



## Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre Accessibility Plan

**3-year period covered by the plan: May 2016 – May 2019**

### **Introduction**

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education.

Since September 2002, the Governing Body has had three key duties towards disabled children -

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

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

- ❑ Increasing the extent to which disabled children can participate in the school curriculum;
- ❑ Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled children can take advantage of education and associated services;
- ❑ Improving the delivery to disabled children 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 and reviewed and revised as necessary.

Summer 2016

Next Review Date – Summer 2019

## 1. Starting points

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

Our Inclusion statement outlines the philosophy held at Oliver Thomas. It states that:

*'The term inclusion is increasingly used in all areas of society to describe the removal of barriers. To include is to embrace all people regardless of race, creed, gender, disability, sexuality or age.'*

*In our centre we value diversity and regard different talents and abilities in people as a source of strength. We see inclusion as an opportunity to listen and learn from each other, sharing our strengths and experiences.*

*We recognise the need for flexibility and a willingness to embrace change so that we are able to grow and develop alongside our community. We strongly believe that inclusion is about changing structures to meet the range of difference and diversity we encounter and not about making people fit into existing structures.*

*We believe that inclusion is all about relationships with people. It permeates everything we do and enriches society by the relationships that grow from children and families being together.*

*We believe in the importance of social justice and encourage active participation of people in our centre and in the community. We are proactive in supporting children and families who may experience difficulties in understanding their rights and in accessing services.*

*In Oliver Thomas we recognise that inclusion is not just an educational issue but something which affects all aspects of the organisation's daily life. We acknowledge that this represents a challenge to all our attitudes, established practices and ways of working. It demands that we examine and reflect upon our own practice in order to provide for all our users. We recognise that inclusive practice requires flexibility of approach as inclusion is a process and never a fixed state.'*

### Aims and Ethos

We aim to promote inclusion by:-

- Welcoming all children and families to our centre

- Ensuring that staff and governors are aware of issues surrounding disability
- Recruiting staff who are committed to the inclusion of all people
- Including inclusion as an integral part of our organisations improvement plan

## Curriculum

We provide a broad curriculum experience for all children that values the contribution of children and their families and aims to include all children in every aspect of school life and children's centre services. We do this by training staff to meet individual needs, finding ways to overcome any restrictions caused by the physical environment or routines, and having high expectations for all.

## Meeting the needs of all users and stakeholders

We aim to work in partnership with parents and carers, centre users and other stakeholders to develop and improve services and to ensure the services we provide are accessible to all local families with children under five. We do this through our Parents' Coffee Mornings, Advisory Board, questionnaires, Children's Centre Heads meetings, Nursery Heads meetings and informal consultation. These findings feed into the school and children's centre development plans, which provides a strategic overview of resource, staff, premises, partnership and leadership issues and future planning.

### **Priorities for action:**

- Further promote the philosophy of inclusion in its broadest sense throughout the school and centre community.
- Through partnership working with other agencies, monitor the needs of priority groups and ensure we make our services as accessible as possible to these groups (e.g. teenage parents)

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### **1b: Information from pupil data and school audit**

Oliver Thomas Nursery School and Children's Centre caters for children aged between 0 and 5 years and their families. It is located in East Ham, which is a culturally mixed area with overall high levels of deprivation. The majority of families accessing the school and centre are of ethnic

minority heritage, the largest groups being of Sri Lankan, Indian, Pakistani and Bengali origin.

The school has places for 212 children on a part time basis. Children with additional needs and disabilities enter through the open waiting list although many are already known to specialist services who have supported families in accessing a place. The children's centre is open to children aged 0-5 and their families through a variety of activities and courses. Typically the percentage of children with additional needs is around 20%.

