

The Bridge School

Accessibility Plan

2025-26



Definition of Disability:

A person has a disability if they have “a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

(Equality Act 2010)

The purpose and direction of the school’s plan: vision and values

The Bridge School has the highest ambitions for all pupils irrespective of their individual needs. Our careful planning and differentiated approach enables all of our pupils to participate fully in all aspects of school life. Our commitment to equal opportunities is led by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement. The school sets challenging, but suitable objectives, responds appropriately to diverse needs and strives to overcome potential barriers in every area of school life. The Bridge School welcomes all children irrespective of race, ethnicity, colour, creed or impairment.

Our Main Objectives - In accordance with the school Improvement Plan

- ✚ To raise the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding
- ✚ To further develop the skills of staff and share good practice in regular CPD sessions and to link into Performance Management Objectives for all staff
- ✚ To further develop the use of data to support learning and monitor progress
- ✚ To raise pupil’ attainment and accelerate pupil progress – support the progress of all and put in place interventions to narrow the gap
- ✚ To improve overall attendance and especially that of persistent absentees
- ✚ To develop leadership at all levels

As a school we recognise our duty under the Equality Act (as amended by the SENDA):

- Not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, and the provision of education and associated services.
-

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably.
- To take reasonable steps and adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage.
- To publish an Accessibility Plan.

Information from pupil data and school audit:

- The school caters for primary aged pupils with a wide variety of additional needs. Disabilities include physical difficulties, sensory impairments, ASD, medical needs, severe learning disabilities and profound and multiple disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are functioning at levels significantly below the standards expected nationally for children their age and require extensive adult support.
- The school has good physical access and is on a single site. The majority of the building remains single storey with the newest wing having a first floor. The first floor is accessible via stairs and an accessible lift. The school hall is large enough for all pupils and staff to use the hall together e.g. assemblies. The hall is coated with a non-slip sports grade flooring. The main corridor is widened and allows for good wheelchair access around the hall. When planning for building work enhanced access for pupils is always a consideration.
- All doorways, entrances and exits are fully accessible and wide enough for wheelchair access. All pupils and visitors can enter/exit the building safely in a range of specialist equipment. There are ramps leading to and from external entrances/exits.
- The school has parking available on site and there are two dedicated disabled parking spaces next to the main entrance. Minibuses have numbered bays and pedestrian walkways are clearly marked. Visitors to the school are advised as to the best place to park depending on the time of day and large school events are organised at times when extra parking is available on the school forecourt.
- There is a waiting area in the entrance foyer with seating available. The entrance to the school is clearly marked with signage. Low ramps are installed leading to the main school entrance making it fully accessible from the school forecourt.
- Previously uneven ground has been redeveloped and two additional play areas created. Both of these are coated with a smooth, soft pour surface and are fully accessible. A further larger playground has been built on the school field which is accessible to all and has the same smooth, soft pour surface. Special consideration has been given to the needs of visually impaired users when choosing the colour of the soft pour surface and the contrasting colours of games printed into it. Access to the field and new playground via a sloped pathway has been improved with the gradient and camber of this pathway being reduced. This pathway has been extended to reach the new playground on the field.

- There is an accessible toilet for adult use in the downstairs foyer area just inside the main body of the school and an additional accessible toilet for adult use upstairs.
- Newer carpets, door frames and doors are coloured in strong contrast with the walls to support visual learners and visitors with visual impairments.
- Most corridors are carpeted to reduce noise levels for hearing impaired pupils and visitors. All newer classrooms and most existing rooms also have carpeted areas to dampen sound. Newer classrooms were designed to have good acoustics and the door between the two newer downstairs classrooms is an acoustic door to reduce sound levels between the rooms. The classroom directly above the Rainbow sensory room has thicker flooring to reduce sound travelling down into the sensory room below.
- The two sensory rooms are accessible to all learners and visitors. The Rainbow Room has flooring that can be easily moved aside for wheelchair access and allow the use of a mobile hoist. Switch operated features can be used wirelessly. The interactive floor in the Starlight Room can also be projected directly onto work tables on pupil chairs and standing frames. The Starlight Room is also fully accessible and a mobile hoist can also be used in this room.
- There is a hydrotherapy pool with sloped access as well as steps and a hoisting system to enable full pool access for non-ambulant pupils. There is a changing bed in the adjacent changing room and the hoisting system allows pupils to move from here to the pool.
- There are mobile hoists to allow pupils to access rooms and activities beyond their classrooms. There is a ceiling track hoisting system in one class that allows pupils to move between their classroom and personal care room.
- There are specialist evacuation chairs in place at each staircase.
- All pupils participate in all aspects of school life. We ensure that they can participate in every activity, through careful planning and risk assessments.
- The physical features of the school are a strength – all parts of the school are physically accessible to disabled users.
- Access to information is planned: for example, symbol size and colour contrast is monitored to ensure maximum access for visually impaired children. Pupils will also have individual support to ensure access.
- We have a clear policy on the administration of medicines, with medical and non-medical staff trained to administer any necessary medication on site.
- We have a clear anti-bullying policy, drawn up in consultation with pupils and staff and an inclusive ethos which fosters good relationships between pupils.
- Other school practices, such as sporting or celebration events encourage mutual support, respect and partnerships between children.
- In order to maximise access and pupil progress, the school includes input from all stakeholders, i.e. staff, visitors, parents / carers into all areas of school development.

Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

- Parents and carers of children are happy with the physical environment of the school and are confident that the school adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Through children's Individual Education Plan (IEP) reviews, for example, we identify any change in pupil need and as a result, adapt our approach, delivery and content accordingly to better suit the identified needs.
- Through the questionnaire (appendix 2), the following suggestions / comments were made:

- ✚ Some classrooms are very hot in the summer months and are at times, too hot to stay in comfortably. Fans don't work as they circulate the air and don't cool it. Is it possible to install air conditioning units? Some classrooms need outside awnings to increase the shade.
- ✚ There is a lack of shade outside generally and this is a problem in the summer.
- ✚ The grassed play area outside EYFS becomes muddy quickly.
- ✚ There are plans to resurface the play area nearest the outdoor classroom. This is a very well used outdoor space and a new surface will be welcome. There are plans for the resurfacing to include a small grassed area in this play ground. This is good because it becomes muddy quickly and the grass doesn't grow well due to the shadow cast by the fence.
- ✚ Increase access to activities and resources for pupils outside.
- ✚ The school entrance doors should be automatic as there are wheelchair users.
- ✚ The sensory garden needs to be reopened for pupils to use at playtimes and for activities. Improve/redevelop sensory garden so all can access safely.
- ✚ Outside storage is needed for large pieces of equipment e.g. wheelchairs and standing frames to give (Class 3) more room in class. There is a lot of equipment e.g. standing frames that now need to be kept in corridors, as there isn't enough room in the classroom (Class 2).
- ✚ There needs to be more large outside play equipment for wheelchair users e.g. wheelchair accessible swing, accessible roundabout.
- ✚ Parts of the wooden trim trail on the field need repairing or replacing.
- ✚ Automatic/assisted openers on heavier doors to make it easier to push wheelchairs through.
- ✚ Add non-slip coating to the decking on the outside wooded castle.
- ✚ All classes need blinds at the windows to reduce glare.
- ✚ The ipads need replacing or upgrading for more pupils to be able to use them. More IT tablets are needed for pupils to use with inclusive and accessible apps. It would be good if there were a set of laptops for pupils to use in lessons.
- ✚ Not all computers/whiteboards in classrooms have speakers and/or microphones that allow pupils to communicate fully via e.g. Teams for events. IT around school needs upgrading.

- ✚ Some items in the sensory rooms need upgrading and replacing. Some of the interactive elements need fixing.

Increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the school curriculum:

The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning style, by:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of pupils.
- Endorsing the key principles in the National Curriculum Framework, which underpins the development of a more inclusive curriculum.
- Ensuring appropriate deployment of staff to maximise pupil access to the curriculum, developing independence and promote social interaction.
- Ensuring high quality teaching for all to improve pupils' access to the curriculum, including using teaching approaches that promote positive pupil interaction.
- Providing professional development for staff on inclusive classroom practice and on issues which are disability specific.
- The differentiation of teaching styles and resources in order to offer an individualised learning experience for all pupils that is targeted to maximise progress.
- Introduce an assessment system called Evidence for Learning so that we have a very accurate picture of what our children have learned and need to learn next.
- Seeks advice from colleagues from various additional specialist services, including the Special School Nursing Service, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, the Sensory Support Service Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment Teams, a Behaviour Consultant, Occupational Therapy and Forward Thinking Birmingham. This includes input into a range of resources in order to ensure that barriers to learning are removed or reduced as much as possible.
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is used as a common thread through all areas of the curriculum and wider school life in order to promote the well-being of all parties. Staff and children promote and practice British Values across the curriculum and in all we do every day as part of our immersion in the principles set out in the Birmingham Curriculum Statement.
- Positive role models are supported within the school setting.

