



# **Accessibility Policy and Plan 2024 – 2026**

**Review Committee**

Policy and Resources

**Date Adopted**

10 October 2024

**Date of next review**

10 October 2026

**Signed (Chair of Governors)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Hunter', is written below the text 'Signed (Chair of Governors)'. The signature is cursive and fluid.

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for an Accessibility Plan at Mowbray Primary School. A schedule for the review of this, and all other, policy documents is set out in the school's policy review cycle this and will now be reviewed annually.

This Plan reflects the requirement for an Access Plan under current equalities legislation. The duty under the Equality Act 2010 is that schools collect and publish equality information, and publish equalities objectives. This duty has existed since April 2012. However, guidance makes it very clear that schools continue to have a duty to produce an Accessibility Plan which must be implemented. Schools' plans should reflect their intention to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided, and
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

## **Access Plan for Mowbray Primary School from September 2024 - 2026**

### **Introduction**

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful.

Schools and Local Authorities have to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. Our school's accessibility plans are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided, and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils

We recognise the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and will regularly review them. Our school's previous access plans were incorporated into a Single Equalities Scheme and build on those foundations. This accessibility plan includes data and consultation from those schemes where they continue to be relevant.

### **Notes**

The definition of disability under the law is a wide one. A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has an adverse, substantial and long term effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The definition includes people with a Hearing or Visual Impairment, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, mental health issues and incontinence. People with ADHD, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome and Hydrocephalus are included. Medical conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, severe Asthma, Diabetes, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, Epilepsy, Sickle Cell Anaemia and HIV are deemed disabilities. Facial disfigurement, severe Dyslexia, gross obesity and diagnosed eating disorders are all included.

If a person has been disabled in the past (for example, cancer recoverers and people with a history of mental illness) they are still covered by the legislation for the rest of their life. It is likely that every school has disabled pupils, staff members and service users.

### **Vision and values**

Our School fully supports the vision of Northumberland Children's Services, namely:

- We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and to have high aspirations for their future.

Our school endorses the Northumberland's Inclusion definition that says:

Northumberland County Council is committed to improving access for all disabled pupils and prospective pupils. We believe that all disabled pupils have a right not to be discriminated against in the provision of education and associated services in schools, and in respect of admissions and exclusions. Wherever possible, disabled pupils should have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers in their access to education. The child/young person is at the heart of everything we do. For schools we will promote the strategy to improve access through our overall inclusion programme and through specific guidance and training for headteachers and senior leaders, and for governors.

We will promote the principle that inclusive schools provide for all pupils, through increasing access and removing barriers to learning.

### **Our School Vision**

- To harness children's natural curiosity by offering a diverse range of new experiences
- To raise children's aspirations while developing life skills and independence
- To develop resilience by encouraging risk and perseverance
- To raise self-esteem, self-belief and self-awareness through nurture

Our school provides a happy, secure, forward thinking and enthusiastic environment where everyone flourishes. We voice our views openly and honestly because we know our beliefs and ideas will always be valued. Ongoing reflection and a continual pursuit of excellence underpin our continual improvements and the high expectations that impact on all areas of our work. Learners are considerate and cooperative and take great pride in the success of their learning environment. Both adults and children are supported by clear and consistent systems and structures. Our organised and purposeful ethos encourages the highest degree of effort in all that we do.

We incorporate a range of both established and proactive teaching and learning strategies that meet the needs of our pupils. We are committed to the highest standards in all areas of the curriculum and recognise the importance of attainment in Literacy, Numeracy and the use of ICT to support lifelong learning. Our curriculum offers challenge through fun, relevant learning activities, which cater for a variety of learning styles and the range of needs and abilities within each class. Our staff and children are justifiably proud of the approachable, enthusiastic and fair relationships they foster within school. Children have a high sense of self-worth.

As a school we encourage positive change and are prepared to take risks within a safe environment. We know that at times we all need to go beyond the boundaries of our "comfort zone" but high quality training and our willingness to share best practice support our development. Active liaison and the commitment to relevant partnerships within and outside our learning environment enhance our work still further.

Lines of communication that operate within and extend from school are clear and open. Consultation with all major stakeholders is an integral feature of key developments. Critical thinking, enquiry and evaluative thought are actively encouraged and the democratic process is evident in systems and structures throughout school. Our school is proactive, dynamic, supportive and hard working. It provides enrichment and fulfilment for all.