As an inclusive organisation, all children play and learn together and all practitioners are trained in the education and care of children. Individual programmes and learning priorities are delivered through a well planned curriculum. This is differentiated to enable all children to have access to it and our environment is continually monitored to ensure accessibility. Our philosophy is about adapting the routines and the environment to suit the child and reasonable adjustments are continuously made according to circumstances. Communication channels such as the 'cause for concern' meetings and health care plans enable all practitioners to be aware of ongoing strategies to support individual children.

Our commitment to inclusion means that to date no child has ever been denied admittance due to disability. We are aware of the need to consider health and safety requirements however and would discuss with parents and professionals any difficulties in adhering to this if there was a high demand for places for children with specific needs and we felt unable to provide a safe level of support. On occasions we have looked at flexible ways to meet families' needs, such as altering attendance patterns.

Outcomes for disabled pupils are mainly monitored via termly child progress reviews where targets, support required and interventions are identified. In most instances children meet their targets and these are reviewed on a regular basis. Children with disabilities are fully included in the learning priority setting, parent and child consultation processes and tracking systems that take place within the setting.

### **Priorities for action:**

- Continue to track progress of children with additional need to compare against whole cohort and consider individual progress against baseline

- Deliver training to build all practitioners confidence and skills in supporting children with additional needs
- Review resources available to extend learning opportunities for children with additional needs
- Review Children centre services to consider take up by families who have additional needs or whose children have additional needs
- Use admission form as a means of information gathering about families needs in order to support them

### **1c: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan**

Disabled children's perceptions of the nursery are best identified through work with child, parents, key person and using each child's special book. Parents of disabled children are consulted on entry to help us gain as much information as possible. They are partners in planning for their child's individual provision plan and are invited to attend review meetings. Their views are sought in these meetings and strategies are put in place for them to use at home so that both nursery and home are working in partnership to support the child.

Advice from wider bodies is sought including speech therapists, educational psychologists, representatives from occupational health and physiotherapy, specialist advisors and experienced practitioners from the advisory services.

#### **Priorities for action:**

- Promote parental questionnaire to parents whose child has a disability to gather their views and perspectives on how they feel their child has been included.

## **2. The main priorities in the school's plan**

### **2a: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

#### **Priorities for action**

- Review and extend resources that promote a positive image of disability and support learning
- Review of curriculum policies to include all equalities issues
- Develop the confidence and expertise of all staff to support children with additional needs
- Increase access to and use of ICT as a learning tool

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

### **Priorities for action:**

- Complete a thorough needs analysis of individual needs on a admission
- Monitor use of equipment in the outdoor environment
- Monitor the indoor learning environment to prevent furniture and equipment hindering access and mobility.
- Work with external agencies to resource individual children with physical equipment to aid participation in the curriculum such as hoists and standing frames.

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

### **Priorities for action:**

- Extend use of picture/symbol systems throughout the nursery
- Extend use of 'objects of reference' techniques.
- Explore new IT systems for better communication with speakers of languages other than English.

## **3: Making it happen**

### **3a: Management, coordination and implementation**

The governing body, informed by the Senior Leaders, is responsible for monitoring the implementation and impact of this scheme. It must be reported on annually as a governing body meeting agenda item.

The plan will be reviewed every three years in line with the equalities scheme. This is the responsibility of Senior Leaders and the governing body through observations, data analysis and verbal feedback.

The SENCO is responsible for overseeing that all children receive the level of support they require. The school employs additional Nursery Nurses enabling the school to improve adult to child ratios and all staff are trained to support the needs of all children attending our setting.

The effectiveness of the plan will be evaluated by;

- Analysing individual data with particular reference to children with additional needs via the tracking system.
- Ensuring children's needs are met through the monitoring of classroom practice.
- Scrutinising evaluation from parents' who have children with additional needs.

**Priorities for action:**

- Establish all equalities plans as a yearly agenda item for governing body
- Identify a lead governor

**3b: Getting hold of the school's plan**

This plan will be available for parents and visitors on our website and paper copies will be made available on request. It will be in size 14 font to increase accessibility.