Considerations aimed to improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

- ✚ More outside activities and resources for all pupils and particularly PMLD pupils. Increase outside storage.
-

- † Reopen the all of the sensory garden.
- † Assisted opening features on some doors to be considered.
- † Provide more shade for pupils outside.
- † Solution found to reduce temperature in rooms that become uncomfortably warm during hot weather.

Management, co-ordination and implementation:

- We will ensure that all staff are aware of and familiar with The Equalities Act 2010 during staff meetings and training sessions.
- We will provide feedback opportunities for all staff, stakeholders and visitors in order to continually improve our provision.
- We will feed back consultation results to staff.
- The Access Plan will form part of the School Improvement Plan and as such will be overseen and reviewed by the governing body and its committees.
- The governing body will monitor implementation of the plan through the Headteacher's report and governor visits.
- The plan will be evaluated yearly, informed by discussions with pupils, staff and parents and analysis of data on progress and attainment of pupils.
- The Accessibility Plan, although forming part of the School Improvement Plan, is also available as an independent document.
- Accessibility planning will be integrated into the school's overarching planning processes, including premises development, curriculum planning and repairs and maintenance.
- The Accessibility Plan will ensure that the school's responsibilities towards disabled staff and the general public are met through the Equality Act 2010 and that our statutory duties under health and safety, race and human rights are also in place.
- Implementation – see action plan attached.
- Evaluation of the plan will look at what the school has implemented and what effect those measures have had. The school will consider a range of evidence to reach a judgement. These will include staff confidence, parental satisfaction with arrangements made, outcomes for pupils, the physical environment, multi-agency protocols, the sharing of good practice and the involvement of all pupils in school life.
- The Governing Body will report to parents on the school's accessibility plan via the school prospectus and the school newsletter.

Copies of the school's accessibility plan are available from the school office and on the school website.

(In accordance with guidance this plan has a readability level of 12 years.)

Signed:

Head teacher

Chair of Governors

Review Date:

Appendix 1

Accessibility Plan (Oct 2021).
**(as required by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA 2001) and
with reference to the Equalities Act (2010))**

	Actions	By whom	Start	Finish	Evidence that it is completed
i. Improvement in access to the curriculum	<p>1. Ensure appropriate deployment of support staff.</p> <p>2. Ensure high quality teaching, through CPD for all.</p> <p>3. Improve access to ICT for all pupils.</p>				<p>Programmes of support. Staff lists. Ensure all pupils have full access to the curriculum, working with independence when appropriate and interacting fully with peers.</p> <p>Damaged resources are repaired or replaced and additional resources are in place. All pupils and class rooms have increased access to ICT suitable to their level of need.</p>

<p>ii. Physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services.</p>	<p>1. Improve access to outside activities for PMLD pupils.</p> <p>2. Provide more shaded areas for pupils outside in hot weather.</p> <p>3. Provide more outside resources and activities for pupils and particularly PMLD pupils. Provide more storage for outside resources.</p>				<p>PMLD pupils have increased access to outside play resources and activities incl. sensory garden.</p> <p>Increased use of outside spaces in hot weather.</p> <p>Increased physical activity outside for all. Resources secure in weatherproof storage. Staff utilise resources to support all pupils to engage in activities outside, particularly PMLD pupils.</p>
---	---	--	--	--	---

	<p>4. Add non-slip coating to wooden walk ways outside. Possible removal of wooden walkway and pond area in sensory garden.</p> <p>5. Quote for assisted openers on some doors.</p> <p>6. Reopen the sensory garden.</p> <p>7. Solution found to reduce temperature in rooms prone to overheating and affected by glare from sunlight.</p>				<p>Wooden walkways no longer slippery when wet.</p> <p>Doors easier for wheelchair users to pass through.</p> <p>Increase in outside space for play and teaching activities. Parts of outside sensory space accessible to all pupils.</p> <p>Glare from sunlight reduced. Temperature in affected rooms reduced and comfort increased.</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--

Appendix 2

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of our drive to continually develop our school and in order to maintain our statutory duties, we are renewing the school's Accessibility Plan. This allows us to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all who attend and visit The Bridge School. Back in 2018 staff were also consulted via a questionnaire and shared ideas on how access could be improved.

Your thoughts and suggestions would also be greatly appreciated now. Please complete the questionnaire below if you feel we could do anything as a school to improve the access provision we offer. Many thanks.

1. Are there any areas around school that could be changed to improve access? This could be areas inside the school building and/or the wider school site.

 2. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to make to improve accessibility? E.g. at specific times of the school day, to the physical environment, signage around school for pupils, staff and visitors.

 3. We are all really looking forward to welcoming back visitors for larger school events. Are there any events or times in the school year that need further consideration in terms of accessibility?

 4. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to make to improve accessibility for all out our school?
-
-

