



SHAPWICK SCHOOL

DISABILITY & DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Directors have three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

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

This plan sets out the proposals of the Directors of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- ❑ increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- ❑ improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- ❑ improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

We are a specialist school dealing with dyslexic boys and girls some of whom have additional needs for language and occupational therapy. The criteria for admission are:

A diagnosis of dyslexia by a Chartered Educational Psychologist

An assessment by a Chartered Educational Psychologist of at least average potential
Previous school report documenting that there are no primary social, behavioural or emotional problems

Each candidate is then assessed in school with a view to assessing the extent to which we can meet his needs. In the past we have had a small number of approaches from parents of disabled pupils and have approached each case on its individual merits.

We, as a school, are reasonably clear of the extent to which we can accommodate disabled pupils from our previous experience of both physically and visually disabled pupils. The outcome for this small group of pupils was very favourable in that they were able to participate fully in school life without competing against non-dyslexics, we were able to make necessary adjustments in our teaching and boarding to ensure that they were not disadvantaged and they achieved very satisfactory examination results.

The main issues then are:

Access to the curriculum

Access to boarding areas

Access to school trips and transport between the sites

Access to the curriculum:

Shapwick Prep site is flat and all areas are accessible for wheelchairs. Some classrooms will require wheelchair ramps for access and desks of an appropriate height. We are already able to present material to an audience that is unable to write with any degree of automaticity and can differentiate work accordingly. Shapwick is more problematic, some classroom entrances may be accessible by ramps as may some of the social areas. Shapwick Manor is a listed building and a wheelchair user would have difficulty accessing all areas. However by entering through the front door, the dining room and library are available. Art is upstairs at Church Farm and is accessed by an outside staircase. Stairlifts inside Church Farm would allow access to Art and French teaching areas if the doorways were wide enough. Ramps would have to be employed widely as there are steps to every area. Safety rails would be necessary in several areas and door opening/closing would need altering to suit a handicapped user.

Access to boarding areas:

Shapwick Prep has one boarding house. Chapel Hill Farm has downstairs boarding and social accommodation together with downstairs washing, showering and toilet facilities for boys. A disabled facility will need to be created for a wheelchair user. Fireproofing has unfortunately made these doors very heavy and our younger children have difficulty with them. It would be a great difficulty to accommodate female wheelchair users.

Shapwick is more problematic because of the ages of the buildings involved. Downstairs boarding for boys is available at The Lakes but that involves transport which may itself be a difficulty. Toilet facilities are also accessible downstairs but safety rails and ramps would need fitting if doorways were wide enough. Greystone has accommodation, toilet facilities and common rooms accessible for girls with no major alterations needed.

Access to school trips and transport between the sites;

The school uses a variety of transport dependant on the activity. School minibuses at present cannot be accessed by wheelchair users and neither can the coaches we hire from local firms. We would therefore have to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of buying a specially adapted minibus for wheelchair users. However that would not solve the problem of using hired coaches.

We therefore plan to examine these difficulties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. We have never rejected a dyslexic pupil because they were disabled. The very small number of approaches we have had have all found us very accommodating and helpful in discussing how we can best meet an individual's needs.

1 Starting points

1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values

- Shapwick School has high ambitions for its pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life;
- Our commitment to equal opportunities is driven by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement. The school sets:
 - Sets suitable learning challenges
 - Responds to pupils' needs
 - Overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils;
- We aim to identify and remove barriers to disabled pupils in every area of school life;
- Shapwick School makes all children feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment within the limits of our admission policy.
- Shapwick staff understand their responsibility in removing barriers to learning for disabled pupils.

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit

- All of our pupils have special educational needs as defined by our admissions policy
- There are areas of the school where wheelchair access is available in teaching and boarding accommodation
- There are areas of the school where wheelchair access is not a practicable proposition
- Our experience of previous pupils we have accepted who had physical and visual difficulties has been helpful in formulating our ideas.
- Disabled pupils in the past have participated in all activities offered by the school including sport and have achieved comparable examination results.
- It is clear that some areas of the curriculum which offer limited access to disabled pupils such as Workshop or lab activities, upstairs classrooms and boarding accommodation
- Up to the present our policy has been to admit disabled pupils with dyslexia where, with parents and the LEA where appropriate, we have been able to make modifications to support the pupil's inclusion into the life of the school

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

- Information in section 1 has been obtained from consultation with staff, pupils, parents and a disability adviser.

2 The main priorities in the school's plan

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum by:

- improvements to lighting, signage, colour contrast, the acoustic environment, floor coverings;
- improvements to toilets, washing and changing facilities;
- changes to the layout of the playground and other common areas;
- the provision of ramps and lifts and improvements to doorways;
- the provision of particular furniture and equipment to improve access.
- enlarged computer screens and keyboards
- established quiet areas

2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

- Hand rails have now been fitted to the steps by the staffroom and the stairs to IT"
- Stairs to IT2 have been colour-marked to aid those with visual perception problems
- A temporary step is available to enable access to the sixth form common room for walking aid users
- Alternative cutlery is provided for those dyspraxics in need
- Alternative seating is provided for those with co-ordination problems

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:

- Provide student handbooks on the network so that font size and colour can be adjusted.

To be updated by 01.09.12