



## MERSEY VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME & ACCESS PLAN

***“We want to live in communities where we can participate fully and equally. We want all our children to do well at school, to take part in all areas of school life and reach their potential. We know that for many disabled children at school, and disabled people in employment, this hasn’t yet happened and there remains considerable work to be done.***

***The Disability Equality Duty is a new way for public authorities to tackle disability discrimination in a practical way by introducing policies that actively promote opportunities and so prevent discrimination taking place”*** Bert Massie, Chairman Disability Rights Commission

### **Introduction**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2010 place a general duty on schools, to have due regard for the following when carrying out their functions:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- Eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

This is also known as the Disability Equality Duty (DED) and applies to all disabled pupils, staff and those using services provided by schools. The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- To plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

It is a requirement that the school’s accessibility plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary.

### **Vision and Values**

Our school mission statement summarises the vision and values of Mersey Vale Primary School.....

***Ensuring all children reach their full potential in a stimulating, challenging and caring environment.***

Mersey Vale Primary School has high ambitions for all our pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.

Our commitment to equal opportunities is driven by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement. The school aims to:

- set suitable learning challenges;
- respond to pupils' diverse needs;
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

We welcome all pupils and staff and pride ourselves on being an inclusive community where diversity is valued and celebrated.

Every member of staff shares in the responsibility to remove barriers to learning for all pupils, including those with a disability.

### **Definition of Disability**

The disability discrimination duties are owed to all pupils who are defined by the DDA as being disabled and under the planning duties schools and local authorities have a general duty to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils.

The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (see definition below of normal day-to-day activities).

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments and also hidden impairments. In the DDA 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. 'Long-term' means has lasted or is likely to last more than 12 months.

The definition is broad and includes children with a wide range of impairments, including learning disabilities, dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), diabetes or epilepsy, where the effect of the impairment on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is adverse, substantial and long-term. All those with cancer or surviving cancer; HIV or Multiple Sclerosis are now included from the point of diagnosis.

A significant number of pupils are therefore included in the definition.

### **Normal day-to-day activity**

The test of whether the impairment affects normal day-to-day activity is whether it affects one or more of the following:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- perception of risk of physical danger

### **Disability and special educational needs**

Many children who have SEN will also be defined as having a disability under the DDA. It is likely that many of the pupils who have SEN and a statement or who are at School Action Plus will count as disabled. However, not all children who are defined as disabled will have SEN. For example, those with severe asthma, arthritis or diabetes may not have SEN but may have rights under the DDA. Similarly, not all children with SEN will be defined as having a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act. In particular some children whose emotional and behavioural difficulties have their origins in social or domestic circumstances may fall outside the definition.

## Possible overlap of SEN and DDA disability definition for children and young people

Special Educational Needs	Both SEN + Disabled	Disabled
Mild dyslexia Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD - social factors) Mild Dyspraxia Minor speech impairment Mild Learning difficulties	Motor Impairment (long term) Learning difficulties Hearing impairment / Deaf Visual Impairment/Blind Incontinence Significant Dyslexia Epilepsy Non-verbal ADHD Autism EBD (factors other than social e.g. medical conditions/mental health)	Asthma Diabetes Cancer recovery Mental health Issues Disfigurement Eating disorder Lack of limbs Sickle cell Anaemia Gross Obesity Very Short Stature

### **Information from pupil data and school audit**

Within the current school population of 195 (+ 30 Nursery) pupils, there are currently 3 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, 13 pupils on School Action Plus and 27 children at the School Action stage. This equates to approximately 22% of the school population (R – Y6).

Disabled pupils currently in school have the following needs:

- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties (EBSD)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Blindness/ Visual Impairment (VI)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD – including Dyslexia and Dyspraxia);
- Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Significant health needs
- Incontinence
- Obesity
- Achondroplasia

### **The school's strengths in working with disabled pupils**

School staff have experience of working with a wide range of disabled pupils. Training is provided through a cycle of staff INSET to raise awareness of needs and also of strategies for effective classroom practice in meeting needs. This includes attending training at other local schools eg. ADHD, Priestnall School, December 2012. Our Inclusion Leader accesses advice and support through involvement in the Local Authority SENDCo network.

Every teacher has a file which contains information on each pupil with special educational needs, medical needs and disabilities. This information is updated at least annually. Children with special educational needs each have a file which contains Individual Education Plans (IEPs), assessments, reports and review notes. This is stored centrally and school staff and staff from outside agencies have access to this information.

