



# **Daubeney Middle School**

## **Accessibility Plan 2009-2012**

This plan takes into account the Government's policy of improving access to education and educational achievement for disabled pupils and Bedford Borough's School Accessibility Strategy.

## **Policy Statement**

At Daubeney Middle School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all those receiving services from the school not only our pupils and staff. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life.

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended part 4 of the Disability Act (1995) by placing new duties on LAs and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LAs to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusions, education and associated services.

There are three main duties:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably
- to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- to prepare accessibility strategies (LAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (the 'planning' duty).

We recognise that these duties are 'anticipatory' – i.e. that schools need to consider the requirements of current and future pupils. This means that we are expected to make reasonable enquiries to find out whether children currently on roll, as well as those seeking admission, have a disability.

The duty not to discriminate covers all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and school trips. The duty to make reasonable adjustments refers to the full range of policies, procedures and practices of the school.

### **Definition of disability**

Pupils falling within the definition of disability will have a range of needs, including mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, AIDS, asthma and progressive/degenerative conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

The Disability Impairment Act (DDA) states that ' a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

The Education Act (1996) states that 'children have a special education need if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special education provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LA
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the above definitions or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.

Pupils with a disability must not automatically be considered to have a special educational need.

We recognise the need for Daubeney Middle School to consider Government policy and the Borough accessibility strategy, and to draw up an accessibility plan to cover the three year period 2009-2012.

In drawing up this plan we have considered the present situation and future needs under the following headings:

- physical environment of the school
- the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- the delivery of information to pupils and parents.

The main barriers to provision are:

#### 1. Physical environment

1a Classrooms: Seating and class noise are considered and most classrooms have carpets. However, not all classrooms are organised in a suitable way for disabled pupils.

Action – contact Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties Service for advice.

Colour schemes may not be appropriate for pupils with visual impairment.

Action – contact Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties Service for advice.

1b Furniture/equipment: Desks/tables would need to be adapted for wheelchair users as would access to exits.

Action – This would have to be considered if a pupil joined the school with specific difficulties.

1c Toilet facilities: Pupil and staff toilets are all accessible on the ground floor. Boys' changing rooms were very recently refurbished and a new single disabled toilet has now been provided.

Action – Existing disabled toilet in admin block should be considered for refurbishment.

1d Emergency systems: Currently upgrading alarm system – no visual system only auditory.

Action – Contact Mouchel to discuss specification for new alarm system.

1e Art room: Only room not on ground level. The previous Bedfordshire County Council had considered a lift for access but this proved impossible to site.

Action – Approach Bedford Borough Council to discuss alternative means of access i.e. chair lift.

## 2. School Curriculum

2a Staff have not received training on SENDA, DDA and ‘How to Include disabled people in Education’.

Action – Source relevant personnel to deliver inset training.

2b Clara read is used to help some students access the curriculum. Some interactive whiteboard screens are moveable.

Action – Seek advice from Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties Service.

## 3. Delivery of Information

3a Access requirements of parents not specifically recorded.

Action – To proactively seek and record information regarding access requirements of disabled parents.

3b Signage could be an issue for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism and epilepsy.

Action – Contact Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties Services regarding pictograms for classrooms.

3c Information to parents only provided in written word.

Action – Be aware of need to present information i.e. prospectus, newsletters, contact form, in different ways if necessary. Contact Sensory Impairment and Communication Difficulties Service for advice.