



Cowbit St Mary's Church of England School

Accessibility Plan

Policy approved by Governors 18.05.21

Our Vision

We are a small, inclusive Church of England Primary School that welcomes everyone and encourages all voices to be heard. Through challenge and support, we strive towards each person becoming the best person God intended them to be, happily flourishing as human beings. We empower our whole school community to be hopeful about the future and to be drivers of positive change.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to show how Cowbit St Mary's CofE School intends, over time, to increase the accessibility of our schools for disabled pupils and stakeholders.

Legal Background

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It consolidated this legislation and made it unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their disability (amongst other protected characteristics).

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. The definition of what constitutes discrimination is more complex. Provision for disabled pupils is closely connected with the regime for children with special educational needs.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Schools' duties around accessibility for disabled pupils

Schools need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the Disability Discrimination Act and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

This plan sets out the proposals of Cowbit St Mary's CofE Schools Governing Body, to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum, which includes teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school, such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits.
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services, which includes improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information, which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled. E.g. handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about school events. The information should take account of the pupils' disabilities and the preferred format of pupils and parents and be made available within a reasonable timeframe.

We will ensure that our Accessibility Plan is resourced, implemented and reviewed and revised as necessary, but at least every three years.

Working in collaboration with our school communities

At Cowbit St Mary's CofE School we aim to treat all stakeholders, including pupils, prospective pupils, staff, governors and other members of the school community favourably and, wherever possible, takes reasonable steps to avoid placing anyone at a substantial disadvantage. At Cowbit St Mary's CofE School we aim to work closely with disabled pupils, their families and any relevant outside agencies in order to remove or minimise any potential barriers to learning, which puts them at a disadvantage, but allows them to learn, achieve and participate fully in school life. Cowbit St Mary's CofE School is active in promoting positive attitudes to any disabled people in our schools and their communities, and in planning to increase access to education for all disabled pupils.

As part of each school's continued communication with pupils, parents, carers and other stakeholders, our Academy Trust will continually look at ways to improve accessibility through data collection, questionnaires and parental discussions.

The Current range of disabilities within Cowbit St Mary's CofE School

Cowbit St Mary's CofE School is fully inclusive and always has a population of pupils with a range of Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities. It is not unusual for our schools to be meeting the following needs:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Attachment Disorder
- Dyslexia
- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Global Developmental Delay
- Various medical conditions including Diabetes, Epilepsy, Asthma
- A range of learning difficulties

Increasing access for disabled pupils

Through self-review and Continuous Professional Development (CPD), we aim to enhance staff knowledge, skills and understanding to promote excellent teaching and learning for all children. As such we access training provided by professionals from Outside Agencies to ensure that our ability to meet the needs of our diverse communities is kept up to date. All our schools have very close relationships with Outside Agencies and will actively seek advice from them to ensure that we can meet every pupil's needs through reasonable adjustments and specialised resources. We aim to meet every child's needs within mixed ability, inclusive classes.

It is a core value at Cowbit St Mary's CofE School that all children are enabled to participate fully in the broader life of the school. Consequently, all children attend age relevant after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and educational visits.

Contextual Information

At Cowbit St Mary's CofE School, the school site is accessible for anyone who has a disability however access to certain areas of the building (outside and inside) are accessed by steps. Although the school does not have its own car park, there is parking immediately outside the school gate. We also have a disabled toilet with a hoist which can be accessed by stakeholders.

Cowbit St Mary's CofE School is an actively inclusive school and will always make reasonable adjustments for any visitors who may have a disability for which we were unaware.

