Disability Equality Scheme & Access Plan 2026-2028

Last Review	Next Review	Every 2 years	Coordinator	Nominated Trustees
May 2026	May 2028		Head Teacher	EC&T Committee

Contents

1. Introduction and Vision

The Mulberry Bush School is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable and accessible environment where all children, staff, families and visitors are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

The school recognises that accessibility extends beyond physical access and includes emotional, relational, communicative, sensory and educational accessibility.

As a specialist therapeutic residential school supporting children with complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, the school acknowledges that many pupils experience disability as defined within the Equality Act 2010. Many children also present with additional neurodevelopmental, sensory, communication and health needs which may affect their ability to access education, relationships and wider opportunities.

The school seeks to remove barriers to participation wherever reasonably possible and is committed to making reasonable adjustments that allow children, staff and visitors to access the fullest range of opportunities available.

This plan outlines how the school will:

1. Increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils.
2. Improve the physical environment.
3. Improve access to information.
4. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the school community.
5. Ensure accessibility is embedded within therapeutic, educational and organisational practice.

2. Aims

The school aims to:

- Eliminate discrimination.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- Ensure all children can participate fully in school life.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and belonging.
- Support staff and visitors requiring reasonable adjustments.
- Deliver an environment that recognises physical, sensory, emotional and communication needs.
- Celebrate diversity and disability positively throughout the curriculum.

Accessibility within the Mulberry Bush School includes:

- Physical accessibility.
- Curriculum accessibility.
- Emotional accessibility.
- Communication accessibility.

- Sensory accessibility.
- Relational accessibility.

3. Legislative Framework

This plan is written in accordance with:

- Equality Act 2010
- Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice (0-25 years)
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Independent School Standards Regulations

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is considered disabled if they have:

"A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

The school recognises that many children attending the Mulberry Bush School meet this definition through:

- SEMH needs
- Autism Spectrum Conditions
- ADHD
- Sensory Processing Differences
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Developmental Trauma

- Attachment Difficulties
- Learning Difficulties
- Medical Conditions

The school is committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers.

4. Principles of Accessibility

The school believes accessibility is achieved through:

Therapeutic Accessibility

Children require emotionally safe environments where they feel understood, valued and supported.

Communication Accessibility

Information should be available in a way that children can understand and use.

Sensory Accessibility

The environment should support regulation and participation whilst minimising unnecessary sensory barriers.

Educational Accessibility

Learning opportunities should be differentiated to enable all children to experience success and progress.

Physical Accessibility

Buildings, resources and facilities should be accessible wherever reasonably practicable.

Workforce Accessibility

Staff should have equitable access to employment, career development and workplace support.

5. Current Strengths

The school currently provides:

Curriculum Access

- Differentiated teaching approaches.
- Rich curriculum content presented at appropriate levels.
- Individual EHCP outcomes.
- Pupil Education Plans (PEPs).
- Regular assessment and monitoring through Earwig.
- Adapted literacy and numeracy interventions.
- Visual timetable systems.
- Colourful Semantics.
- Sounds-Write Phonics
- Mastering Number programme

Therapeutic and Communication Support

- Speech and Language Therapy provision.
- Communication-friendly classrooms.
- Social stories.
- Visual supports.
- Emotion and incident processing tools.
- Specialist therapeutic input.
- Staff training in communication approaches.

Sensory Support

- Individual sensory strategies.
- Therapeutic consultation.
- Access to sensory resources.
- Sensory-informed classroom practice.
- OT consultations as required

Physical Environment

- Level access across educational provision.
- Accessible toilet facilities.
- Designated disabled parking bays.
- Ongoing environmental adaptations where needed.

Equality and Diversity

- Diverse curriculum content.
- Ongoing review of representation within resources.
- Commitment to disability awareness and inclusion
- Regular Inclusion Group meetings

6. Accessibility Action Plan 2026-2029

Priority Area 1

Increasing Access to the Curriculum

Ensure all pupils access a bespoke curriculum	Review curriculum annually to ensure accessibility for all learners	Headteacher / SENCO	Annual	Curriculum audit completed and actions implemented
Ensure opportunities for qualifications	Review use of and access to AQA awards	Headteacher/SENCo	Annual	Comprehensive record of achievements
Increase representation of disability in the curriculum	Audit curriculum and library resources	Subject Leaders	Annual	Disability representation evident across subjects
Improve literacy access	Continue Sounds-Write and communication interventions	SENCO	Ongoing	Improved pupil progress data

