



## Accessibility Plan

**Adopted By:** Board of Trustees

**Date:** November 2024

**Review Date:** November 2027

November 2024

Policy applies to:	All schools in Wessex Multi-Academy Trust
Policy Version Number:	1
Purpose of the document:	<p>To set out how, over time, our schools will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Increase access to the curriculum</li> <li>b) Improve the physical environment of the school</li> <li>c) Make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways</li> </ul>
Summary of the main points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction</li> <li>2. Vision and aims</li> <li>3. Objectives</li> <li>4. School context</li> <li>5. Pupil data</li> <li>6. Audit</li> <li>7. Consultation</li> <li>8. Previous actions</li> <li>9. Sources of advice and information</li> <li>10. Other policies</li> <li>11. Implementation and monitoring</li> </ul>
Approved by:	Wessex MAT Board of Trustees
Reviewer:	Karen Weir/Mike Foley
Summary of amendments:	n.a
Next review due:	November 2027

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. All schools must have an Accessibility Plan. This is required by law - Equality Act 2010. Accessibility Plans support current and future pupils with a disability.
- 1.2. The Equality Act says that a person has a disability 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.
- 1.3. Accessibility Plans set out how, over time, a school will:
  - increase access to the curriculum
  - improve the physical environment of the school
  - make information more accessible by providing this in a range of different ways
- 1.4. This is our school Accessibility Plan.

## **2. Vision and aims**

- 2.1. Our aim is for everyone at The Thomas Hardy School to feel part of the school community. We are committed to making our school as accessible as possible. We want our pupils with a disability to:
  - be fully included in school life
  - actively take part in high quality learning
  - thrive and enjoy their learning
  - develop the skills to go on and lead fulfilled lives as adults
  - be empowered, confident and able to function as independently as possible
- 2.2. We want our pupils with a disability to access all elements of school life. This includes school clubs, activities and trips. We recognise that we may have to do things a little differently to make this happen.

## **3. Objectives**

- 3.1. At The Thomas Hardy School, all staff and governors will be aware of, and working in line with:
  - this Accessibility Plan
  - the wider disability provisions set out in the Equality Act
  - the United Nations Conventions on the rights of:
    - the child
    - persons with disabilities
- 3.2. Our SEND Governor will champion the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. They will be involved in developing and reviewing this Accessibility Plan.

3.3. Our staff will remove disadvantage faced by pupils with a disability by:

- adopting a 'can do' attitude
- having a flexible approach to teaching
- modifying the curriculum and environment

3.4. Person-centred systems will be in place to support the inclusion of pupils with a disability.

#### **4. School context**

We are committed to providing a fully accessible environment, which values and includes all young people, staff, parents, carers and visitors. This is regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

We are intent on ensuring that the physical environment and the curriculum is accessible to all students who attend the school.

The Thomas Hardy School is a school with 2,077 students on roll from year 9 to year 14. The school is on a large site with 4 main blocks linked to areas of the curriculum. The school dates from the 1940s and whilst is in good condition, the older parts of the school noticeably consist of narrower corridors, for example. The school has 2 large sports halls and access to the public 1610 sports centre. There is a large field on two tiers and a large AstroTurf.

The school has 2 resourced provisions (complex communication needs and physical disability).

#### **5. Pupil data**

5.1. We ask for information about any disabilities or health conditions in early communications with new parents and carers. We also carefully observe our pupils' progress.

5.2. Where our pupils have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, we use the information within this to ensure that we have a good understanding of their disabilities and how to support them.

5.3. Current pupil data shows that at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year, 14.5% percent of our pupils were regarded as disabled under the Equality Act 2010. Our pupils have the following areas of need:

- Physical Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Diagnosed mental health conditions

- Communication difficulties

## **6. Audit**

6.1. To help us develop our Accessibility Plan, we undertook an environmental audit of The Thomas Hardy School. This told us that:

- Students access the curriculum is good, and lesson support combined with some interventions outside of the classroom have a positive impact on student outcomes.
- The physical access to the school site is generally good, with some key areas for improvement.
- Access to information technology is a real strength of the school and allows information to be accessible to all students.