#### **The nature of Mowbray Primary School's population:**

- We have around 230 mainstream pupils from Nursery to Year 6
- 43 full and part time staff members.

#### **The School Environment**

The school is an older ex-middle school building predominantly on one floor but with some areas of two storey accommodation.

Many pupils with quite complex medical needs are attending mainstream settings now and staff will receive training from Health professionals and volunteering to carry out procedures as and when this is required. Since 2023, we have housed a Specialist Support Base within the school building and have adapted the use of four classrooms and a section of the outdoor area for the Base's use. The Base admits pupils via the SEND pathway for Northumberland County Council. All of the pupils within the base have an EHCP and significant needs; many of which would be classified as a disability

We have children with disabilities and have developed the school building accordingly

- All doors are painted in a darker colour (blue, green or grey) to ensure visually impaired children can see the openings.
- High needs areas such as the Specialist Base are decorated with low sensory input in mind
- We offer all policies and documentation in bigger text to parents who are visually impaired should they require it.
- Two allocated parking spaces for the parents of disabled pupils are provided, as is ensuring that the spaces are not used inappropriately, or blocked by other vehicles. The access into school from the parking space is level with no obstacles.
- Dropped kerbs are installed where necessary.
- School operates Home to School transport for children within the Specialist Base to support attendance and accessibility of the provision
- Accessible toilet and changing facilities have been added to support children with intimate care needs
- Ramps have been installed to support level access to outdoor play areas
- Level access to Forest School Areas has been added to avoid access over uneven ground
- Schools have a responsibility to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils and this can include specialist equipment. We provide a range of learning support material for children to access the curriculum where necessary such as pencil grips, scissors etc. We provide specialised cutlery for children to use at lunch time if required.
- School has built two sensory rooms to support children with a range of different needs and to support pupils who are hyper and hypo stimulated

#### **Awareness of staff**

All staff are aware of the needs of individual children and have regular training to support the needs of children in school, e.g. physiotherapist training for disabled pupils. Work with

healthcare workers to support toilet training etc. New staff will have an induction meeting about children's needs.

All children in school are included, disabled children are encouraged to take a full and active part in school life, e.g. sports day, performing in concerts, educational visits etc. Support is given to children who can not attend school for medical reasons e.g. home tuition. Afterschool clubs are available for all children.

We have policies in place and a named person to administer medicines and care. We have a strong Anti-Bullying Policy to ensure all children feel safe and included. All children with Special Needs or a disability will be offered a broad and balanced curriculum that is tailored to meet their needs e.g. speech therapy, PSHE, visual timetables, social stories etc. An adapted timetable and curriculum is offered to children within the Specialist Support Base and some children within mainstream in order to meet their highly specific needs. This adapted curriculum is still in line with the school vision and vision drivers.

### **Access to the curriculum**

All areas of the curriculum are available to pupils regardless of their disability. In some cases an adapted curriculum based around the same vision and drivers is offered. If an activity cannot be made accessible or would be inappropriate then an alternative activity will be made available. Handwriting practice might be inappropriate for a disabled pupil but practising keyboard skills would be a suitable and valuable alternative. Planning to improve access to the curriculum will include identifying reasonable adjustments to offer an equality of opportunity.

Depending on the impairments of disabled pupils, planning specific staff training improves access to the curriculum. Training is available from a number of sources.

Purchasing specialist equipment will increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. Where necessary based on the individual needs of pupils we will purchase any specialist equipment in order for all children to access the curriculum. Reviews of the participation of disabled pupils during lesson observations will inform future developments in inclusion.

Planning to use tools such as the Index for Inclusion can help a school improve access and raise awareness.

Access to school visits can be problematic for some disabled pupils. Reviews and investigating more accessible venues and transport providers will be valuable, as will better forward planning and a creative approach to staffing.

### **Access to written information**

- We provide additional support for learners with reading difficulties.
- Raising awareness of font size and page layouts will support pupils with visual impairments.
- Auditing the school library to ensure the availability of large font and easy read texts will improve access.
- Auditing signage around the school to ensure that is accessible to all is frequent.

