

COGNITA



Accessibility Plan

September 2024-2026

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The document outlines our Accessibility Plan as required by the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for Cognita, which is the responsible body of a school, to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil or staff in relation to:
- admissions;
 - the way we provide education for pupils;
 - the way we provide pupils access to any benefit, facility or service;
 - by excluding any pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.1 The Act outlines some protected characteristics (below) and we pay due regard to these:
- Sex
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy or maternity
- 1.2 This plan fulfils the requirements of the Independent School Standards.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This Accessibility Plan outlines how we ensure that we are working to remove barriers to learning and access in our school. The plan is reviewed every three years.
- 2.2 The school aims to treat all its pupils, staff and visitors fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all pupils without discrimination of any kind
- 2.3 The school ensure all staff are trained in understanding equality and disability issues in line with the Equality Act 2010

3 Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that nothing we do as a school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage compared to other pupils. However, where we have to do so, we make sure that we take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- 3.2 When it is reasonable to do so, we provide auxiliary aids or services for a disabled pupil, when such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the pupil faces compared to other non-disabled pupils.
- 3.3 Where an auxiliary aid is not provided under the SEN system (i.e. via a Statement/EHC Plan) there should be no assumption that it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Any decision would be taken on the basis of the facts of an individual case, including cost implications.
- 3.4 There is no legal definition of auxiliary aids. We interpret this to mean any or all of the following: helpful; providing support or assistance; and that these can be things or persons which help. We include hearing loops, adaptive keyboards, and special software.
- 3.5 Our SEN Policy defines what provision we make available including reasonable adjustments in our school. We will consider what is reasonable in the context of our school, given the circumstances of each individual case.

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- 3.6 Where the auxiliary aid has a benefit to the rest of the child's life outside of school, it would be unreasonable for our school to make such provision; e.g. hearing aids.
- 3.7 We consider that effective and practicable adjustments for disabled pupils will involve little or no cost or disruption, and will therefore be considered as reasonable. Where substantial adaptations are required which are not contained within our three year accessibility plan, we reserve the right to deem these as unreasonable.
- 3.8 It is our aim to ensure that disabled pupils play as full a part as possible in school life and our accessibility plan and reasonable adjustments help support that aim. Where any adjustment would have a detrimental effect on other pupils, we would not consider it to be *reasonable*. For example, if a geography field trip were planned to involve climbing and a wheelchair user could not take part, we would carefully consider how the disabled pupil could participate viably, but we would not cancel the trip because to do so would be detrimental to other pupils

4 Aspects of the Plan

- 4.1 Our Accessibility Plan focuses on the following areas:
- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
 - Improving the physical environment to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
 - Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

5 Responsibility

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure that the school has an Accessibility Plan which matches the needs of the school and to ensure that it is available on the school's website.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Proprietor (via the Director of Operations) to ensure that the plan is reviewed annually and is fit for purpose.

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Actions to increase access to the curriculum and learning

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Ensure all children are able to access written work on the board, through eye tests for all Reception class children.	Autumn term annually	School Secretary arranges for the REI to visit the school each year.	Any issues identified early on in the child's school career.
Ensure all children are able to access lessons and hear clearly through hearing tests completed in Reception class for all children.	Annually	School secretary liaise with Cognita Schools Nurse	Any issues identified early on in the child's school career, and referrals to audiology made.
Flu vaccinations offered in school, working with the local health authority and Pharmacist. School staff offered flu vaccines.	Autumn term annually	School secretary liaises as appropriate.	Ensures protection for children and especially those with underlying health conditions. 'Herd protection' for whole community.
To continue to work with outside agencies such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, behavioural therapists and educational psychologists so that they can visit school and work with children in the nursery and school.	Ongoing- When need raised on register of concern. To be followed up by SENDCo	Staff to refer if they have concerns. SENDCo	Strong links formed with outside agencies. Working together with outstanding professionals who can be called on to address our children's needs and make recommendations to school to support the children further. Children aided to improve their specific individual skills helping them to access the curriculum and make progress with their learning.
One-page profiles to aid children's transition.	June/July each year	Teachers, SENDCO	One page profile created by the current teacher together with the child for the new teacher prior to transition. The new teacher has a good understanding of the new child prior to joining their class. The child has a smooth transition to their new class.
To support children where needed with social stories.	Ongoing – in response to specific needs	SENDCO/TAs/Teachers	Personalised social stories created for specific children who require support to cope with change, transition and new concepts.
Ensure accessibility to all pupils for SATS by applying for reasonable adjustments/additional time as appropriate.	If there is a child with additional needs	Teaching staff Senco	Children have every opportunity to perform at their own level.

