

St Matthew's CE (Aided)  
Primary School and  
Nursery Centre

## **Accessibility Policy**

*'To provide quality education for our children in a happy and secure Christian environment, encouraging pupils to achieve their full potential academically, spiritually and socially'.*



2023 - 2024

## **St Matthew's CE (Aided) Primary School Accessibility Policy 2023-2024**

### **St Matthew's Accessibility**

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 pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation". According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and
- 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 will be reviewed every 3 years or where operational needs dictate and approved by the Governing Body.

St Matthew's Primary School aims to treat all stakeholders, including pupils, prospective pupils, staff, governors and other members of the school community favourably and, wherever possible, takes reasonable steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage. The school aims to work closely with disabled pupils, their families and any relevant outside agencies in order to remove or minimise any potential barriers to learning, which puts them at a disadvantage, but allows them to learn, achieve and participate fully in school life. As part of the school's continued communication with parents, carers and other stakeholders we continually look at ways to improve accessibility through data collection, questionnaires and parental discussions.

### **The purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to show how St Matthew's Primary School intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our school for disabled pupils. Under the Equality Act 2010 schools should have an Accessibility Plan. This Accessibility Policy pays due regard to Government statute and local Telford and Wrekin directives, including the Equality Act (2010) and the Children and Families Act (2014) Part 3 which links in to the SEN Code of Practice (2015) and to previous legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, the SEN and Disability Act 2001, and Telford and Wrekin Schools Accessibility Strategy.

The effect of the law means that "schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. 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 the Policy upon legislative or local changes, both must be approved by the Governing Body. The review process can be delegated to a committee of the Governing Body, an individual or the Head.

### **Aims:**

Our Aims are:

- Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, medical condition or other access needs
- To improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils, staff and other members of the school community with a disability, medical condition or other access needs can access education and associated services.
- Improve the delivery of information to pupils, staff, parents/carers and other members of the school community

The Accessibility Plan has been developed and drawn up based upon information supplied by the Local Authority, and consultations with pupils, parents, staff and governors of the school. 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.

### **Definition of Disability**

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.

### **What will the Accessibility plan do?**

The Accessibility Plan is structured to complement and support the school's Equality and Diversity Policy and the SEND Policy, both of which can be accessed via our website.

St Matthew's Primary School is committed to providing an environment that enables full curriculum access that values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, 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.

The St Matthew's Primary School Accessibility Plan will evolve to meet the specific requirements of disabled pupils, 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 actions to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as prepared for life as are the able-bodied pupils. This encompasses teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in
2. After-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum within a reasonable timeframe.
3. Improve and maintain access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary – this covers any improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education within a reasonable timeframe.
4. Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, 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.

### **Current good practice**

We gather information about any disability or health condition in early communications with parents and carers of children who are new to school. Wherever possible discussions take place with parents prior to the child starting at the school. For parents and carers of children already at the school, we ask parents to keep the school informed of any changes to the information they have provided.

### **Physical Environment**

There are no areas of the school to which disabled pupils have limited or no access at the moment. Disabled pupils and pupils with health conditions participate in extra-curricular activities. Some aspects of extracurricular activities present particular challenges, for example lunch and break times for pupils with social/interaction impairments, after-school clubs for pupils with physical impairments and school trips for pupils with medical needs, however all reasonable adjustments are made to support as full an involvement as possible and risk assessments conducted.

### **Curriculum**

Through planning for individual need, we aim to provide as inclusive an approach as practically possible. Some areas of the curriculum present particular challenges, for example: PE for pupils with a physical impairment, however all

reasonable adjustments are made to support as full an involvement as possible. We seek advice and support from the relevant professionals in order to ensure that we have made adequate and reasonable adjustments.

### **Staff Training**

Whole school training will recognise the need to continue raising awareness of equality issues for staff and governors to comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Associated Policies**

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

- Behaviour Policy,
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health & Safety Policy,
- SEND Policy
- School Improvement Plan for Inclusion

### **Access Audit**

The school is housed in 3 separate one storey buildings. All entrances to the school are either flat or ramped and all have wide doors fitted. The main entrance features a secure lobby and has been fitted with a low reception hatch, this being fully accessible to wheelchair users. Whilst we acknowledge that the size of the school site could potentially present challenges when moving between buildings, we make reasonable adjustments as the need arises. The school does not have any dedicated visitor parking. Visitors to the school use on-street parking, however suitable arrangements for disabled visitors are made when appropriate. There are disabled toilet facilities available in 2 of our buildings. These are fitted with a handrail and a pull emergency cord. The school has internal emergency signage and escape routes are clearly marked. Personalised evacuation plans are put in place as required.

### **Management and review**

- We consult with other professionals and services when new situations regarding pupils with disabilities are experienced.
- The Governors and Senior Leadership Team work closely with the Local Authority.
- We work closely with parents to consider their children's needs.
- The policy is reviewed annually and/or as children's needs change.
- The annual review is then shared with staff.
- We make links with other schools to share best practice through regular SENCo network meetings and other communications as needed.

### **Complaints**

The school works, wherever possible, in partnership with parents to ensure a collaborative approach to meeting pupils' needs. If there are any complaints relating to the provision for pupils with access needs these will be dealt with in the first instance by the Headteacher. The SEND governor or chair of governors may be involved if the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily.

**The Accessibility Policy will be published on the school website.**

**The Accessibility Policy and Plan will be monitored through Governing Body committees and reported to the Full Governing Body.**

**The school will work in partnership with the Local Authority in developing and implementing this Accessibility Policy and required Plan.**

Approved by St Matthew's Governing Body

Review date: September 2024