



Plan agreed: September 2023
Plan Review: September 2025
Lead member of staff: Anita Laws

Introduction

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

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

This Accessibility Plan was drawn up in accordance with the planning duties within the Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2002 and 2005 (SENDA)).

It draws on the guidance set out in

- "Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils", issued by DfES in July 2002
- HCC schools self-audit questionnaire of January 2002
- What Equality law Means For You As An Education Provider, issued by the Equality and Human Right Commission 2010
- Equality Act 2010: What Do I Need to Know? Disability Quick Start Guide published by the Equality and Diversity Forum 2010

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined as follows by the Equality Act 2010:

A person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day- to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial;
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.
People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairment are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances.

The School's Context

Holme Court School is an innovative independent special school, specialising in the teaching of pupils with dyslexia and associated co-morbid conditions. We are a Centre of Excellence for dyslexia (HMI November 2017). As such we provide a holistic programme for each individual's specific needs in addition to providing outreach to international and national bodies.

The School's Aims

- To offer a broad and balanced curriculum for KS2, KS3 and KS4 with an emphasis on literacy acquisition.
- To embrace a partnership between the school and home
- To offer to each member the opportunity to grow in knowledge and skills
- To ensure every individual has a right to be part of a community where each member is valued and respected for their own worth irrespective of race, colour, creed or ability
- To help children to appreciate that they are members of the wider community in its richness and diversity
- To provide a curriculum which provides a setting in which all children have an equal opportunity to grow in understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

SEND

As a specialist provision, all pupils at Holme Court School are on the SEND register. All pupils experience difficulties with reading, writing and or spelling and are functioning at a level below that expected according to their chronological age.

Many pupils have complex needs including__

Co-morbid specific learning difficulties	dyscalculia- maths difficulties
	ADHD
	ADD
	Developmental Co-ordination Disorder
	ASD
	Scotopic sensitivity-Irlen's Syndrome
	Verbal dyslexia
	Expressive language difficulties
	Receptive language difficulties
	Auditory processing difficulties
	Sensory processing difficulties
Stress related	Diagnosed anxiety
	Abdominal migraine
	Stress related eczema

	Self harming haviour
	Social anxiety disorder
	Generalised anxiety disorder
	Selective mutism
	Irritable Bowel Syndrome
Medical	hemiplegia
	hypermobility
	asthma
	ezcema
	heart condition
	Type 1 diabetes
	frequent and severe nosebleeds
Alergies	grapefruit
	dairy
	peanuts

Location

In March 2020 the School relocated to Cherry Hinton, Cambridge. This move was necessary, as our previous premises at Abington Woods was sold by its owner.

We are now settled into our new premises a short distance away at Cherry Hinton Hall, Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 8DW. In conjunction with this move, we received permission from the Department for Education to expand our pupil roll up to 50.

Cherry Hinton Hall is a large Victorian mansion house, set in large park grounds. The building is host to two schools, Oaks International School (an independent nursery and primary school), and Holme Court School, (a specialist independent school for aged 7 – 16yrs).

The two schools are entirely separate. Holme Court School occupies the entirety of the upstairs floor. Oaks International School are on the lower floor. The two schools have separate entrances.

Facilities

The upstairs area includes six classrooms, an administrative office and a 1 to 1 teaching area.

There is a shared hall, which is timetabled for use by both schools.

A new purpose-built science lab was created within a term of our arrival and is fully operational. The lab is for sole use by Holme Court School classes. At the moment it is being prioritised for science and art classes for years 8 up to GCSE.

Within the school site there is a shared playground which is timetabled for the use of both schools. This comprises three wooden seating areas, a large sand pit, a water feature, a number of balance units, a climbing area and an astro-turf area for ball games with a net ball post.

There are extensive outdoor areas, as the school is set in the middle of a park. There is a playground, tennis courts, table tennis, a swing park, a water park and a trim trail. These

areas are all for community use. However, the high adult – pupil ratio at Holme Court means that our children can access all of these outside areas at breaktimes.

In addition to this there is a small stream which flows through the park which can be used for curriculum studies in addition to flat green spaces which are used for PE.