Priority	Lead Person	Strategy / Action	Resources	Time	Success Criteria
Availability of written materials in alternative formats	Business Manager, Headteacher	Staff made aware of services available through LA. Others aware of facilities through newsletters and signs etc. Improve availability of written information to parents e.g. website, collection point in office areas.	Contact details Cost of translation / adaptation Website redesign	In place and ongoing	Information to disabled parents / pupils as appropriate. Written information available in alternative formats Information taken or downloaded by parents
Training for teachers on inclusivity within the curriculum and effective communication with parents	Headteacher SENDCO Deputy Headteacher	Staff training and meetings with parents arranged	Training time TA timetables	In place and ongoing	Increased access to the curriculum Parents informed of how needs of pupils are being met Data reflects progress being made
Training for staff on increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, SENDCO	Staff needs audit Staff training on ASD and as required through audits	Training time	Ongoing and reviewed regularly as needs arise	Increase access to curriculum SEND standards increase Staff more confident
Appropriate use of specialist equipment in order to meet specific learning needs	Headteacher, Business Manager, SENDCO	Word processors or similar for pupils with reading difficulties Laptops in use / ipads. Sloping boards and adjustable seats for pupils with mobility problems or fatigue. Coloured overlays for pupils with visual difficulties. Sensory Support activities.	Specialist equipment as listed as and when required Staff training time	Ongoing and reviewed as necessary	Increased access to the curriculum

Appropriate use of colour schemes for internal and external decoration	SENDCO, School Business Manager	Specially shaped pencils or pens for pupils with grip or motor difficulties. Staff trained as appropriate	Redecoration costs placed into maintenance budgets Displays to reflect this as renewed	Renewed as necessary	Physical accessibility of school increased. Areas maintained on a regular basis
Broadening of the mainstream curriculum offer in line with Specialist Support Base offer	Deputy Headteacher, SSB Teacher and EYFS Team	Cherry Garden framework embedded into SSB and use to structure learning pathways in EYFS with small steps of learning for all pupils not just those with disabilities.	Cost of cover to release staff to write plans, visit alternative provisions and observe good practice	Ongoing – drafted in SSB and EYFS by Christmas 2024 and in full use by Summer 2025	New curriculum plans and pathways created with staff confident in their use
Improve signage to access routes into and around school	Business Manager, Headteacher	Signage directing people to main office improved Offices and key areas signposted and in braille	Costs of signage	By Summer 2025	Accessibility and clear signposting improved

## Good Print Guidelines.

- **Font size** Most fully sighted people can read 12 point font easily. Visually impaired people will need different sizes depending on their level and type of vision. It is not correct to assume that the larger the font the better – this is fine for some, but others, for example those with a small field of vision, might prefer a smaller font. If you are printing for individuals, it is best to ask them their preferred font size. Font size 14 is a good size to use to cover as many people as possible.
- **Font type** Always use a plain, sans serif font such as Arial, Univers, Tahoma or Verdana or Comic Sans. Letters should be evenly spaced.
- **Font style** Never print anything using all capital letters. A mixture of upper- and lower-case letters, like on this page, is easier for everyone to read. Use bold weight for emphasis; avoid using italics as much as possible. Letters and words should be spaced conventionally. Leave extra spaces between lines of text and between paragraphs for greater clarity.
- **Alignment** Do not use right-justified text, as this can cause irregular spacing. Use left or central alignment only.
- **Colour** Use dark ink on light paper – black on pale yellow is particularly good for people who are troubled by glare. Alternatively, use light coloured text on a dark background – yellow on black or dark blue is best. Never use dark ink on dark paper or light ink on light paper.
- **Enlarging** It is possible to enlarge print using a photocopier, but this can result in a grainy image and oversized paper. Always print the correct font size directly from a laser or ink jet printer where possible.
- **Paper** Choose paper with a matt finish where possible. Glossy paper produces glare that may cause reading difficulties. Thin paper should be avoided as print can show through from the other side.
- **Images** Never print text over patterns, photographs or illustrations. Try to position any images so that they do not confuse the flow of the text.
- **Individual needs** Different people will have different needs – visually impaired people will have different levels and types of vision. Dyslexic people may also have different needs. If you are producing documents for individuals, it is usually best to ask what their preferred format is. After all, with modern word processing packages, it is easy to manipulate text and give everyone exactly what they want.