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Support parents in accessing Educational Psychologist if necessary	When raised on register of concern and followed up by SENDCo	SENCo	Children's specific needs are identified, and a plan put in place to meet them.
Education and Health Care Plans - EHCPs	Ongoing – direct response to specific children	SENDCO/teacher /parents	Funding in place for specific children which allows for provision at school specific to a child's particular needs and barriers to learning. Good useful contacts made with Plymouth City Council.
Team around me meetings - TAM	Ongoing	SENDCO DSLs Phase Leaders (ELT)	Effective communication between departments ensures that we are meeting the needs of vulnerable children to ensure they have the correct support to thrive.
To encourage children with specific medical issues to be as independent as possible.	Daily	Relevant Class Teachers and overseen by the school's qualified first aiders.	All children with specific medical conditions e.g. Diabetes or CF. Each relevant class teacher receives specific annual training for the condition the child has and understands how best to support them. Children with asthma are likewise encouraged to manage their own inhalers where appropriate. Again, this is overseen by qualified class teachers, and first aiders.
To have classroom white boards and displays placed at the appropriate height for the age group of the children.	Ongoing	Facilities co-ordinator/Caretaker	Children able to reach/access the IWB board/display boards for all relevant work.
Provision of 1:1 devices for all children from Reception-Year 2 (iPads) Y3-Y6 (Tablets) Shared iPad for FS children 1:2	iPad March 2023 Tablets refresh for all new pupils from Y3 - 2023	Cognita Digital department Head Digital Lead	Every child has their own individual 1:1 device.
New staff devices – increased speed of working	September 2024	Head Cognita Digital	Staff able to work smartly and efficiently.
Digital Upskilling of children and staff	Ongoing	Head Digital Lead Cognita Digital Learning Advisor	Planned training sessions, from ML, Cognita digital learning advisor, for both children and staff Staff and children have increased confidence. Staff become Microsoft Educators.

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			Maintain Microsoft Showcase Status
Access to digital software aids to help individual children e.g., Immersive reader, screen colour filters, dictation. Learn touch typing.	Ongoing	Cognita Digital department Head Digital Lead	Use of digital software aids and Microsoft accessibility tools to provide children with tools that improve their access to the curriculum and learning leading to better outcomes and greater success for individual children.
Adapt communication for individual children - Photo exchange Pictorial exchange Makaton Object reference Widget For use with children with SEND and EAL	Ongoing	SENDCO Teachers TAs	Children are able to successfully communicate their needs and understand others thus making good progress and having greater access to the curriculum and developing their learning. Increased outcomes for children with SEND and EAL
Introduce colourful semantics for children to use when writing	September 2024	SENDCO	Increased outcomes for children with SEND and EAL
Introduce sensory resources and dark pop-up den for EYFS children to support individual children's needs	From July 2024	FS Lead Nursery Manager	Enables sensory seeking children to self-regulate and tools to enable effective learning.

Actions to improve the physical environment to enable those with disability to take better advantage of the education and facilities

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Signs to be put up by the main entrance gate indicating action to be taken if disabled visitors are unable to access the intercom	By end Dec 2022	Facilities Coordinator	Ensure all visitors to the school have full access.
Main entrance, reception, Headteacher's office, Main Hall and Dining Room are all accessible by wheelchair.	Checked regularly by Site Manager	Facilities Coordinator/Site Manager	All visitors are able to access the Headteacher's Office, School Hall and Dining Room.
Ensure the lift is always fully operational so that there is disabled access between the main school ground floor, to the lower ground floor Infant Department and outside playground	Regular checks by Site Manager Regular servicing	Facilities Coordinator Site Manager	Anyone with mobility issues able to access the Infant Department and playground from the Main school ground floor via the lift.

