

Accessibility Policy

October 2017

Introduction

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

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

This Accessibility Plan is compliant with current legislation and the requirements relating to Disability specified in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act, 2010. Under this Act a person suffers a disability if he/she has “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities.” This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body to increase access to education for pupils with a disability in three main areas:

- Increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in all aspects of the **school curriculum**.
- Improving the **physical environment** of the school to increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery of **information** for pupils with a disability.

Participation in the school curriculum

Bettridge School is organised to provide access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to all its pupils. This is achieved through:

- A commitment, as communication underpins all learning, to providing a total communication environment within school.
- Specifically adapted schemes of work, differentiated appropriately according to the age and learning needs of each pupil with detailed evidence of curriculum delivery set out in Individual Outcomes, Annual Review documentation, Education Health Care Plans and Pupil Profiles. This means that all pupils are challenged to succeed commensurate with their level of ability.
- Teacher assessment of learning to inform teaching as an on-going process providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve.

- Development of individual curriculum pathways.
- Encouragement to take part in music, drama and physical activities using adapted and specific resources enhanced by outside professional input.
- Specialist teaching and learning methods e.g. structured teaching involving work done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class.
- Specialist facilities, additional support and timetabled “needs-led” therapies (including onsite occupational therapy, speech & language therapy and physiotherapy) are carefully integrated into classroom practice e.g. sensory rooms and music therapy. The school provides specialist equipment which supports the pupils’ access to the curriculum e.g. computer technology.
- Staff providing alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for pupils with disabilities who cannot engage in particular activities. We work in conjunction with parents/carers and are flexible in responding to pupils needs.
- Accreditation at a level matched to the individual at Key Stages 4, 5 and Post 16.
- A substantial commitment to professional development for staff at all levels e.g. by the training and use total communication skills staff motivate pupils’ learning and desire to participate. This encourages innovative thinking by the staff to ensure that no child is restricted from the educational experience.
- Careful deployment of staff to meet the individual needs of pupils
- Individual and flexible adapted timetabling for pupils with very high levels of disability responding to individual needs rather than organisational expediency. Frequent breaks are built into the timetable and therapy needs of many children so that their day is broken by scheduled changes in activity.
- School visits made accessible to all pupils irrespective of their attainments or impairment. This includes RDA, swimming, horticulture, numerous sports activities and regular trips linked to the curriculum.

Actions/Future Plans

- To continue to monitor access to all activities within the curriculum.
- To maintain and improve existing facilities including our new post 16 unit.

Improving the Physical Environment of the school

The school has a duty to improve the physical environment in order to better meet the needs of pupils with disabilities and to provide physical aids to support access to education. Bettridge is a safe and secure environment in which pupils can maximise their independence. All areas are accessible to pupils with disabilities and the Governing Body has ensured that all the specifically designed new units have been built with accessibility very much in mind taking into account the needs of those pupils with learning, physical and /or sensory disabilities.

Access to all areas of the school building is available through internal routes, passenger lift, sloping paths in all areas, wide access points to playground areas and automatic doors with no external steps. The majority of the building is on one level, all access doors are swipe activated for safety and in line with the safeguarding policy. A wide range of specialist equipment to support the needs of pupils with disabilities is available in the school including, but not limited to:

- Specialist switches.
- IT availability in each classroom including touch and plasma screens
- Augmentative communication aids.
- Hoists and other personal care equipment, supported seating and rise and fall computer tables.
- Classroom size, disabled width doors and movable furniture to allow access and curriculum delivery.
- Low vision aids and equipment to support pupils with visual and/or auditory impairment are readily available through the specialist teaching services.
- Acheeva Beds.
- The school works in partnership with the physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services to identify individual needs and to ensure that appropriate physical equipment is made available. Wheelchairs and specialist equipment for home are provided by the NHS, Social Service or Local Authority.
- A hydrotherapy pool.

Information to pupils with disabilities

There is a duty to provide information, normally provided by the school in writing to its pupils, to pupils with disabilities.

Bettridge operates within a total communication context with every effort being made through the use of signs and symbols to ensure that pupils understand the curriculum and what is required of them. Communication is paramount within the learning environment of the school and is achieved through:

- Signs (Makaton), symbols, photos, objects of reference and sensory communication are used throughout the school to ensure that all pupils understand what is required of them and can understand the curriculum as it is presented. All classes use symbol timetables as a matter of course and present worksheets and other materials using symbols. General notices to pupils and displays are always presented using symbols. Staff also carry symbols in lanyards for transitions.
- Information being provided in simple language, symbols, large print or in Braille for pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information.

The school has facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats.

- Full use of augmentative communication strategies as appropriate to individual pupils e.g. voice output communication aids (VOCA).
- Elected pupils representing the views of all pupils within the School Council. This creates a communication channel which generates, discusses and initiates ways of improving the school from a student perspective.
- Pathways of travel around the school site being safe, logical and well signed. Areas to which pupils have access are well lit.
- Steps taken to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils & pupils with sensory difficulties (this includes identifying triggers).
- Staff being familiar with ongoing technology and practices developed to assist pupils with disabilities.
- Auditory alarms set up to alert all pupils to emergencies.