

Accessibility Policy

The SEN and Disability Act (2001) amended part 4 of the Disability Act (1995) by placing new duties on LEAs and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From September 2002, it has been unlawful for schools and LEAs 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 favorably
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To prepare accessibility strategies (LEAs) and accessibility plans (schools) for increasing over time the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils (the 'planning duty')

We recognize that these duties are 'anticipatory' - i.e. that schools need to consider the requirements of current and future disabled 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, visitors. 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.

(Tameside Accessibility Strategy 2003-2006)

The Disability Discriminatory 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 affect 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 LEA
- 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.

At Artisans we also note that gifted children have their own set of special needs.

We recognize the need for Artisans Kindergarten to consider government policy and the LEA accessibility strategy and to draw up an accessibility plan.

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

- Physical environment of the Kindergarten
- The extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the kindergarten curriculum
- The delivery of information to pupils, parents and visitors

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Artisans Kindergarten has disabled access into all areas and a purpose built toilet for the disabled.

1 Access to rooms

- All rooms are on ground level with wide corridors and double doors internally.
- We have a ramp for access to the outside space from the main hall.

2 School décor

- All rooms have good natural light as well as appropriate artificial lighting.
- We are prepared to put blinds, in addition to the curtains, in the main hall, if necessary, and with the agreement of the Landlord, to help to make the kindergarten suitable for VI and HI pupils.

- We have included many soft furnishing and other sound absorbing materials.

3 Layout of classroom, appropriate furniture

- Furniture is appropriately scaled for the children. The layout of the room will be variable but account will be taken of the needs of all individuals using the space at any time.
- In addition we have used and will continue to use furniture specific to the needs of individual children in attendance.

4 Toilet facilities

- There is a purpose built facility for those with disabilities accessible from external as well as internal spaces.

5. Outside Space

- The outdoor space is designed to maintain good vision lines.
- All equipment excluding the pond is moveable to allow variations in layout to accommodate different needs.
- Heights and access to equipment is all selected with the children in mind to allow them to access the equipment independently as much as possible.
- We have a folding ramp for the external door to allow level access direct from the main hall to the garden area.

6. Car parking for the disabled

There is adequate parking in close proximity to the entrances.

7 Signs around school and school pathways

- Some clear, accessible signs, but extra may signage needed by particular individuals at a later date.
- We have contacted local councilors regarding a designated footpath through the carpark but have not received any favourable response to date.

School Curriculum

- Accessible displays – displays as far as possible bearing in mind other users are at an appropriate for height for children.
- Accessible storage both for the children to access equipment and for staff to use and store.
- Work planned for individual children with regular assessments.
- We have a full SEN policy.
- Work planned well enough in advance to cater for sensory impaired pupils.

Action

- Staff training on identifying barriers to access as the needs arise.

Delivery of Information

- We are aware of the potential need to present information (e.g. prospectus/newsletters/contact form) in different ways if necessary.

© Artisans Kindergarten 2009

© Reviewed September 2011
Designated teacher Donna Brice