



Calder Valley Steiner Education
The Valley Kindergarten
Making time for childhood

CVSE 3-YEAR ACCESS PLAN

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ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, Calder Valley Steiner Education has on-going accessibility strategies and plans to improve access to all aspects of its provision. The current document outlines CVSE's strategies with clear time-frames up to a three year period with an aim to increasing the extent to which disabled pupils (as well as staff, parents and other visiting professionals) can participate in the setting's curriculum, facilities and general environment. It also outlines ways in which delivery of the curriculum may be improved for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, while taking into account both their disabilities, special needs and any preferences they or their parents may express.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA):

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. "

CVSE Key Objective

To make every reasonable attempt to reduce and eliminate barriers to access, to the curriculum and to full participation in the CVSE community for pupils and prospective pupils with a disability.

Background Information

Within its first year of moving to its new premises of St. John's Sunday School in Cragg Vale in 2009, CVSE undertook major structural improvements to the building in order to provide full level or ramp access throughout the ground floor of the building. They also installed a brand new facility of a fully wheelchair accessible toilet. This work was successfully completed during the summer of 2009. Access improvements have also since been made in the garden. In 2013, our consultant architects were given the brief to create a second downstairs classroom, while maintaining good flow and access. By using the existing ramps, and raising the floor in one of the new rooms, from Sep. 2013 the school was able to create two fully accessible teaching spaces. However, as part of the current set-up (as of Sep. 2019 onwards) with just one kindergarten class, these two teaching spaces have been opened out into one.

The current usage of just the downstairs of the St. John's building as a kindergarten greatly improves the possibilities we have to offer both staff and children with mobility issues. The design of the new corridor also incorporates a suitable wheelchair turning area, and is easily accessible from the garden. A new window opening was constructed for one of the new classrooms which greatly improves the natural light in the new classroom space. In the new kindergarten space, natural light was also a priority, with the construction of both internal windows, and the replacement of some frosted glass panes with clear glass. We are also committed to improving the artificial lighting of the kindergarten, and have replaced a lot of the old "strip lighting" originally in the building. The St. John's building is listed, and major external alterations would unduly change the character of the building. The possibility of adding a lift in order to make the upstairs fully accessible as been investigated, but has been found to be structurally challenging and may unduly affect the historic character of the building. Emphasis has therefore been made on making the ground floor fully accessible.

The timetable for further improvements, along with strategies for improving the accessibility and delivery of the curriculum, are given in the table at the end of this document.

Principles

- CVSE recognizes its duty under the DDA
 1. not to discriminate against disabled pupils in their admissions and exclusion
 2. not to treat disabled pupils less favorably
 3. to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
 4. to publish an Accessibility Plan

- Steiner Waldorf schools are founded on respect and care for the development and individuality of human beings in the context of their cultural and natural environment. The educational approach seeks to be hospitable to the ethnicity, family background or other traditions of the children and to provide them with insight and understanding for the diversity of human beings as a whole.

- As outlined in our Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policies our Parent and Child Groups and Kindergarten are committed to making every effort to ensure that Steiner Waldorf education is available to all who choose it regardless of religious or cultural beliefs, ability, or social or financial background.

- In Steiner Waldorf education there is an intrinsic respect for and celebration of difference and diversity. The cultivation of these virtues is a natural seamless aspect of the educational experience and learning environment.

- Thus every effort will be made to cater for children with disabilities. There will not be discrimination when considering an admission request for a disabled child. Assessment of the ability to cater for disabled children will include liaising with parents and professionals in assessing a child's needs and how a disabled child can be supported so that the child is able to participate as fully as possible in all activities.

- Planning will include giving consideration of how new and existing facilities can be improved to cater better for children, with particular physical needs.

- In keeping with the principles of Steiner-Waldorf education Calder Valley Steiner Education considers all children as having individual needs and aims to meet those needs as best as possible taking into consideration the child's age, developmental stage, and other circumstances.
- Children with special needs, like any other child, will be considered for admission on an individual basis. This will involve full discussion of a child's needs with the parents/guardians, and where appropriate other involved professionals, including consideration of practical and resource constraints.
- Decisions on admission of children with particular special educational needs (including, for example, English as additional language) will be taken through discussions between the teacher and carers, including consideration of practical and resource constraints. The decision has to be based on the best outcomes for the child, the other children in the Kindergarten as a whole.
- In accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy there will be fair treatment of disabled applicants for all types of vacancy, and where possible, after necessary rehabilitation training, every effort will be made to retain any employees who become disabled during their employment.
- Disabled employees will be fully covered by the Equal Opportunities Policy, specialist knowledge and advice offered as necessary and particular attention paid to fire safety.
- The needs of the disabled will be taken into consideration when deciding upon new premises and before carrying out alterations to equipment and premises.

- As a small education charity seeking to develop and provide the best facilities for its children and staff, it has to be recognised that there are currently very tight financial constraints. The kindergarten and parent and child groups are dependent on fees, NEF and any grants and gifts it is able to access. However within this situation the aim of improving accessibility is a priority and a great deal has already been achieved in improving the St. John's building.

Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

- This document will be reviewed annually
- This document will be discussed and reviewed by the Board of Trustees

Related policies

- CVSE SEND policy
- CVSE Equal Opportunities policy
- CVSE English as Additional language
- CVSE Admissions policy