

Mount Pleasant Primary School

Disability Access Statement – Sept 2016

1 – Introduction

Mount Pleasant Primary School is committed to providing a fully accessible environment which 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 challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

The school recognises that many of its students, visitors and staff, whether disabled or otherwise, have individual needs when using school facilities. We recognise that for all pupils, the nature of their disabilities may mean that they experience specific difficulties related to accessing education, and the physical environment. As part of the ongoing commitment to the delivery of an inclusive educational service, we will endeavour to ensure that all our pupils receive a high standard of education.

2 – Disability Discrimination Act

With the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in October 2005, Mount Pleasant Primary School, in common with all premises offering access to the Public in England and Wales, assumed a mandatory obligation to provide easy access to all parts of its premises for people with Disabilities, wherever reasonably practicable.

The Act recognises however, that full access is not always reasonably achievable in older existing buildings, and therefore states that in these cases people with disabilities should be able to gain easy access into the premises and that the services they require should be made available to them in close proximity to their entry point.

3 – Key Objectives

The school recognises that many of its students, visitors and staff, whether disabled or otherwise, have individual needs when using school facilities. We recognise that for all pupils, the nature of their disabilities may mean that they experience specific difficulties related to accessing education, and the physical environment. As part of the ongoing commitment to the delivery of an inclusive educational service, we will endeavour to ensure that all our pupils receive as high a standard of education as their counterparts in mainstream schools.

In order to ensure that the educational services it provides effectively meet the needs of disabled students the school will:

- Share this access policy with staff so that the provision of educational services ensures the inclusion of all of our pupils. Such communications will address the legal obligation of staff, and the school.
- Make all prospective employees aware of the disabilities of the pupils in the school. Any applicant for a new position will be made aware of their role in delivering the curriculum, personal care, therapy programmes and maintaining the health and safety of the pupils at all times.
- Provide appropriate training for staff which will explain the school access policy and ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of it.
- Encourage all visitors to school including suppliers and contractors, to adopt similar policies towards disabled students.
- Consult with disabled pupils, parents, staff and disability organisations.
- Regularly review whether its education (and other) services are both accessible and effective, and take appropriate action.
- Operate an accessible complaints procedure whereby disabled people can make improvement suggestions and request assistance.
- Ensure that information about the Accessibility Plan is published on the School's website.
- Ensure that the terms of reference for all governors' committees will contain an item on 'having regard to matters relating to Access'.

Address acts of disability discrimination via existing policies, the school development plan and the asset management plan. As curriculum policies are reviewed, a section relating to access will be added to that on Equality and Diversity.

4 – The Physical Environment of the School

Mount Pleasant comprises an interlinked grouping of single story buildings which form part of the Infants and Nursery School. The Junior School is housed in temporary double-storey accommodation during the new building project which is due to be completed in November 2017. The new build has been designed to be completely accessible and has ramps as well as lifts going to all parts of the building thereby providing 100% total disabled access.

In the current building, various ramps and handrails are provided for use by wheelchair and ambulant users. Access around the school can be restrictive as the school has to take into account the children and security issues around the site. Consequently there are areas where extra security is installed to prevent a child running away or going to the playgrounds alone.

To meet the requirements of the legislation in the current premises, Mount Pleasant has installed a number of ramped/level access points throughout its premises as follows:

Road level access for wheelchair users: During the building works, access to the main entrance of the school is via a ramp from Victoria Road. However, the school has installed call button and signs for wheelchair users who can get support and access through a secondary gate which is at road/ground

level and leads straight into the school thereby avoiding the need to even use the ramp.

Ramp to Reception class doors: The reception classes are accessible through a mobile ramp which is brought into use providing direct access to the classrooms as and when needed.

Grass Play Area & Fire Muster Point: These areas are now fully accessible, following the installation of a wheelchair low gradient ramp from Mount Street to the field level.

In addition to the above, there are accessible lavatory facilities at various locations within the building with the addition of a changing facility for EYFS and Y12 children (if required).

Signage around the school adheres to current Health and Safety regulations.