There is a Forest School area, which is owned by Cambridge City Council and fenced off for the sole use of the schools, the use of which is timetabled. Whilst the schools share these areas, they do not use them at the same time.

Within close proximity to the school are local shops, Cherry Hinton Village Sports Centre and Abbey Swimming Pool.

Cambridge city is easily accessed using public transport and contains a large number of museums, religious buildings and community resources.

Disability Plan

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

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

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

We are working within a national framework for educational inclusion provided by:

- Inclusive School (DfES 0774/2001)
- SEN & Disability Act 2001
- The SEN Revised Code of Practice 2002
- The Disability Discrimination Act (amended for school 2001)
- Code of Practice for Schools (Disability Rights Commission)
- Ofsted inspection framework

The priorities for the Accessibility Plan for our school were identified by the SLT.

1. Planning
1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values The aim of Holme Court School is to increase access to the curriculum for all our pupils with disabilities. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the School such as participation in cultural activities and school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment which may assist pupils in accessing the curriculum.

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit All

our pupils have learning differences (see above).

Several pupils have medical needs. (see above).

At present we have no wheelchair users, staff, children, or parents.

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

For pupils with EHC plans their views are gathered through the Annual Review process.

Their parents also have the opportunity to express their views orally or in writing, including highlighting any possible gaps in provision.

The rest of the school attends the School Council, where they are free to suggest improvements.

A number of external professionals visit the School on a regular basis to assess and support our pupils. Recommendations made by these people has also been incorporated.

2. The main priorities in the school's plan

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

As a small, specialist school, we are in a good position to consider the needs of every pupil at all times.

All staff are trained in neurodiversity, with a particular focus on dyslexia.

All teaching staff have or are in the process of gaining accredited qualifications to support their understanding of dyslexia and specific learning difficulties. This provides them with specialist knowledge and understanding of the range of needs that our pupils exhibit. This means that they are better equipped to provide appropriate multi-sensory learning opportunities for all pupils.

The School has recently developed a link with a service provider and is able to access level 2 qualifications for its staff and the wider community via the Holme Court micro site. Many members of staff have already taken advantage of this opportunity and have achieved qualifications in understanding autism, mental health and counselling skills.

The School has links to several specialist organisations and outside agencies and benefits from additional training opportunities.

The School makes good use of research literature and this informs many decisions which are made in relation to teaching, learning and the School environment.

Class sizes are small with a maximum of ten pupils with 1 class teacher.

Some pupils with recognised additional needs have a LSA to support them either throughout the day, or at specific times. In such cases this is funded individually through EHCPs.

Up to KS4 when the focus is directed at GCSE coverage, pupils are grouped according to ability for English, spelling, handwriting and maths.

Diagnostic assessments are used to identify gaps in learning. The information from such assessments is used to ensure that the teaching meets the needs of individuals.

The Holme Court curriculum is based around the National Curriculum. Where possible this is delivered through a multi-sensory approach. As our pupils experience considerable difficulty in writing, staff employ a range of methods to enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding using alternative methods of recording.

Graphic organisers, mind maps and writing frames are used throughout the School to support pupils with the organisation of their ideas.

Reasonable adjustments are made throughout the day e.g. use of readers, scribes, use of word processor and C -pens etc.

The School Council is available as a forum for children to discuss any difficulties, and to propose any changes.

Specialists such as Hearing/Vision Impairment team visit, as do Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. Counselling is available.