Strengthen pupil voice	Gather pupil feedback on accessibility annually	Headteacher	Annual	Pupil feedback informs development planning
Improve sensory access to learning	Develop sensory support plans where needed	Therapies Team	Ongoing	Sensory strategies documented and reviewed
Ensure reasonable adjustments are embedded	Include accessibility needs in EHCP and PEP reviews	SENCO	Ongoing	Evidence in annual reviews

Priority Area 2

Communication Accessibility

Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria
Improve communication accessibility across the school	Develop visual support standards across education and residential provision	SALT	Annual review	Consistent visual support observed
Ensure accessible information for children	Review all key child-facing documents	SALT	Annual	Documents available in child-friendly formats
Strengthen staff knowledge	Communication training programme for all staff	SALT	Annual	Staff report increased confidence
Improve transition support	Review and update Welcome Booklet annually	SALT / Admissions Team	Annual	Positive pupil transition feedback

Improve information sharing	Develop accessible social stories and communication tools for key processes	SALT	Ongoing	Resources available and used consistently Staff ability to create their own/adapt resources

Priority Area 3

Sensory Accessibility

Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria
Create consistency of sensory approaches between group living and education	Develop shared sensory guidance, language and routines across education and group living settings	Head of Therapies / Residential and Education Leads	Annual review	Consistent sensory approaches are evident across group living and education, with shared expectations understood by staff
Create sustainability of the sensory interventions used by children	Review sensory resources, intervention plans and staff routines to ensure strategies can be maintained and embedded over time	Therapies Team	Ongoing	Sensory interventions are documented, reviewed and used consistently by children across settings

Improve staff understanding of sensory needs	Deliver sensory processing training and provide practical guidance linked to children's individual sensory profiles	Occupational Therapy / SALT	Annual	Staff report increased confidence and demonstrate improved understanding of children's sensory needs in daily practice

Priority Area 4

Physical Accessibility

Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria
Improve site accessibility	Annual accessibility audit of all buildings	Maintenance Manager/Head of Facilities	Annual	Audit completed and actions tracked
Review future capital developments	Include accessibility considerations in all building projects	School Leadership Team	Ongoing	Accessibility embedded within planning

Priority Area 5

Accessibility for Families, Visitors and External Professionals

Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria

Improve accessibility of meetings	Offer virtual attendance where appropriate	Headteacher	Ongoing	Increased participation
Improve information accessibility	Provide alternative formats on request	Administration Team	Ongoing	Information accessible to all
Review visitor accessibility	Include accessibility questions in visitor feedback	Operations Manager	Annual	Feedback informs improvements
Improve access for disabled visitors	Review parking, signage and entry arrangements	Operations Manager	Annual	Identified barriers addressed

Priority Area 6

Workforce Accessibility

Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success Criteria
Improve accessibility for staff	Review workplace adjustments process	HR	Annual	Staff aware of available support
Improve recruitment accessibility	Audit recruitment materials and processes	HR	Annual	Recruitment process accessible
Increase staff awareness	Annual Equality Act training	HR	Annual	Training completed by all staff
Support disabled employees	Implement reasonable adjustments promptly	HR	Ongoing	Staff feedback positive

7. Admissions and Placement Considerations

The school recognises its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and to consider accessibility for disabled pupils.

As a specialist therapeutic setting, placements are considered individually. Decisions are made through careful assessment of:

- The child's needs.
- The safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff.
- The school's ability to provide appropriate support.
- The reasonable adjustments available.
- The suitability of the environment.

The school will work collaboratively with placing authorities, families and professionals to identify potential adjustments and accessibility solutions wherever possible.

8. Training and Development

The school will maintain a programme of staff development which may include:

- Equality Act 2010 training.
- Disability awareness.
- Autism awareness.
- Communication-friendly practice.
- Speech and Language approaches.
- Trauma-informed practice.
- Attachment-aware practice.

- Sensory processing awareness.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Inclusive teaching strategies.
- Tailored induction programme

9. Monitoring and Review

The Accessibility Plan will be monitored through:

- Accessibility reviews.
- School improvement planning processes.
- EHCP review outcomes.
- Pupil voice activities.
- Parent and carer feedback.
- Trustee oversight.

The School Leadership Team will review progress annually.

The plan will be formally reviewed every two years, or sooner if significant changes occur in legislation, school provision or pupil need.