

# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has high expectations of all its pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life. Our commitment to equal opportunities is an important aspect of our overall commitment to be a fully inclusive school. This plan identifies how the school meets the needs of disabled pupils in response to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2014: 0 to 25 years. This will be reviewed every three years by the Governing Body.

### Introduction

This plan is drawn up in accordance with the planning duty in the Equalities Act 2010.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

'The Equality Act 2010 sets out the legal obligations that schools, early years providers, post-16 institutions, local authorities have towards disabled children and young people;

- They **must not** directly or indirectly discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children and young people
- They **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory- it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.
- Public bodies, including FE institutions, LA, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and when carrying out their functions **must** have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people. They **must** publish information to demonstrate their compliance with this general duty and **must** prepare and publish objectives to achieve the core aims of the general duty. Objectives **must** be specific and measurable.' (SEND code of Practice 2015)

The duties cover discrimination in the provision of services and the provision of education, including admissions and exclusions. (SEND code of Practice 2015)

## **Definition of SEND:**

'A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or a disability if he or she:

- has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or colleges.'

(SEND code of Practice 2015)

'Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010- that is'... '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'.

The definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: 'long-term' is defined as 'a year or more' and 'substantial is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, we understand that the definition of disability under the Act is different from the eligibility criteria for special educational needs provision. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEND definition.' (SEND code of Practice 2015)

## **Definition of Disability**

Disability is defined by The Equalities Act (2010) :

'A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Normal daily activities are those which are carried out by most people on a regular and frequent basis. The categories include:

- Manual dexterity
- Physical co-ordination
- Continence

- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move every-day objects
- Speech, hearing and eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger

## **The Accessibility Plan**

All providers **must** make reasonable adjustments to procedures, criteria and practices and by the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Most providers **must** also make reasonable adjustments by making physical alterations. Schools and LA education functions are not covered by this last duty but they **must** publish accessibility plans'....'setting out how they plan to increase access for disabled pupils to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.' (SEND code of Practice 2015)

' Where a child or young person is covered by SEN and disability legislation, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should be considered as part of SEN planning and review.' (SEND code of Practice 2015).

The full range of needs and required support for all pupils identified as SEN Support or with a statement/EHC plan will be considered as necessary. The discussions will involve staff, parents and children plus outside agencies, as necessary.

## **Aims**

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School aims to include all pupils, including those with disabilities, in the full life of the school. Our strategies to do this will include:

- having high expectations of all pupils;
- finding ways in which all pupils can take part in the full curriculum including sport and music;
- planning out-of-school activities including all school trips and excursions so that pupils with disabilities can participate;
- setting admissions policy and criteria which does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or treat them unfairly;
- devising teaching strategies which will remove barriers to learning and participation for pupils with disabilities;
- planning the physical environment of the school to cater for the needs of pupils with disabilities;
- raising awareness of disability amongst school staff (teaching and non-teaching);
- by providing written information for pupils with disabilities in a form which is user friendly;

- by using language which does not offend in all its literature and make staff and pupils aware of the importance of language;
- by examining our library and reading books to ensure that there are examples of positive images of disabled people;
- by encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life;
- by promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons. This means not representing people in a demeaning way or pretending that they don't exist.

## **The Scope of the Plan**

The plan covers three main strands:

- To improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services.
- To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum.
- To improve the delivery of information to pupils and adults with disabilities.

## **Principles**

Compliance with the LA is consistent with the school's aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of our SEN policy. We recognise our duty under the LA:

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To publish this Accessibility Plan

In performing their duties, governors and staff will have regard to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2007).

The school recognises and values parents' knowledge of their child's disability and its effect on his/her ability to carry out normal activities, and respects the parents' and child's right to confidentiality.

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils, and endorses the key principles in the National Curriculum 2014, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- Setting suitable learning challenges
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

## **STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AIMS**

### **Education and Related Activity**

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of LA services and their local offer, such as specialist teacher advisers and SEND inspectors/advisers and/or appropriate health professionals from the local NHS Trusts. We will liaise with parents at least once a term to discuss individual needs and targets for pupils with a disability.

The SENCO, Class Teachers and Learning Support Assistants will receive appropriate training where necessary to address the needs of individual children. This will be planned where possible in advance of the child attending St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. Training for staff will be reviewed annually.

The SENCO will liaise with teachers and support staff to aid planning for individual pupils. Progress will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's normal SEN policy and planning. The governor with special overview of SEN will be kept informed and involved of matters and developments relating to inclusion and accessibility.

### **Physical Environment**

The school will take account of the needs of the pupils and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting and accessible facilities and fittings.

Regular meetings with the Deputy Headteacher/SENCo and Caretaker will ensure that any building/minor works will take account of the needs of all users of the school building, consulting with staff, parents and pupils where appropriate. Wherever significant works are planned, expert advice from the LA is sought. Work is prioritised always with health and safety, security and accessibility principles uppermost in mind. Work is evaluated by the

Committee on best value principles and then a report is made available to the full governing body.

### **Provision of Information**

The school will make itself aware of local services, including those provided through the LA, for providing information in alternative formats when required or requested.

The SENCO and class teacher will work together to assess individual needs to determine what specific resources will be required to enable children to access the curriculum.

Through the school, enlarged print papers will be produced for pupils and for parents with visual impairment. The teaching assistants and Office staff will be responsible for this. Further adaptations in braille or on tape will be produced wherever possible, if required. Reporting to the Governing Body on the provision of information consistent with the aims and objectives of the accessibility plan will be the responsibility of the Headteacher.

### **Financial Planning and Control**

The Headteacher and Finance Governor, will review the financial implications of the school's accessibility as part of their normal budget review process.

### **Responsibilities**

The accessibility policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher in consultation with the SENCO and governors' committees.

**Review Date:** February 2021 (with effect from May 2021)

**Next Review Date:** May 2024