



Brinsworth Whitehill Primary

Disability Equality Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Duty to promote disability equality

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was a landmark in equality legislation, making it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of his or her disability. It also required organisations to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a disabled person could take a job, continue to work for an organisation or access services.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the 1995 legislation. It introduced the duty to promote disability equality, which partly parallels the duty to promote race equality introduced under Race relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The duty to promote disability equality contains two elements - a general duty for all public bodies and a specific duty, which applies to a more limited number of specified public authorities, including maintained schools. The Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) states that the "overarching goal of the duty is to promote equality of opportunity". In many cases the disadvantage and discrimination that disabled people experience arise from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The duty to promote disability equality aims to overcome these barriers.

This Scheme sets out the steps the governing body will take that will result in improved outcomes for disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff in all aspects of school life in the wider community and in the non-educational services they might provide.

This Scheme builds on our accessibility plan and develops our work further to include:

- A definition of both disability and inclusion that is wider than special educational needs* and applies to all vulnerable groups
- Taking a proactive approach in making reasonable adjustments
- Work with pupils, staff and parents/carers
- Involving the views of disabled pupils, their carers and staff where appropriate in identifying priority actions within the school improvement plan.

1.2 The general duty

The general duty to promote disability equality places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons – This means not representing people in a demeaning way, and it also means not pretending they don't exist and not representing them anywhere at all.
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life – It is also important to respect the wishes of disabled children in an educational setting so that they do not feel pushed into activities they do not wish to take parting.
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. (DDA 2005 S49A)

*The legislation includes in the definition of SEN any pupil who has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of peers or a disability preventing or hindering access to educational facilities

1.3 The Specific Duty

The specific duty requires a designated public authority (which includes schools) to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), setting out how it will fulfil its general and specific duties to promote disability equality. Disabled people must be involved in the development of the Scheme. The first Disability Equality Schemes should be published in Primary schools by December 2007 and should last for three years with an annual review of progress.

2. BRINSWORTH WHITEHILL'S ETHOS, VISION AND VALUES

2.1 Our Vision and Values

The school is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its employees, pupils and any others involved in the school community, with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.

This school will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment and will also consider pupils who are carers of disabled parents.

This Disability Equality Scheme is consistent with our vision and values and the school's Equal Opportunities policy.

2.2 Who do we mean by "disabled people"?

"Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities" (DDA 1995 Part1 para.1.1)

This includes 'hidden' impairments, such as mental illness, dyslexia, autism, speech & language, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), diabetes, or epilepsy. Substantial means "more than minor or trivial" and long term means lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.

Disability is said to have an adverse effect if 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
- Eyesight(unless brought to functionally useful level by spectacles or lenses)
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger

This definition was amended and broadened in December 2005 under the 2005 Disability Amendment Act:-

- People with cancer or surviving cancer are now included, as are people with HIV and Multiple Sclerosis from the point of diagnosis
- For a mental impairment the need for it to be clinically well recognised has been removed

In considering what might constitute a substantial disadvantage, the school has taken account of a number of factors, eg

- The time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled child
- The inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer
- The loss of opportunity or the diminished progress that a disabled child may make in comparison with his or her peers who are not disabled.

Another way of considering whether particular special educational needs are disabling is illustrated in the table below:

	Physical, hearing, vision	Speech comprehension	Learning	Perception of risk or danger
Autistic Spectrum		√	Some	√
Behaviour		Some	Some	√
Dyslexic-type needs			√	
Other learning needs		Some	√	Some
Physical sensory	√	Some	Some	Some

2.3 Discrimination Disabled People Face

Disabled people are discriminated against in a number of different ways. These include:

- Discriminatory attitudes
- A lack of accessible information
- Inaccessible environments
- Services that have not been designed to take account of the needs of disabled people.

2.4 Action to Date

Our disability Equality Scheme will take a fundamental step in removing these discriminatory barriers for disabled people in Brinsworth Whitehill school. The scheme builds on what we have done already to promote equality for disabled people.

