



Accessibility Plan

Reviewed by Governors Social Care Committee on 18th October 2016

1. **Introduction**

Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled students, under Part 4 of the DDA.

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

Valence School caters wholly for students who have disabilities and complex medical needs and it ensures that every child admitted to the school under its admission arrangements is provided with the individual support and access to education that enable their special educational needs to be met. The School ensures that all students have equal access to learning and other opportunities and to the facilities and provisions made within the School

2. **School's Mission Statement and Aims**

MISSION STATEMENT

Student's views and rights are central to the ethos of Valence School.

Its mission is to provide a learning community where there is quality education, care, access and therapy in order to promote each student's intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Our work is about enabling children and young people who have special physical, medical and sensory needs to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding together with the confidence, self-esteem and self-dependence necessary for them to participate in and contribute to society in the way each chooses.

The School's aims are to:

1. Meet the individual needs of each student as documented in their individual Statements of Special Educational Needs.
2. Maintain and develop in students lively enquiring minds; to promote the ability to question and argue rationally; to encourage students to apply themselves to a range of tasks and skills.
- 3 Provide a multidisciplinary approach to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets individual needs with full access to accreditation.
- 4 Raise students' self-esteem and self-confidence and create in them a sense of personal excellence enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to life in a fast-changing world.
- 5 Help students to develop self-knowledge, spiritual and moral awareness and understanding and respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs.
- 6 Help students to understand the multicultural world in which they live as citizens and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations and the rights and responsibilities of living in today's Britain.

In order to achieve these aims, the School will work to provide

- a stable environment where each student is accepted as an individual with rights and responsibilities;
- a challenging environment in which the curriculum presents each student with work, activities and opportunities which stretch and challenge their abilities;
- an enabling environment in which each student can attain the highest level of self-dependence skills and overcome the barriers they have to learning and living;

- a caring environment in which each student can develop their confidence and self-esteem and in which their physical and other needs are met with dignity and sensitivity;
- a welcoming environment where students, parents and other people feel comfortable and valued;
- a pleasant environment in which each student has privacy and personal possessions and access to fulfilling social and leisure facilities and activities;
- an open environment where individuals are encouraged to communicate their thoughts, feelings and opinions;
- a safe environment where students are enabled to take appropriate risks in order to develop their skills and with opportunities to test authority and have appropriate boundaries and controls on their behaviour;
- an outward-looking environment where students can engage in educational and social activities with other schools, local communities and in wider society;
- a dynamic environment where students are educated, cared for and supported by a well trained staff team who are committed to professional development;

The School's mission and aims seek to ensure that every student receives their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and other areas of learning, that individual needs are fully met and that there is no discrimination against any individual student or group of students who have specific needs.

3. Context for developing priorities for improving accessibility for students

The Curriculum

The curriculum is continually developed to ensure that courses are relevant to all students. In particular subject staff have engaged in reviews of accreditation routes

to ensure maximum access to accreditation for every student. This is an on-going process driven in part by continual changes in examination requirements and assessment processes. Some disadvantage becomes in-built to accreditation for students who, for example, have limited fine motor control or whose physical disabilities cause great tiredness.

The School has invested heavily to enable curriculum access for every student to be as personalised as possible. Developments in technology are constantly reviewed by the Communication and Curriculum Access staff and individual packages are developed for students who have specific access needs such as those with visual impairments in addition to their physical disabilities.

The Staffing changes that have been implemented since 2014 have provided the context for improving teaching, social and health care. Middle management has been strengthened with the appointment of Home-living Area Managers and Assistant Managers, together with Learning and Support Coordinators who manage student support staff during the school day. Greater differentiation of classroom based posts has been implemented with the appointment of subject and class-based teaching assistants. All of these developments, taken together with the School's keyworking system ensure a personalised approach to meeting the needs of the children and young people.

Buildings and Facilities

During the past few years the School has developed plans to improve buildings and facilities to improve access for students, both to learning and to social, leisure and residential facilities. Major developments to replace all residential accommodation have been undertaken with six new bungalows being built and the complete refurbishment of another block. All residential accommodation is at ground floor level. The residential accommodation is also enhanced by having environmental controls and adjustable height kitchens fitted enabling students to control as much of their lives as possible and to participate in activities of daily living.

Teaching accommodation has been similarly improved with a new classroom block built and the refurbishment of other teaching spaces. New Design Technology and Science facilities have been provided and new and extended sports and PE facilities provided. Extensions have been made to two primary classrooms to ensure that there is sufficient space for students to move around freely and to be able to access all learning opportunities. All classrooms are now large and spacious and fully accessible.

Health care facilities have been improved and accessible consulting and sickbay provisions has been made, together with additional spaces for therapy within the classroom area and a room specifically to support communication and speech therapy work with students.

Other issues

The school is committed to make adjustments in respect of access ramps, contrasting coloured surfaces for those students who have visual impairments and has ensured that any planned maintenance recognises and incorporates this in the plans.

Students who use communication aids and who cannot access facilities directly without the use of environmental controls are benefiting from being able to operate new lifts which has been suitably adapted. Other students who cannot operate it have not yet been provided with access.

Equipment for students who have communication difficulties is assessed on an individual basis and the School provides both hi-tech and lo-tech solutions to enable students to communicate effectively and where possible independently.

Occupational Therapy staff assess students' needs in relation to activities for daily living and make recommendations for equipment that will maximise opportunities for access and independence.

Physiotherapy staff assess students' mobility needs and make recommendations for suitable wheelchairs, supporting students and families to secure these through private and charitable routes if NHS supplied wheelchairs are restricting a student's independence.

Priorities for the Curriculum

1. The continued review of courses and accreditation routes to maximise access for all students to learning and accreditation
2. The development of Target Setting and data analysis to make further improvements to standards of achievement for students. This work is carried out in conjunction with other Kent special school as part of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT)

3. The development of ICT solutions for individual students and the development of a whole school network and log on facilities for students.
4. The further development of opportunities in physical education and sport using the School's Sports College status to ensure opportunities for students irrespective of ability or disability.
5. The provision of a fitness centre with new equipment to widen access to a larger number of students to fitness programmes.

Priorities for Buildings and Facilities

1. Continued maintenance and refurbishment programme which incorporates the requirements of the DDA.
2. Provision of bathing facilities to supplement showers in order to meet the needs of, in particular, students who have to bathe for medical reasons and those who do not like showering.
3. Provision of a sensory learning facility to widen provision for students who would benefit from additional sensory learning opportunities.

Other building and facility developments (new reception area and new community reception for using sports facilities) will be developed with full DDA requirements met.

Other priorities

1. The further development of individual access equipment such as that required for eating and drinking.
2. Extend environmental access controls to all students who require them.

The building developments set out above are incorporated into the 2016-17 School Plan.