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Continuing assessment and improvement of signage on the school site, in the buildings and on the approach via Hartley Road.	3 year - signs to be erected in Hartley Road indicating speed restriction and alerting to the fact that children use that route by July 2024	Facilities Coordinator	All visitors feel confident and welcome.
Provision of suitable aids to learning include sloping writing desks, pencil grips, fidget toys, fidget cushions	If raised on an IEP or recommended by SENDCos	All teaching staff and SENDCos	All children have assistance if required, to aid learning and emotional wellbeing. Worry Monsters available in classrooms from Reception through to Year 6.
Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) created for any child with specific need/disability to aid safe evacuation from the school in the event of a fire or similar. Staff who work closely with the child will be familiar with and support the child with the plan.	Ongoing, reviewed annually or if conditions/child's needs change.	H&S Coordinator SENDCO Class teacher TA	Children can safely be evacuated from the building without risk to their own or others' lives.
Disabled parking bay always available for visitors ensuring easy access to school building and site.	Ongoing	Operations Manager	Disabled visitors have easy access to school site and building
Replace main school stair flooring to give clear distinction between treads	July 2025	Operations Manager	Treads are easily distinguished for visually impaired children/adults.

Actions to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, staff, parents and visitors

Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Ensure writing on the boards is accessible to children with dyslexia etc by using appropriate coloured pens, background colour Visual timetables used.	Revised Autumn term annually by class teachers liaising with	All teaching staff	Children have full accessibility to the curriculum, regardless of specific learning difficulty

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Enlarge print	previous teachers		
Digital screens use colour filters as appropriate to improve children's access to learning.	Revised Autumn term annually by class teachers liaising with previous teachers	All teaching staff	Children have full accessibility to digital learning, regardless of specific learning difficulty
Review of classrooms that have included upgrade of lighting.	Lux tests carried out annually in Spring term, upgrades as indicated.	Site team Teaching staff	Light levels are good for learning
Classroom arrangements reviewed to ensure children with hearing or sight difficulties sit at the front.	Annual classroom risk assessment done in the Autumn term and reviewed as and when required	Teaching staff SENCO	Children feel they are fully supported with their learning
Addition of subtitles to Head's Bi-weekly video newsletter.	By May 2025	Registrar	Parents able to view newsletter and subtitles help those whose hearing is impaired.
Use of coloured paper for printout for children who require and different background.	Ongoing	Teaching staff	Children find reading handouts more accessible.
Access arrangements for SEND pupils for examinations – readers/scribes/additional time	Ongoing	SENDCO	Children have increased opportunity to achieve successful outcomes.

Actions to improve the mental health of children and the school community.


Targets/Strategies	Timing	Responsibility	Success criteria
Global Be Well Day	Annual September event	Deputy Head Well-being leads	Attention drawn to the importance of Mental Health within the school community. Children and parents have an understanding of the factors that

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			improve mental health and well-being.
Increase number of trained Mental Health First Aiders	Ongoing	Deputy Head	Trained mental health first aider able to offer children 'time to talk'. Great awareness and understanding of mental health across the staff community.
Train staff with 'Girls on board' to support all children, particularly in KS2 to resolve situations and conflicts themselves. Refresher training from KS2 lead.	Ongoing	KS2 Lead	Children able to resolve conflicts more easily and have greater empathy with and understanding of each other.
Voice of the Student to include well-being questions VOS	Annually	Head Cognita	VOS questions help to identify any well-being issues/patterns that can then be addressed through assemblies/PHSEE to support the children and improve their well-being.
Improve outdoor environment Sensory garden Animal habitat Growing and producing food to eat	Ongoing	Operations Manager/Facilities Coordinator Site Manager	Gardening and Bee Club established. Pond area to be redeveloped to provide safe learning and play Children will benefit from the smells, sounds, taste, touch and sights of the outdoor environment.
Weekly Forest School sessions for all children FS-Y6	Ongoing	Forest School Leader	Promote holistic development, children learn to take supported risk developing confidence, resilience, independence and creativity, develop team working skills

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Signed		Clare Page Headteacher