

SAXON MOUNT SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan May 2020

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have an accessibility plan. Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

“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.”

Compliance with the DDA is consistent with the school’s aims and equal opportunities policy, and the operation of the school’s SEN policy.

The school recognises its duty under the DDA:

1. Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and provision of education and associated services
2. Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
3. To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage

At Saxon Mount School we are determined to make access to the school as open as possible for every pupil, staff member and visitor.

If pupils can engage in the curriculum and related activities and can benefit from all the school environment has to offer and staff can fulfil their role within the school effectively and safely, then we feel that every effort will have been made to accommodate their needs.

Aim

The aim of our plan is to:

- **Increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum**
- **Describe how we plan to improve its physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided**
- **Improve the availability of accessible information for disabled pupils by, for example:**
- Providing all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils by planning to:
 - Setting suitable aspirational learning challenges
 - Responding to pupils’ diverse learning needs

- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

Achieving the aim

The accessibility plan outlines the main considerations which the school will undertake when planning for improving accessibility. It also describes some recent developments and areas currently under discussion, which, if completed, will contribute to the improvement of accessibility. In identifying improvements, the school will take account of:

a) Education and related activities:

The school will continue to seek and follow the advice of DfE, government and LA services, other external professionals and professional bodies that can support or advise the school in improving equality of access and developmental achievement in relation to learning and personal development.

b) Physical environment

The school evaluate and monitor the changing needs of pupils and visitors with physical disabilities and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishments of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, noise reduction, colour schemes, and more accessible facilities, services and fittings.

c) Provision of information

The school will provide information in alternative formats when required or requested and possible to do so.

Context and recent actions

With the objective of reducing and eliminating barriers to accessing both the school and to participation in the school community for pupils with a disability, we regularly inspect the school site and review policies and procedures.

Building and Environment

- Although the school is built on a slope, the more recent extension and the older part of the building have been modified to allow wheelchair access and those using walking aids. Access ramps have been fitted to the mobile classrooms.
- A lift links upper and ground floors and ramps have been strategically placed to alleviate the need for steps. Hand rails have been installed to allow access to the hall (as well as the ramp to the back doors). Footpaths have been demarcated to ensure pupils can move safely around the car park areas.

- Automatic sound sensitive doorstops in the corridors to widen the corridors for wheelchair access (these release when the fire alarm sounds) have been installed. Corridors have been deliberately cleared of furniture wherever possible as this is both good ASD practice and also allows more space for wheelchair users. Stairs have high visibility nosings to support safe use for those with visual impairments. External doors are fitted so they are wide enough to allow wheelchair access.
- Classrooms are generously sized to allow room for wheelchairs etc. and teaching groups are small enough to allow room around the tables. Carpets are low pile.
- All areas of the playground and the field are accessible to disabled persons although, again, the sloping site is not conducive to easy access. The site is secured by perimeter fencing.
- All areas are well lit and paintwork bright and clean. The environment is ASD friendly, low arousal and predictable. It is kept in a good state of decoration and repair.
- There are disabled toilets on both floors, one of which also has a shower area for those who cannot manage the other toilet or shower facilities.
- Some teaching areas have been further sound-proofed to ensure that peripheral noise will not confuse those with a hearing impairment. Also, every effort is made to ensure that visual or hearing-impaired pupils can sit near to the teacher.
- Around the school there are many visual signs so that pupils with literacy impairment can access information. Visual time-tables are also used as are consistent use of signs within class areas. We have also purchased visual aids for pupils with sight problems i.e. magnifying reading stands.

Additional Needs

- Provision is made for all children at Saxon Mount because all pupils have additional needs. Sometimes children require individual support and this is usually planned and accounted for by our additional needs team.
- Children with emotional/family problems can be given time to talk by our staff in a quiet environment which is suitable for children with complex learning needs. The Blue room is available for a range of support uses, including at breaks and lunchtime.

- There is a well-qualified additional needs team and a school nursing service and a linked social worker who can help to support and advise staff about working with children who have emotional, behavioural and health related difficulties.
- Speech Therapists work in the school to help our pupils with communication problems and they can offer both regular, formal sessions and more informal help and advice to staff, pupils and parents. Other therapists work in school according to individual needs identified on a child's statement or EHCP.

Provision of information

Our school uses a range of communication methods to ensure information is accessible. This includes:

- Internal signage with symbols and braille where required
- Large print resources
- Makaton / Communicate in Print / sign supported communication and technology to support this

Future planning

We are constantly trying to improve the building, environment, resources and staff skills to make the school even more accessible.

Recent improvements since the last plan review in 2016 and planned and budgeted for over the next 1 or 2 years include:

The installation of ramp access to the rear of the building as part of a resurfacing project to the staff rear access. This area will also have an anti-slip blue top surface to aid safe access and provide high visibility differentiation to the step area with white concrete edgings.

Similarly, the steps to the pupil entrance from the front of the building will be resurfaced with anti-slip blue top surface and white step concrete edgings to ensure high visibility of edges.

Non-slip safety flooring has been replaced around the school and a cycle for repair and replacement is in place.

Disabled washrooms have been refitted around the school to provide greater accessibility and a cleaner and brighter environment, particularly to pupils who are reluctant to use toilets at school.

The main pupil washrooms will also be refurbished to provide improved levels of hygiene, automatic sensor taps to reduce contact with hardware and a cleaner and brighter environment.

The IT suite has been fully refurbished to provide improved access and movement around the room and includes a DDA work station with adjustable height level work station.

An enclosed and covered outdoor table tennis area has been installed to provide an additional facility and is accessible to all staff and pupils.

A canopy has been installed providing covered walkway access between the main school building and the adjacent hut classroom units.

We are constantly aware of the need to be more accessible to the differing needs of the pupils and adults who work here and CPD planning occurs to take account of this.

The fire safety system has been replaced with an upgraded system including additional sounders and smoke alarms at strategic points and as recommended in our fire safety risk assessments.

Re marking the car park and accessible pedestrian routes in both the front and the rear car parks and pedestrian access routes.

Transport home after attendance at school clubs and activities is offered to all pupils in school vehicles to ensure that transport is not a prohibitive consideration for families and all pupils have the opportunity to access extra -curricular activities.

Transport to school is offered to a number of pupils not eligible for county council provided transport, to provide equality of opportunity to arrive at school on time

Further considerations in progress:

Fire door closers are to be replaced with wall mounted systems to ensure improved effectiveness and efficiency in both keeping access open for all staff and pupils and automatic closing in an emergency.

Regular review footpath markings around the school to ensure visibility of routes and safe access from the mobile classrooms to the playground areas.

A review of the pedestrian gate access and signage to the main entrance to improve safety of pedestrians by enabling open access to the pedestrian gate during the arrival and collection of pupils when the vehicle gate is kept open so used by pedestrians as the first and easiest route.

All new building or modifications to the environment and provision at Saxon Mount will take into consideration the needs of all abilities and disabilities. We aim for this school to be “open to all” and to be a truly inclusive environment that is able to support the complex needs of the pupils in our care.

Accessibility is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the head of school and considered by the Health and Safety management group.

Chair of AAB.....

Date.....

Executive Headteacher.....

Date