## **7. Consultation**

7.1. In developing our Accessibility Plan, we have consulted with:

- our pupils
- parents and carers
- our SENCO and SEND support staff
- other staff at the school, including the leadership team
- our SEND Governor and wider governing body
- relevant specialist services

7.2. These consultations told us that:

- There are some improvements which can be made to the physical access to the entirety of the school site.
- The physical disability base itself needs to be improved.
- The consultations supported our knowledge that access to the curriculum is good and that students receive adequate support to create equality of access (including technology where appropriate).

## **8. Previous actions**

### **8.1. Access to the curriculum**

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability through the following means:

Using multimedia activities and interactive ICT equipment to support specific curriculum areas.

- High quality teaching which includes differentiation, designed according to need and where necessary with specialist input.
- Skills for life alternative GCSE is offered to 24 students in Yr 10 and in Yr 11.
- Skills for life includes some learning outside of the classroom including visits Weymouth Outdoor.
- As an alternative to T&E, students are taught the skills of how to revise and answer examination questions. They receive additional numeracy and literacy tuition in some of their sessions. Students are also given the opportunity to use assistive technology which may help them access their exams.
- One-page profiles on Class Charts.
- Hearing and vision support team of TA's (who receive regular specialist input), including modifying resources and worksheets for students where necessary.
- One TA trained in using braille to support a student who is blind.

## **8.2.The physical environment**

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we improved the physical environment of the school to increase access for pupils with a disability by:

Installing automatic doors around site.

- Ramped accesses to school entrances
- Dedicated parking bays at the main entrance for pupils, families and visitors with a disability.
- Ensuring that there is good lighting within the school, making use of natural light where possible and reducing glare.
- Ensuring that lessons for wheelchair users take place where possible (and in most cases) in downstairs classrooms.
- Removing and fixing potential trip hazards and keeping all floor spaces uncluttered.

## **8.3. Access to information**

During the period of our previous Accessibility Plan, we made information more accessible to pupils with a disability by:

Having a specific team of HVSS (Hearing and Vision Support) consisting of two teaching assistants who work to ensure written information is accessible to students with hearing/vision needs.

- Adhering to the guidelines from specialists
- Using social stories and picture symbols to explain protocols and changes to programmes for pupils who benefit from this.

## **9. Sources of advice and information**

9.1. Our Accessibility Plan has been written following guidance from the Local Authority and considering the Dorset Local Authority Accessibility Strategy. Additionally, the following sources of advice and information have been used:

- Report undertaken by manual handling advisor.

## **10. Other policies**

10.1. Our Accessibility Plan complements and supports our:

- Special educational needs and disability policy and SEN information report
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions policy
- Equality information and equality objectives

It can also be read alongside the following school documents:

- Child protection policy
- Curriculum policy
- Staff development policy
- Health and safety policy (including off-site safety)
- Behaviour policy
- School development plan

## **11. Implementation and monitoring**

- 11.1. Our Accessibility Plan shows how we will continue to improve accessibility at The Thomas Hardy School pupils with a disability (and for staff and visitors to the school) over the next 3 years. It may be used to inform other school planning documents.
- 11.2. We will work in partnership with the Wessex MAT in implementing the Accessibility Plan. Where necessary, environmental works will be guided by relevant buildings regulations.
- 11.3. Sufficient resources will be allocated to implement this Accessibility Plan.
- 11.4. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed regularly (and updated if needed). It will be monitored through governor link meetings and SENCo meetings.
- 11.5. This Accessibility Plan runs for 3 years and will be updated in November 2027. Once updated, we will advise our parents/ carers of this via our usual communications and on our website.
- 11.6. The Thomas Hardy School complaints procedure covers the Accessibility Plan.