Lighting is suitable for purpose in all rooms with blinds in most rooms to allow for adjustable lighting.

The school is aware of the affect that noises e.g. lights buzzing, can affect the ability of the children to work and concentrate. This is kept to a minimum and the caretaker undertakes repairs as soon as possible.

The evacuation procedures are displayed around the school and there is a fire drill every term. There is a high staff to pupil ratio to meet the needs of students with disabilities under an emergency evacuation.

Accessible toilets have emergency call alarms activated by cords in case of any problem. The accessible toilets have both lights and alarm sound warning (assistance call) over the doors.

The premises team monitors the general internal condition of the school on a daily basis, also monitoring Health and Safety issues and completing statutory building checks. The school staff note any maintenance items on job request sheets for the Caretaker to attend to. Contractors are brought in for issues not within the remit of the Caretaker.

5. Arranging the Classroom

Each classroom is set out to provide the most positive environment to work in, to ensure the child learns effectively.

Classrooms have sufficient space for all the children.

Toilet facilities are available close to each classroom. Signage is in place to signpost users of all abilities to the facilities

A variety of resources are used to ensure that the pupil learns effectively.

IT support is invaluable in providing access to the curriculum and assistive technology is used extensively throughout school to support the learning of disabled pupils

6. Access to Education

Mount Pleasant Primary School recognises that all disabled children should have access to education in accordance with the Equality Act and adheres to the code of practice which advises on the statutory responsibilities of education bodies in the preparation of accessibility strategies and seeks to:

Improve 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 as identified in the Asset Management Plan and the School Development Plan.

Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils are as equally prepared for life as are able-bodied pupils in mainstream schools; this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and assistive technology, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.

7 – Access to the Curriculum

Mount Pleasant Primary School offers a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils provides additional specialist provision to enable all pupils with learning difficulties to access the curriculum and aid their educational development. The teaching environment / facilities include:

- Teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled pupils through regular INSET days, individual courses and joint training days.
- Staff work closely with colleagues from the sensory services and the SEN Team to ensure that pupils are enabled to access all curriculum opportunities, have appropriate means of communication and to devise and review targets for inclusion on pupils IEPs.
- The classrooms are organised for pupils with adaptive equipment and the variety of equipment required to meet the needs of the children.
- Individual targets are set to allow all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in all lessons.

- All pupils take part in music, drama and physical activities as part of the access to the curriculum.
- Communication systems are used by all staff, including as appropriate Makaton Pecs, photographs, and objects of reference.
- Staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by our pupils to use equipment in practical sessions.
- Mount Pleasant Primary School provides all pupils with access to computers in class with IT sessions at some point of each week with appropriate adaptations for our pupils.
- School visits are accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment.
- There are high expectations of all pupils.
- Staff constantly seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation.

8 – Access for Community Use

Mount Pleasant Primary School also hires the facilities to non-educational and community bodies. This is an important income stream and provides a strong link with the local community

Since October 2004, schools, in the provision of non-educational services to the public, have had to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to access the service.

The provision of non-educational services may include activities such as:

- Governors meetings;
- Services offered to parents, such as meetings to present the annual report, admission and exclusion hearings where an appeal is by the parents;
- Fund raising events organised by Mount Pleasant's parent teacher association.
- Leisure time activities for children or adults without any element of educational development;
- The use of school sports facilities by the local community or the hiring of school accommodation to members of the public.
- After School Club, activity clubs run by private hirers, Breakfast Club

9 – Making Adjustments

The Equality Act states that Schools are not expected to change their premises. They are however expected to make long-term proactive plans for improving access to their buildings through their planning duties and this document should be read in conjunction with the School Development Plan and the Asset Management Plan.

Mount Pleasant Primary School will continue to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled students, parents or visitors attending the school are not discriminated against. Making reasonable adjustments could include:

- changes to practices or procedures
- changes to physical features
- changes to how learners are assessed
- providing extra support and aids (such as specialist teachers or equipment)

Mount Pleasant is pleased to be able to say that the new school building will have 100% disabled access facility. The statement will be updated in November 2017 as the school moved into the new building.