Actions to improve Teaching and Learning:

- to introduce and continuously develop a Teacher Toolkit which summarises and includes the major strategies and approaches used throughout the school. This will serve as a reminder for established staff and an introduction for those newly appointed. The aim of this document is to ensure consistency in approach and

method throughout the School

- to introduce Cool Fire as a new intervention to support emotional literacy throughout the school. This is aimed to increase pupil motivation, concentration and self-regulation
- to introduce Colourful Semantics throughout the school as a means to develop both oral and written language skills
- to embed the use of Visual Phonics across the curriculum for all ages to improve letter-sound relationship and correct sound pronunciation for all pupils
- to embed the use of Word Aware strategies throughout the curriculum for all ages to help support with vocabulary and phonological awareness
- to embed the use of phonological awareness / vocabulary activities which are currently used in language lessons to become starter activities in all subjects for all age group in all subjects
- to consider/evaluate new interventions as recommended by external professionals and to introduce these if relevant to the needs of pupils
- to develop a long-term strategy to provide access for all pupils to Microsoft Surface tablets to enable them to record their ideas
- to continue to invest in the purchase of C pens for use throughout the school to encourage independence when reading challenging texts
- to continue to train and develop staff and pupils in the use of technology including the accessibility tools order that they can customise the settings for their own personal use and needs
- to further develop the skills acquired by staff and pupils during COVID lock downs in relation to the use of remote learning, sharing of information and marking etc to develop a method of storing work electronically which will reduce the need for exercise books
- to monitor curriculum changes and physical access needs to ensure they remain robust.

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

The lower floor of the Manor House is wheelchair friendly.

There is a disabled ramp at the main reception door. All doors are of adequate width to enable wheel- chair users to pass through. The floors are level with no trip hazards.

There is no wheelchair access to the upper floor.

The main stairway is wide with a handrail and allows plenty of space for an assistant to support anyone with restricted mobility.

Okes Hall is located adjacent to the Manor House and can easily be accessed by wheel chair users.

There are two disabled toilets.

One is located within Okes Hall on the ground floor. The other is on the upper floor of the Manor House.

The staff/visitor toilet on the ground floor of the Manor House is large but has no adaptations for disabled users.

Holme Court School is dyslexia friendly, with visual timetables, uncluttered display areas, written information supported by Widgit whenever appropriate.

Many pupils have sensory processing difficulties and the pastel coloured walls throughout the building provide a calm working environment. All rooms have sound proofing attached to at least one wall which enhances the acoustic quality within the rooms. All rooms have sensory light fittings which can be adjusted.

All rooms have windows to allow adequate ventilation. These are suitably adapted to ensure the safety of pupils.

Posture is important. Tables are height adjustable and anti-tilt chairs are available in three sizes.

Cherry Hinton Hall is a Grade 2 listed building and as such the School is limited in the adaptations that can be made.

Actions to improve accessibility of the environment

- Grab rails and disabled adapted taps to be fitted in the lower floor staff/visitor toilet
- Additional height adjustable tables to be purchased as the size of the School increases

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils:

We are constantly mindful of making all written information as accessible as possible for children with reading difficulties.

Pupils are supported using Visual Phonics and Widgit symbols as appropriate in order to help them to read, understand and remember specific vocabulary.

Reading for our pupils is particularly challenging. Due to the nature of their difficulties many pupils do not read age appropriate material- and hence do not get to practise reading age appropriate words. They do not always want to ask for help. To support them in their choice of reading material all books are colour coded and pupils are regularly assessed using the PM Benchmark Kit so that pupils are aware of the appropriate colour level.

The School has started to invest in technology to support with reading. This includes the purchase of tablets and C-pens. All pupils are taught how to use the assistive tools to support them in reading.

For those pupils who stay at Holme Court School for KS4, they will be entered for nationally recognised exams. While they are allowed a human reader for most subjects, they will not be allowed a reader for English language exams. However, if they are able to use assistive technology appropriately, this will enable them to access support for all subjects.

Many of our pupils suffer from scotopic sensitivity and subsequently wear glasses with tinted lenses. However, white paper is quite hard on the eyes and even those who do not have a diagnosis will benefit from a softer shade of paper.

To support with this where possible exercise books are used with cream pages and photocopying is done on cream paper.

Materials developed by staff uses the Verdana font which is dyslexia friendly.

Action to improve accessibility of writing materials

- School to continue to purchase C pens and tablets with the aim that all pupils will have their own devices for use in school by 2023
- Pupils to be taught how to use C pens and to be encouraged to use these where required throughout all subjects

3: Making it happen

3: see School Development Plan

• Coordination and Implementation – Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body

4 Evaluation