The school subscribes to local authority training for support staff. Teaching assistant training includes visits in to local Resourced School to observe good practice and support our development. There is regular liaison with a range of outside agencies who offer advice, guidance and support in meeting the needs of the pupils we support. These agencies include:

- Learning Support Service
- Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Occupational Therapy Service
- CAMHS
- Educational Psychology Service
- Educational Service for the Sensory Impaired
- Behaviour Support Service

Close links are established between Mersey Vale Primary School, Priestnall School and other local schools. Recently autistic pupils have benefited from working with a trainee educational psychologist based at Priestnall School to participate in an individual, transitional programme. In addition we offer opportunities to children from Lisburne and Oakgrove schools to attend sessions at Mersey Vale to aid their transition to mainstream school.

Robust systems are in place to ensure the smooth transition of pupils to Priestnall and other high schools. Liaison and the sharing of information regarding disabled pupils with a statement of S.E.N. or on School Action Plus usually begins with the SENDCo from the high school attending the Year 5 transfer review. Further meetings are then arranged during Year 6 and additional visits to the high school during the Summer Term prior to transfer are arranged for the pupil. Staff also ensure that all relevant information is passed on so that any appropriate adjustments and preparations can be made for the pupil.

In 2012 a disabled wheelchair user from Stockport CP partnership visited Mersey Vale and spent time in KS2 classes delivering Disability Equality workshops with our children about living with a disability.

### Curriculum Access

All disabled pupils follow a full and balanced curriculum, appropriately differentiated according to their needs and are encouraged to take a full and active part in school life, including extra-curricular activities and off-site visits. Each case is dealt with on an individual basis and in discussion with parents / carers and professional outside agencies. Individual Educational Plans and Provision Maps are in place and adjustments made to enable each child to fully access all the opportunities available in school. Mersey Vale has built up an effective bank of resources to ensure that all work is appropriately differentiated and accessible to all pupils.

### Physical Access

The physical layout of the school is relatively well accessible for all members of the school community. The building is single storey and wheelchair accessible. In 2005 the toilets were improved and there is now provision of a disabled toilet. This is also used as a changing facility for children who have soiled themselves. Classrooms are partly carpeted to cut out excess noise and to improve the acoustics for hearing impaired pupils. Our ICT suite is easily accessible for wheelchair users. We have ample car parking facilities to provide easy access eg. for wheelchair users. In 2011 a mobile classroom unit was installed which has ramped access and a disabled toilet. We have recently admitted a child with Achondroplasia and are accessing support and advice about the physical modifications that will be required as the child progresses through school.

### Information Access

Information is given to all new parents/ carers in the form of a face to face meeting, a tour of the school and a prospectus/ information pack. Our admissions form gives parents/ carers the opportunity to give details of medical, language and cultural needs. Newsletters are used to give information about curriculum, building and other developments within school. Progress on attainment and social development is shared at parents' meetings twice yearly, S.E.N. review meetings and through a written report at the end of the year. Additional meetings are arranged on request. At Mersey Vale we know our pupils and their families very well and are sensitive to their needs. We make individual arrangements for sharing information as appropriate eg. texting a deaf parent rather than phoning, arranging for bilingual assistants/ interpreters to attend meetings.

### Areas for Development:

- Raising of awareness for all staff of what the DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) expects of them
- Raising of awareness for governors of what the DDA expects of them
- Ongoing training and INSET for staff to ensure appropriate knowledge and understanding of strategies to support all pupils
- Monitoring and analysis of patterns of attendance and exclusion for disabled pupils
- Detailed analysis of outcome data for disabled pupils – e.g. end of Key Stage outcomes
- Detailed information showing how well disabled pupils are accessing the curriculum
- Monitoring and detailing achievements in extra-curricular activities
- Improving accessibility through the installation of ramps to the hall entrance and improving ramps to the main reception entrance
- Disability awareness training for all classes
- Creation of a quiet, soft area for all children who require it, but particularly for autistic children and those with behavioural difficulties

## **Consultation**

The views and aspirations of all pupils, including disabled pupils, are formally gathered annually through questionnaires each July, the School Council and through our monitoring programme.

Parents also have the opportunity to express their views through;

- Our 'open door' policy giving informal access to staff and the leadership team throughout the year.
- Termly parents' evenings and open afternoon
- Special educational needs review meetings
- Termly parent & leadership team meetings
- Induction meeting and individual appointments for new parents. Our admission form includes questions on disabilities, medical/ special/ access needs
- All parents have access to Family Support Worker

Staff have opportunities to express their views through;

- Termly open staff meetings
- Individual formal meetings
- Informal opportunities to talk with each other and the leadership team

The Governing Body is consulted regularly through termly steering group, committee and full governing body meetings. The Governing Body has designated governors with responsibility for S.E.N.D. and for Diversity.

