation of learning Questionnaire feedback	

Key messages for schools

The Accessibility Planning Project worked with six partner local authorities and their schools to develop the accessibility planning materials. On the basis of that work, some key issues emerged. They are provided here to inform the further development of schools' plans.

The best plan for your school starts with your school and your pupils
Plans need to start with the school's own information and data about their disabled pupils, the school's vision for their disabled pupils, and the views of disabled pupils and their parents. Every school is different. Another school's plan is unlikely to be relevant to your disabled pupils at your school.

There are more disabled pupils than you think
Crucial to effective planning is a clear understanding of which pupils count as disabled; and which pupils who might be coming to the school count as disabled.
Most people are surprised to find out how many are included in the DDA definition.

Consultation is crucial
Consult and schools will get help in identifying their priorities. Consult pupils and parents and schools will get good practical solutions to increasing access for them. Consult early and schools are more likely to get help in identifying low cost or no cost solutions.

Knowing where to go for support
All schools may need to supplement and complement their own expertise. A range of different forms of support is available to most schools: supportive colleague networks, specialist advisory support, different sections of the local authority, other agencies, local and national voluntary organisations.

Nobody can do this on their own: these duties need a school wide response
It needs everyone to take the lead in respect of accessibility within their area of responsibility: access to the curriculum in the hands of those with curriculum responsibilities; access to the pastoral life of the school in the hands of those with pastoral responsibilities; all overseen by the senior management team reporting to the governing body.

Differentiation takes time
If differentiation is to include those pupils who are working at significantly lower levels of the National Curriculum than their peers, a significant investment of time is needed to adapt schemes of work. This work needs to be built into the school's curriculum development and its accessibility plan over time.

'Invest to save'
There is a strong case for investing in curriculum and professional development. This can improve access for disabled pupils and may make more effective use of learning support.

The physical environment is not just about ramps and doorways
Improvements to the physical environment are about getting into and around the school, but they are about more than that: they are about all disabled pupils being able to use all the facilities of the school. It is as much about pupils with autistic spectrum disorders being able to use recreational spaces, or improvements to the acoustic environment, as it is about getting wheelchairs up a step and through the door.

Share where possible
Sharing good practice through clusters and networks can spread creative solutions. Sharing development work through clustering and networks can reduce the workload.

Piggy-back where possible
Where curriculum development is planned, include access considerations; where building works are planned, include access considerations; when ordering books, equipment and materials, include access considerations; when increasing access for disabled staff or members of the public under other parts of the DDA, include access considerations for pupils.

School improvement
Improved access should lead directly to improved outcomes for disabled pupils. The school's accessibility plan should therefore not just be linked to the school improvement process, it should be located firmly within it.