

Paternoster School

Accessibility Plan

Introduction

“A person suffers 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”.

The nature of Paternoster School means that most pupils have been or are likely to be deemed disabled under this definition. The school aims to include all pupils in the full life of the school through the implementation of all its policies.

The governing body acknowledges its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended by SENDA (2001) “not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services”.

This plan seeks to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which replaces the DDA (1995).

Schools and local authorities must:

- Not treat disabled pupils less favourably; and
- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

Local authorities and governors have the duty to publish Accessibility Strategies and Plans.

This plan covers the three main strands of the planning duty:

1. Improving the physical environment
2. Participation in the school curriculum
3. Information to pupils with disabilities

1. Improving the physical environment of the school

At Paternoster school the buildings and site have been made safer and more secure since 2005.

All buildings are accessible by ramp. However, there are still steps to doors in Class 2, Class 6's small room and the fire exit from the food room (attempts to install a ramp to Class 2 failed due to lack of space because of the existing ramp to Class 1).

There are automatic doors from the atrium and long corridor but other doors need to be opened by staff for pupils who use wheelchairs.

Hoists (including a new swimming pool hoist installed in 2008) are provided to promote safe moving and handling of pupils with physical disabilities and staff are trained in their use.

Toilet and changing facilities have been improved since 2009 so that all classes have access to changing beds and toilets with sufficient space for changing pupils who need hoisting.

A new food room completed in 2010 has adjustable height tables, sink and cooker.

A 'Safe Space' tent was installed in a specially assigned room during 2011, for the benefit of a small number of pupils with challenging behaviours who need to calm down/take time out of class.

A soft surface has been installed in the sensory garden and paths partially improved to enable pupils who use wheelchairs to access the garden more easily.

Supported seating, standing frames and walkers are provided in accordance with advice from physiotherapists and occupational therapists. School seeks funding from the local authority for these and pays the first £300 towards the cost.

Pupils with physical disabilities requiring school chairs have been given new chairs with larger wheels to improve safety in moving around the school site (Spring 2014).

Corridors and classrooms are organised to provide access to pupils with physical disabilities and pupils with visual impairments.

iPads, switches, communication aids and touchscreens are provided for pupils to access ICT equipment and to promote communication, as advised by the speech and language therapist, Communication and ICT co-ordinators.

An adjustable height plasma screen was purchased in 2010. New interactive boards were installed in every classroom in 2016. An interactive board was installed in the small hall in 2017.

Eye gaze technology was purchased in 2016.

Adapted cutlery and sloping boards are provided for individual pupils as recommended by occupational therapists or the advisory teacher for visual impairment.

Pupils with physical disabilities have high staffing levels to promote their safety.

Staff are trained in evacuation procedures in the event of fire.

Most staff have been trained in Total Communication to at least level one.

Staff are trained in medical matters, including administration of medication; feeding pupils with gastrostomies; Epilepsy and administration of rescue medication and use of oxygen.

All class based and caretaking staff are trained in manual handling and protocols for individual pupils are drawn up in conjunction with physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

The headteacher and governors have been working over a long period of time to secure developments to the site in order to provide more appropriate accommodation. This has been delayed due to the difficulties of being on a Scheduled Ancient Monument site and to cuts in capital funding. It is finally anticipated work will begin in August 2017 on a refurbishment/extension project to provide four new classrooms within the main school building with withdrawal spaces and adjacent outdoor space.

Recent school developments arising from our previous Accessibility Plan include:

- Installing a canopy and soft surface to the Early Years play area (2013/14)
- Installing a dividing net in the sports hall (2013/14)

Actions

- Ensure completion of building project Phase One to start in August 2017 for one year, to refurbish two classrooms and provide two new classrooms by extending the school (2017/18)
- Continue to push for plans for Phase Two to replace the Elliot classrooms and provide two further classrooms within the main building (2017/18)
- Re-develop sensory room as part of new build project in order to make it more up to date and interactive and suitable for the needs of a wider range of pupils, promoting development of their communication, cognition, movement, visual and auditory skills (2017/18)
- To develop the playground to make it more accessible to all pupils, including a roundabout suitable for wheelchairs and wheelchair accessible swing and climbing/fitness trail equipment (2018/19)

2. Participation in the school curriculum

At Paternoster, we aim to provide a broad and balanced, relevant and enriching curriculum for all pupils.

We have developed protocols on provision for pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and with Autistic Spectrum (AS) and as, including use of the TEACCH approach and (including use of schedules).

Pupils with PMLD or with an autistic spectrum disorder have individual timetables which best meet their needs. This may include additional swimming sessions, additional riding sessions, music therapy, sensory sessions and physiotherapy.

All staff have undertaken training in 'Sensology' with Flo Longhorn in June 2010.

The school makes use of advice from advisory teachers for visually and hearing impaired pupils.

The school has increased staffing levels (TAs) to better support the needs of individuals and groups.

It also increases staffing levels during the course of the academic year where needs are identified.

The school provides music therapy on a rolling programme for pupils with PMLD and AS who benefit.

Recent school developments arising from our previous Accessibility Plan include:

- Improving signing across the school and introducing signs of the week (2013/14)
- Providing staff training in maths calculation and Numicon (2013/14)

Actions

- Develop a whole school annual plan for access to Yoga, Forest School, Music Therapy and Horse riding to ensure equal opportunities for pupils across the school (2016/17)
- Develop use of Eye Gaze technology for all pupils who would benefit in order to give them a voice. Agree list of pupils who should be using Eye Gaze and frequency of use and monitor progress (2017/18)

3. Improving the delivery of information to pupils with disabilities

Information, timetables and worksheets are presented to pupils in the form of Widgit symbols in order to help them with understanding written material. Signs around school are in Widgit format.

Pupils with Profound and Multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to use objects of reference in order to make sense of the world around them.

Communication aids are used with pupils who require them

Signs and PECS are used for pupils who require them

Staff are trained to use spoken language at a level which is appropriate to the comprehension level of the pupil.

A new post of parent support worker was introduced in 2009 and this promotes communication between home and school

We introduced a new pupil questionnaire to contribute to the annual review from 2012, which has widget symbols.

The annual pupil questionnaire has widget symbols to aid comprehension.

An annual communication audit, carried out by the Communication co-ordinator, was introduced in 2012 to monitor progress through the school and ensure consistency of approach.

Actions

- Ensure object of reference holders and signs and labels with symbols are in place across the school (in classes, corridors and shared areas) in the new building from September 2018

Monitoring

Implementation of this plan will be monitored by the Governors' Curriculum and Premises Committees where items are included in the school development plan. Governors will also monitor the plan when making governor visits.

Review

The Premises committee will review the plan every three years and ensure its actions are incorporated into the school development plan.

The governing body will monitor progress on the plan by evaluating progress of all pupils, attendance and exclusions.

The plan will be amended through consultation with staff and governors.

Revised April 2018

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