



Growth through Understanding

Thomas Bewick School Accessibility Policy and Plan 2014-2017

This Accessibility Plan is drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting on progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period.

Purpose

Thomas Bewick School is committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

It is our intention to remove, as far as possible, those barriers which make it hard for a person who has difficulties with:

- Mobility
- Physical co-ordination
- Manual dexterity
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to learn, concentrate or understand
- Perceiving risk or physical danger

Our School Context

All pupils at Thomas Bewick have autism which is a life long disability: some pupils have more severe autism than others and have very limited or no verbal language. We have an increasing number of pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils attend our school from all areas of the city of Newcastle. Our staff are predominantly female. There is a wide spread of ages. A small number of staff are of nationalities other than British.

The main school is a PFI build which was opened in 2008. The site is managed by Roberstons Facilities Management (RFM) and all proposed changes, alterations maintenance are managed by RFM in consultation with the school, LA and Aura.

The Nursery unit is situated within Cruddas Park Early Years Centre and the Post-16 unit is situated within Studio West. Both units will comply with Thomas Bewick Accessibility Plan and will be reviewed as part of the main school. These units are not covered by the PFI and RFM management.

We have excellent access to our main building Reception. There is easy vehicular and pedestrian access to the site with clearly defined pathways and dropped kerbs at appropriate points. We have automatic front doors and a large circulation space in Reception. We have a meeting room and toilets within easy reach of Reception and we can easily accommodate wheelchairs and visitors with reduced mobility. There is a lift at Reception to ensure ease of access to the first floor. School acknowledges that fuller inclusion to the school for new staff or pupils with mobility issues would need to be planned for and resourced appropriately.

Information about the Accessibility Plan will be included in the school prospectus.

The Plan will be published on the school's website.

The School's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.

Objectives

The Accessibility Plan will contain relevant actions to:

1. Improve access to the physical environment of the school, providing additional specialist facilities as necessary. This covers reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
2. Differentiated access to the curriculum to meet individual pupil needs. Expanding and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum as necessary – this covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of aids and equipment which may assist in accessing the curriculum.
3. Improve and make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Information should be made available in various preferred formats, within a reasonable time frame (also see Communications Policy).

Process

Access audit and review of current activities → devise actions → set goals and targets → consult on plan → implementation → evaluate the plan.

The above process will be the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team. An initial accessibility plan is included at Appendix 1 and this will be reviewed at the end of the first process cycle. A draft accessibility audit is included at Appendix 2.

The Accessibility Plan will be incorporated into the School Development Plan.

Summary of Actions

To accomplish the planned developments we will:

- Continually review the environment of the school, the way we plan, prepare and deliver the curriculum so that we can improve access for all.
- Work to provide an atmosphere where all pupils feel safe and valued.
- Continually review our communication and information provision to pupils, parents, staff and visitors.

- Trigger an investigation of access within our planning cycle so that it is an explicit part of our School Development Plan.

Associated Policies

- Equalities Policy
- SEN Policy
- Medications Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Monitoring and Review

The Plan will be monitored through the Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body.

The Plan will be updated annually and the Policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly cycle.

Revision Record of Published Versions			
Author	Creation Date	Version	Status
J McCreery	November 2014	1.0	Approved by Governors 05/02/15
Amended by	Revision Date		

Accessibility Plan September 2014

Appendix 1

Targets	Strategies	Outcomes	Responsibility	Time Frame	Goals
Make staff aware of the need to consider accessibility when new developments are made and when staff or students are admitted	Inform at staff briefing/meeting	All staff understand the need	HT	Frequent and regular activity	Through staff briefing
Availability of information in alternative formats when specifically requested including: prospectus, newsletters etc	School will make itself aware of the services available for converting information into alternative formats	School will be able to provide information in different formats when requested for individual purposes	Office/SBM/SLT	By September 2015	Delivery of information to stakeholders improved including: parents, local community
Audit of all practices and policies to establish appropriateness to meet the needs of all disabilities depending on students/staff in school	Undertaken when policies and practices are reviewed.	Policies and practices reflect the spirit of the legislation	SLT and specified staff members	By July 2015	All policies reviewed
Ensure décor and signage considered across all sites to ensure appropriateness for all users	SLT seek advice where felt appropriate	All areas of school are made more accessible especially for visually impaired and comprehension difficulties		By July 2015	Increase access
Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum	Undertake audit of staff training requirements	All teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of individual pupil's needs to accessing the curriculum	SLT	By July 2015	Increase in access to the curriculum
Training for Awareness Raising of Disability issues	Provide training for governors, staff and parents Discuss perception of issues with staff to determine current status of school	Whole school community aware of issues relating to Access	SLT	By July 2015	School community will benefit by a more inclusive school and social environment

Areas for Review	Activity	Action
Signage	Appropriate signs for comprehension impaired Visually impaired – would be improved by not using white backgrounds on labels	
Door Access	Portable ramps for areas with restricted access Maglock system on doors not suitable for wheelchair users without support	Will review if wheelchair users regularly access school site Not possible to change
External Access to sites	Ease of access into main school Ease of access into Post-16 Ease of access into Nursery Units	
Transition	Physical transition indicators between main areas of school Same colour flooring at transitions could be an issue for visually impaired pupils	
Uneven areas in playgrounds	Indicators	
Playground equipment	Specifically purchased to meet the needs of current school population	
Enhanced reception for hearing impaired	Hearing loop added to main reception if possible	To review
Door handles	Ease of use for physical impairment Not easily usable by wheelchair users	No action to be taken as usage is aimed at current school population
Lifts	Lift at reception not a good size for accommodating larger wheelchairs. On first floor not a lot of size to manoeuvre wheelchair out of lift and position properly to access top corridor.	No action
Automatic door access at main reception	Use by physically impaired users	
Lighting	All areas suitable lighting for use	
Visitor access	Ease of use	
Furniture	No rise and fall specialist furniture –	current school population not req'd