## **Additional implications**

At Mersey Vale we have a responsibility;

- to ensure that the building is accessible to all when we hire out rooms or parts of the building
- to make information available in an accessible format so that people who may be, for example, visually impaired, can access the information
- to consider the needs of any staff members who have a disability
- events and meetings should be held in easily accessible parts of the building
- staff will need to be aware of Section 6 of the Disability Discrimination Act when hiring transport as it puts new duties on transport providers
- the election of parent governors is covered by the DDA 2005, and governors will need to ensure that the procedures for candidates to stand for election and for parents to vote for candidates are accessible to disabled people. However, the result of the election is not covered and disabled candidates will not be able to claim that they were not elected simply because they were disabled. Once a disabled parent governor is elected, the school governing body functions in relation to that parent are covered and the school must ensure that they can participate fully in school life

## **Making things happen**

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Disability Equality Duty, we will –

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Increase awareness of the ways in which parents of disabled children and young people can help to support their learning
- Ensuring that the talents of disabled pupils are represented accordingly through the Gifted and Talented register
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Monitor incidents of harassment and bullying of disabled pupils. Encourage pupils to report and take action against offenders
- If a number of incidents have been prevalent within a particular year group, use circle time, story time or assembly to investigate and address the issue with all pupils
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Ensure that disability is represented in posters, collages, displays and learning materials

- Ensure all children are represented on trips, activities and the school council
- Ensure that all school plans reflect priorities for developing access for disabled pupils
- Celebrate and highlight key events such as the Paralympics, Equality & Diversity Week
- Encourage participation in public life by disabled people
- Ensure that disabled pupils are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events and on the school council

### **Monitoring and reporting**

To meet the Disability Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people with disabilities. It is important to monitor the impact of the action taken to ensure that progress is being made towards meeting the Disability Equality Duty. At Mersey Vale we will monitor the achievement of pupils by disability and the developments which are implemented to enhance access to the curriculum, the physical environment and to information.

### **To Conclude**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school and local authority policies:-  
Special Educational Needs Policy; Medicines in School; Dyslexia; Education of Sick Children; Inclusion Policy; Whole School Policy for Equal Opportunities (including Racial Equality Policy)

Overall responsibility for the school's Disability Equality Scheme and accessibility plan lies with the governing body, but improving access for disabled pupils requires everyone at the school to understand the duties in the DDA and apply this knowledge in their own area of responsibility: the leadership team, class teachers, curriculum subject leaders, support staff, the SENDCo, administrative staff and governors themselves.

## APPENDIX I

### DDA Action Plan

The production of this disability equality scheme provides us with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty.

The main actions to be taken in the next three years to promote disability equality are described in the following action plan. This plan will run in conjunction with the School Improvement Plan, Accessibility Plan and Asset Management Plan and will be subject to revision and amendment at the end of the three year period.

#### Access to the Curriculum

Target	Strategies	Personnel	Timescale	Achievement criteria
<p><u>Short term</u> Raise awareness among all staff of curriculum needs, and extra curricular needs of specific groups of pupils, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASD</li> <li>• Speech and Lang</li> <li>• MLD</li> <li>• Hearing Impairment</li> <li>• Visual Impairment</li> <li>• EBD</li> </ul>	<p>Programme of INSET through staff meetings or INSET days to share expertise among staff</p> <p>Establish central base for information</p> <p>Audit of skills and expertise, identification of training needs</p>	All staff	2012-13	<p>Increased access to curriculum for all groups</p> <p>Increased confidence among staff</p> <p>Expertise and training needs identified</p>
Identifying dyslexia training	British Dyslexia Association	Inclusion Leader + PSHCE leader (TLR holders)	Spring 2013	Improved outcomes for children
<p><u>Medium term</u> Refresher staff training in moving and handling techniques</p> <p>Use of P scales throughout school for children working towards LI of national curriculum</p> <p>Establish appropriate assessment and tracking system for all children covered by DDA</p> <p>Develop knowledge and understanding of disability for children and staff</p>	<p>Team Teach INSET</p> <p>Training (LSS) Used in target setting if appropriate</p> <p>Monitor for Lit/num, clubs</p> <p>Disability Awareness Training for KS2 classes</p>	<p>Teachers + identified, key TAs</p> <p>All staff</p> <p>Assessment leader SENDCo Chris Blakeley</p> <p>SENDCo All staff All pupils</p>	2014 - 2015	<p>Increased confidence and knowledge among staff</p> <p>Quality specialist support within school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increased access to curriculum</li> </ul> <p>System to monitor access to curriculum and extra curricular activities established</p>

<u>Long term</u> Update staff training in eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hearing/ Visual impairment</li> <li>Speech and language</li> <li>ASD</li> <li>Specific learning difficulties</li> </ul>			2012-15	Greater understanding of needs of disabled people  Quality specialist support within school - increased access to curriculum
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#### Access to Physical Environment

