



**Whitstable Junior School**

# **Accessibility Plan and Policy**

**Governors' Committee Responsible: Resources Committee**

**Policy Originator: Headteacher**

**Status: Statutory**

**Review Period: 3 yearly**

**Date approved: June 2021**

**Next review date: June 2024**

## **1) Context:**

Under the Equality Act 2010 schools should have an Accessibility Plan. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act. The effect of the law is the same as in the past, meaning that “schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against children because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation”. According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- (a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Accessibility Plan is listed as a statutory document of the Department for Education’s guidance on statutory policies for schools. The Plan must be reviewed every three years and approved by the Governing Body. The review process can be delegated to a committee of the Governing Body, an individual or the Head.

At Whitstable Junior School, the Plan will form part of the school’s development and will be monitored by the Headteacher and evaluated by the relevant Governors’ committee.

At Whitstable Junior School we are committed to providing a fully accessible environment which values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We aim to challenge negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to develop a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. We are dedicated to working together to provide an inspirational and exciting learning environment where all children can develop an enthusiasm for life-long learning. We believe that children should feel happy, safe and valued so that they gain a respectful, caring attitude towards each other and the environment both locally and globally.

Whitstable Junior School’s Accessibility Plan has been developed and drawn up based upon information supplied by the Local Authority, and consultations with children, parents, staff and governors of the school. Other, outside agencies and specialists, have also been consulted. The document will be used to advise other school planning documents and policies and will be reported upon annually in respect of progress and outcomes. The intention is to provide a projected plan for a three year period ahead of the next review date.

2) The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school’s Equality Objectives and will similarly be published on the school website. We understand that the Local Authority will monitor the school’s activity under the Equality Act 2010 (and in particular Schedule 10 regarding Accessibility) and will advise upon the compliance with that duty.

3) Whitstable Junior School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to taking positive action in the spirit of the Equality Act 2010 with regard to disability and to developing a culture of inclusion, support and awareness within the school.

4) The Whitstable Junior School's Accessibility Plan shows how access is to be improved for disabled children, staff and visitors to the school within a given timeframe and anticipating the need to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate their needs where practicable. The Accessibility Plan contains relevant and timely actions to:-

- Increase access to the curriculum for children with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that children with a disability are as, equally, prepared for life as are the able-bodied children; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of their duties under the Equalities Act 2010); this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or schools visits – it also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these children in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe;
- Improve the delivery of written information to children, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities; examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events; the information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

5) Whitstable Junior School's Accessibility Plan relates to the key aspects of physical environment, curriculum and written information.

6) Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness for staff and governors on equality issues with reference to the Equality Act 2010.

7) This Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following school policies, strategies and documents:

- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Single Equality Scheme Objectives Action Plan
- Health & Safety Policy
- School Prospectus
- School Improvement Plan
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Information Report

8) Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when school policies are reviewed. The terms of reference for all governors' committees will include the need to consider Equality and Diversity issues as required by the Equality Act 2010.

9) The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website.

10) The Accessibility Plan will be monitored through the Governor Health and Safety and Premises Monitoring Pair.

11) The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority in developing and implementing this Accessibility Plan.

12) The Accessibility Plan may be monitored by Ofsted during inspection processes in relation to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

Our Aims are:

- Increase access to the curriculum for children with a disability,
- Improve and maintain access to the physical environment
- Improve the delivery of written information to children.
  
- Our objectives are detailed in the Action Plan below

## **3.School Information**

Whitstable Junior School currently has a Child Admission Number (PAN) of 60 and is situated in the heart of Whitstable.

We have children with a range of additional needs both learning and physical. This has involved us liaising with a variety of professionals to ensure the best possible education, within our power, for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) children.

When children enter school with specific disabilities the school contacts the Local Authority professionals for assessment, support and guidance for the school and parents.

As a school we have a long history of teaching children with a wide range of special educational needs and disabilities, without exception, disabled children have been fully included in all aspects of school life.

The progress of these children is regularly tracked and comparisons are made between the achievement and attainment of these children compared with their peers.

## **4. Current good practice**

We aim to ask about any disability or health condition in early communications with new parents and carers. For parents and carers of children already at the school, we collect information on disability as part of an annual data collection exercise and an annual survey of parents' views.

## **Physical Environment**

Disabled children participate in extra-curricular activities. Some aspects of extra-curricular activities present particular challenges, for example: lunch and break times for children with social/interaction impairments, after-school clubs for children with physical impairments, school trips for children with medical needs; there are very few parts of the school to which disabled children have limited or no access at the moment.

Part of our school was purpose built to meet the needs of all children, however, the majority of the building was constructed in 1876 and is subject to a conservation order.

Provision, in exceptional cases, will be negotiated when the child's specific needs are known. We have a wide range of equipment and resources suitable for the day-to-day use of children in the junior age-range. We will constantly keep under review resource provision. The School Improvement Plan will be the vehicle for considering such needs on an annual basis.

## **Curriculum**

There are currently no areas of the curriculum to which disabled children have limited or no access. Some areas of the curriculum do present particular challenges and these are dealt with on an individual basis.

Improving teaching and learning lies at the heart of any school's work. Through self-review and Continuous Professional Development, we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children.

It is a core value of the school that all children are enabled to participate fully in the broader life of the school. Consequently, all children have always been permitted to attend age relevant after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits.

## **Information**

Different forms of communication are made available to enable all disabled children to express their views and to hear the views of others. Access to information is planned, with a range of different formats available for disabled children, parents and staff.

Teachers will always need to be sensitive to presenting materials to children in appropriate formats e.g. reading aloud, interactive whiteboard presentations, etc. should that be necessary. This is a core part of a teacher's work.

## **5. Access Audit**

The school is made up of a traditional Victorian building (c.1876) comprising the school hall, library and 8 classrooms. The School was extended 15 years ago adding a 2 storey building with wide corridors and access points from outside with the addition of a lift. The new building comprises of a Studio, Computer Suite, 3 classrooms (upstairs) and additional teaching space and Well Being Room.

Where possible ramps have been added to the Victorian entrances of the school but due to the structure of the school doorways cannot be widened. The school hall can only be accessed by the main entrance by those with mobility problems due to stairs connecting the new part of the school and school hall. Although, where possible, in the Victorian sections of the school, ramps have been provided making most of the school corridors flat there are areas where wheelchair access would be difficult and restricted.

The school also has two additional Victorian houses (once Headteacher and caretaker accommodation). One is now used as additional teaching space and meeting room but has restricted use due to the stairs and the age of the building. The Headteacher house is used as the School Offices and although the upstairs has no access to anyone with mobility needs the School Office has a ramp to its entrance, push open door and a low reception and this is fully accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilet facilities available, in the Care Suite situated off the school hall by the main entrance, in the Well Being Room in the newer build and also in part of the old Victorian building (near classrooms). All these are fitted with a handrail and a pull emergency cord. These disabled toilets are for the use of staff and those children who require them.

The school has internal emergency signage and escape routes are clearly marked. An emergency 'carry out' wheelchair is available for emergencies.

## **6. Management, coordination and implementation**

- We will consult with experts when new situations regarding children with disabilities are experienced.
- The Governors and Senior Leadership Team will work closely with the Local Authority.