## 12. Accessibility Action Plan

### 12.1. Increasing access to the curriculum

Outcome 1			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Review the way in which SEND information is shared with teachers and the regularity with which the information is updated.		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	<p>October SEND intervention review day to be held where all students coded a K on the SEND register are invited in to meet with a member of staff to update their learning plan which is subsequently shared with teachers.</p> <p>Provision Map software (Edukey) to be linked with ClassCharts so that SEN information is readily available.</p>		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	<p>Feedback from students and parents.</p> <p>Lesson visits</p> <p>Student Outcomes</p>		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	Ongoing		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	£3,300 per year		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	SENDCO, Assistant Headteacher, Classroom Teachers	<b>Date complete</b>	October 2025

Outcome 2			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Embed and refine the Thomas Hardy Citizenship and Personal Development Award.		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	Team of staff working to develop and review the schemes of work for this award.		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Lesson visits, feedback from staff and students, achievement/student outcomes linked with component parts.		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	2024-2025		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	£450		

<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	Assistant Head, Award Co-ordinator	<b>Date complete</b>	
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<b>Outcome 3</b>			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Homework needs to be accessible to all young people.		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	Support through HVSS team and co-ordination with teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching Assistants also running homework clubs and supporting students in after school settings where necessary.		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Homework completion		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	Ongoing, more regular homework clubs set up from Sept 2024, including before school, lunchtime and after school		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	£4875		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	SENDCo, HVSS team, classroom teachers	<b>Date complete</b>	Ongoing

## 12.2. Improving the physical environment

<b>Outcome 1</b>			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Adaptations to physical disability base (with a view ultimately to develop plans for a new base)		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	Business case production, consultation with Wessex MAT to access SCA funding.		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Alterations made by September 2025		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	Proposed- Summer 2025		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	Quotes pending		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	Assistant Head, Site Manager	<b>Date complete</b>	Summer 2025

<b>Outcome 2</b>	
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Create an accessible area within one Food Technology room so that students in a wheelchair can access subject along with peers
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	As part of the SCA bid, these works will be quoted for and funding sought.
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Works complete

<b>When will this work be done?</b>	Summer 2025		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	To be confirmed.		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	Assistant Head, Site Manager	<b>Date complete</b>	Summer 2025

<b>Outcome 3</b>			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Good access to disabled toilets which doesn't involve a keypad and handle.		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	Keypads on 5 toilets (used) around site have keypads removed. Site team to look in to fob keys.		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Access to disabled toilets good.		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	Ongoing		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	£400		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	Site Manager	<b>Date complete</b>	

<b>Outcome 4</b>			
<b>What outcome do we want to achieve?</b>	Lift to dance studios always accessible		
<b>What actions will we take to achieve this?</b>	New/spare key to be sourced		
<b>How can we tell if this is successful?</b>	Functioning lift (no need to collect key from upstairs)		
<b>When will this work be done?</b>	October 2024		
<b>Approximate cost</b>	£100		
<b>Responsible person(s)</b>	Site Manager	<b>Date complete</b>	October 2024

### 12.3. Making information more accessible

Outcome 1			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	HVSS team training based around use of braille to support students		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	Training from county HVSS team and collaboration between county and the HVSS team here at Thomas Hardy		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Trained staff		
When will this work be done?	Academic Year 24-25		
Approximate cost	£2342		
Responsible person(s)	HVSS team/SENDCo	Date complete	
Outcome 2			
What outcome do we want to achieve?	Install and roll out the use of new 'Read Write' software		
What actions will we take to achieve this?	New software trialled, training delivered to staff, use of exams		
How can we tell if this is successful?	Use of software in exams and as 'normal way of working' for some students in lessons and at home (including those who have EAL, and some specific learning difficulties)		
When will this work be done?	September 2024 onwards		
Approximate cost	£8,000		
Responsible person(s)	Assistant Head/SENDCo team	Date complete	Summer 2024