Target	Strategies	Personnel	Timescale	Achievement criteria
<u>Medium term</u> Identify priority areas and plan to fit ramps/ handrails/ classroom adaptations from DFC budget if necessary eg ramp to school hall to improve access  <u>Long term</u> Incorporation of appropriate colour schemes/acoustics to benefit pupils with visual/hearing impairment  Creation of a quiet, soft area for all children who require it, but particularly for autistic children and those with behavioural difficulties	Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical access</li> <li>Visual access</li> <li>Acoustics</li> </ul> Advice from property services  Seek advice from SEN service Investigate how to access transmitter for hearing impairment  Visit to other settings for ideas/ advice.	H/T Governors Inclusion service Property services	2012-14    2012-16	Increased access to environment  Increased pupil autonomy

#### Access to Information

Target	Strategies	Personnel	Timescale	Achievement criteria
<u>Short term</u> All information follows an agreed house style using an appropriate font (Gill Sans MT) size 11 or larger. All information is presented in a user friendly way for children, parents and staff	Agreed house style Gill Sans font for parent info	Admin staff All staff	2012-13	Delivery of information to disabled pupils and parents improved



Information is available in a variety of different formats	Posters, letters, website/e-mail	Admin staff All staff		
Staff differentiate presentation of information/ requirements for children with specific needs	Staff aware of needs eg for additional time	All staff		
<u>Medium/ long term</u>				
Staff to know how to access a range of different formats eg Braille as necessary	Consult with LA/Sensory Support Service re services available	SENDCo		Delivery of information to disabled pupils and parents improved
School to be able to produce large print transcriptions	School staff trained to produce materials in large print	Admin staff All staff		

## APPENDIX 2



### MERSEY VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

We firmly believe that every child who wishes to come to our school, and who has a successful application based on our admissions criteria, should be admitted, regardless of sex, race, belief or physical disability.

To achieve this aim we take steps to accommodate our pupils to their best advantage:

#### Physical Environment

1. Classes of children are placed within the building to take account of their age.
  - Foundation Stage children have easy access to small toilets and sinks and direct access to an outdoor play area.
  - Key Stage 1 children have easy access to small toilets and sinks and a large teaching/ learning space including a structured play area within the classroom.
  - All children have direct access to the playground.
  - All children have own toilets with appropriately sized toilets and sinks, and cloakroom space.
2. Our reception/ office area is sited next to the main entrance where there is a ramp and large doorway for wheelchair and pushchair access.
3. The whole building is single storey and wheelchair accessible. Trip hazards have been removed to improve accessibility and safety within school.
4. In 2005 and 2011 the toilets were improved and there is now provision of two disabled toilet.
5. We are planning to improve accessibility through the installation of permanent ramps to the hall entrance.
6. Classrooms are partly carpeted to cut out excess noise and to improve the acoustics for hearing impaired pupils.
7. Doors are self-closing to meet fire safety requirements and to limit disturbance from other areas.
8. All classrooms are decorated in neutral colours to create a calm environment.
9. Furniture is appropriately sized for the age group of children within each classroom.

#### Curriculum

1. Planning is differentiated so that the curriculum can be accessed for children of all ages and abilities. Teachers differentiate work to suit all children within their class. Teaching assistants and learning support assistants play a valuable role within school, often working with individuals or groups of children at the higher and lower ability levels.
2. Teaching and learning opportunities are designed to meet the needs of different learning styles.
3. Through P.H.S.C.E. lessons children are introduced to sensitive issues around physical and mental disabilities, social and moral dilemmas, cultural and emotional differences etc.

4. Risk assessments made at the initial planning stages of residential/ day visits ascertain the suitability of the site for inclusion of all children. Only venues which offer suitable accommodation for all pupils will be considered.
5. Support and advice is sought from appropriate outside agencies when necessary e.g. service for hearing impaired, learning support service, school nurse, educational psychology service, Ethnic Diversity Service.
6. An audit is taken in the Autumn term to ascertain whether modified test papers are required and orders are placed with QCA as necessary.

## **Information**

1. Information is given to all new parents/ carers in the form of a face to face meeting, a tour of the school and a prospectus/ information pack. Our Admissions form gives parents/ carers the opportunity to give details of medical, language and cultural needs.
2. Newsletters are used to give information about building and curriculum developments within school.
3. Progress on attainment and social development is shared at parents' meetings twice yearly, at our annual open afternoon and through a written report at the end of the year. Additional meetings are arranged on request. In addition since September 2011 we have held a 'Meet the Teacher' week to give all parents/ carers and opportunity to find out information and discuss any issues.
4. Our school website provides all stakeholders with a variety of information about policies and procedures, our curriculum and events.