For example we have:

- Made physical alterations to the building – including new disabled toilets, handrail and widening class exits – in co-operation with the Local Authority to enable a child with physical disabilities to attend the school.

- Made 'reasonable adjustments' to enable children with disabilities to participate fully in class trips.
- Approved an equal opportunities policy which aims to ensure equality of opportunity for all members of the school community
- An Accessibility Plan which aims to
- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- Improve the physical environment in Whitehill to increase opportunities for disabled pupils
- Ensure that disabled children are provided with information in formats that are accessible for them

3. INVOLVEMENT

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 i.e. to produce a Disability Equality Scheme for our school.

These actions may include some priorities to increase access to the curriculum, the physical environment and the provision of information. They should include measures to increase participation such as directly asking pupils with a disability to stand for election to the student council.

Specific actions will depend on the feedback from our consultation, and may include strategies to promote accessibility and make the environment more disabled friendly, such as creating a quiet place, improving signage, etc.

We will also continue to take steps to ensure that children with disabilities can participate in all aspects of school life including lunchtime activities, school plays or school trips.

3.1 Developing a voice for disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers

Parents are always invited to annual and termly review meetings for children with a statement of special needs and their views of our provision sought. Children are also asked for their views at this meeting either by attending in person or completing review activities of their progress with a Teaching Assistant to then be brought to the meeting.

3.2 Removing Barriers

Over the last three years the school has been made more accessible to children with some physical disabilities with the alterations to the building made to accommodate children. This has included handrails, new exit doors and a new disabled toilet. This was funded by the Local Authority. As children move through school, risk assessments are updated every year and the Headteacher discusses any alterations needed with the Local Authority's Buildings Manager.

New building work completed at the school – for example new doors and toilets – is compliant with the latest D.D.A. regulations.

3.3 Disability in the Curriculum, including teaching and learning.

In line with the inclusive ethos of the school, positive images are given of people with disabilities in the curriculum. The children are taught that all forms of discrimination are wrong. Assembly stories often reinforce this positive message with the achievements of people with disabilities shown.

The achievement of all children, including those with exceptional special needs, is celebrated throughout school with the emphasis always on what children can do.

3.4 Eliminating harassment and bullying

The school has adopted the model Anti bullying policy recommended by the Local Authority. This makes it clear that bullying of any child on any grounds is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with our policy. This includes discrimination, bullying and harassment of disabled children and adults.

3.5 Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are made in school by staff in many different ways to enable children with disabilities to participate fully in school life and to access the curriculum as much as they are able. For example, children who have difficulty seeing the whiteboard or hearing the teacher may be moved to the front. Children on the Autism spectrum who may find some activities too noisy may have withdrawal time in a separate area with a teaching assistant to work on an individual programme at some times.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants working with children with disabilities constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the adjustments and make changes as necessary. They are judged by the extent to which they enable the child to participate in class and to meet their needs.

As stated earlier the building is all on one level to maximise its accessibility. A disabled parking space is also provided close to the main entrance which could be used by a disabled person coming into school while it is being hired.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School recognises the importance of assessing the impact of current policies and practices on disability equality, in order to ensure that they do not have adverse impact on its disabled stakeholders and to inform future planning.

Brinsworth Whitehill therefore regularly monitors the impact of the school's policies. This is captured by means of the school's equalities monitoring process which involves:

- Consultation with disabled stakeholders, in order that areas for change can be identified
- Analysis of information from data collection relating to disability

This Disability Equality Scheme is a working document and therefore one which will be subject to review and alteration in response to the school's impact assessments. It will therefore be key to the review and development of all school policies and practices in order to achieve the school's vision of a welcoming and diverse community.

The school will use the information gathered to review the scheme each year. The scheme will be revised every three years. The review and revision of the scheme will be carried out by the Headteacher and Governors.