



The Joseph Whitaker School

An Academy specialising in Sport and Performing Arts

2026-28

Accessibility Plan

The Joseph Whitaker School

Accessibility Plan

1. We are committed to providing an environment that is as fully accessible as possible, which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their education, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
2. The Joseph Whitaker School plans, over time, to increase the accessibility of provision for all pupils, staff and visitors to the school. Accessibility Plans will contain relevant actions to:
 - Build on the existing facilities to make the school as access friendly as possible for all
 - Improve access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education
 - Increase access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability, expanding the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are able-bodied pupils. This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities, or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist pupils in accessing the curriculum
 - Improve the delivery of written information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame. The school uses the school website, Insight and a range of social media tools.
3. Attached are Action Plans, relating to these key aspects of accessibility. These plans will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis. New Plans will be drawn up every three years.
4. We acknowledge that there is a need for on-going awareness raising and training for staff in the matter of disability discrimination and the need to inform attitudes on this matter.
5. The Accessibility Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:
 - Behaviour policy
 - Curriculum policy
 - Disability and Equality Scheme
 - Equal Opportunities policy
 - Facilities Management Plan
 - Health and Safety policy
 - School Improvement Plan

- School Prospectus
 - Special Educational Needs policy
6. Potential access improvements are severely limited in areas of the school as a result of the design of current buildings. The school is built across three distinct levels. This affects the ease of access between upper and lower school in particular. Departments affected include English, Technology and Science.
 7. Development of the sixth form centre in 2012, with the provision of a lift, has ensured good access from the Sports Centre car park into central areas of the school has improved markedly. There is additional access via the ramp from the sports hall car park to the lower school. The Learning Inclusion Centre (LIinc) has created a new area which is fully accessible to all users and this provides for both short term and long term needs.
 8. Tarmac resurfacing to areas around lower school with the removal of steps to incorporate a sloped ramp and widening of footpaths has improved accessibility around lower school.
 9. All new developments are subject to DDA provision and this is a primary factor when planning for site improvements.
 10. The Accessibility Plan will be monitored by the EMET Premises Group and the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1 - Basic Access Audit for Schools

The Joseph Whitaker School

Please answer all the questions in this audit. 1= Yes - completely, 2 = Almost - working towards meeting the guidance, 3 = Partially, 4 = Not yet considered.

Section 1: DISABILITY AWARENESS/TRAINING		1	2	3	4	Comments
1	Do you provide disability awareness training to enable all staff to understand and recognise disability issues?		☐			Currently provided to all staff teaching students with disabilities but not routinely to all staff.
2	Do you have arrangements for teachers and teaching assistants to have the necessary training to teach and support children and young people with disabilities if required?	☐				

Section 2: HOW DOES THE SCHOOL DELIVER THE CURRICULUM?		1	2	3	4	Comments
3	Do all staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?	☐				
4	Is teaching appropriately differentiated to meet individual needs so that children and young people make good progress?	☐				
5	Are all children and young people encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?	☐				
6	Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for children and young people with disabilities who cannot engage in particular activities, for example some forms of exercise in physical education?	☐				
7	Do all staff recognise, understand and allow for the additional planning and effort necessary for children and young people with disabilities to be fully included in the curriculum?	☐				
8	Are all staff encouraged to recognise and allow for the additional time required by some pupils with disabilities to use equipment in practical work?	☐				

9	Do you provide access to appropriate technology for those with disabilities?	☐				
10	Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all children and young people irrespective of attainment or disability?		☐			Subject to risk assessment.

Section 3: HOW DOES THE SCHOOL DELIVER MATERIALS IN OTHER FORMATS FOR ANYONE WHO NEEDS IT?		1	2	3	4	Comments
11	Do you have arrangements to provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		☐			Access to services as required
12	Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?			☐		Not all formats (e.g. braille).
13	Do you ensure that information is available to staff, pupils and parents in a way that is user friendly for all people with disabilities?		☐			Available on request rather than routinely.
14	Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		☐			Evac. Chairs. Specialised equipment for students with disabilities.
15	Do you ensure that all school staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		☐			

Section 4:

Name of Block: Technology					
1A	Number of teaching spaces in block	11	1B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	3
1A	Number of social spaces in block	0	1B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	N/a

Name of Block: Reception, Administration and Upper Dining Hall					
2A	Number of teaching spaces in block	0	2B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	N/a
2A	Number of social spaces in block	13	2B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	4

Note: Accessibility measured from main Reception

Name of Block: Upper School					
3A	Number of teaching spaces in block	19	3B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	0
3A	Number of social spaces in block	4	3B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	1

Note: Accessibility measured from main Reception

Name of Block: Art and Library					
4A	Number of teaching spaces in block	5	4B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	5
4A	Number of social spaces in block	4	4B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	4

Name of Block: Performing Arts					
5A	Number of teaching spaces in block	5	5B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	5
5A	Number of social spaces in block	3	5B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	3

Name of Block: Mathematics					
6A	Number of teaching spaces in block	10	6B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	5
6A	Number of social spaces in block	1	6B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	1

Name of Block: Lower School					
7A	Number of teaching spaces in block	16	7B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	16
7A	Number of social spaces in block	5	7B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	5

Name of Block: Sport and gym					
8A	Number of teaching spaces in block	4	8B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	4
8A	Number of social spaces in block	2	8B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	2

Name of Block: Sixth Form					
9A	Number of teaching spaces in block	5	9B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	5
9A	Number of social spaces in block	4	9B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	4

Name of Area: Playgrounds					
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10A	Number of teaching spaces in area	0	10B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	N/a
10A	Number of social spaces in area	4	10B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	3

Name of Area: Fields and 3G					
11A	Number of teaching spaces in area	2	11B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	2
11A	Number of social spaces in area	1	11B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	1

Name of Area: Sports Centre Car Park					
12A	Number of teaching spaces in area	0	12B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	N/a
12A	Number of social spaces in area	1	12B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	1

Name of Area: Upper School Car Park					
13A	Number of teaching spaces in area	0	13B	Number of those teaching spaces which are accessible	N/a
13A	Number of social spaces in area	1	13B	Number of those social spaces which are accessible	1

4a General		1	2	3	4	Comments
16	Are pathways and routes logical and well signed? (both internal & external)			☐		Not well signed externally. No signage internally.
17	Do you have emergency and evacuation procedures to alert all pupils?	☐				

18	Is appropriate furniture & equipment provided to meet the needs of individual pupils?	☐				
19	Do furniture layouts allow easy movement for pupils with disabilities?			☐		Not in all areas, particularly small classrooms
20	Are quiet rooms/calming rooms available to children who need this facility?	☐				SSC and LInc

4b Getting to the building		Yes	No	N/a	Comments
21	Are car park spaces reserved for disabled people near the main entrance?	☐			
22	Are there any barriers to easy movement around the site and to the main entrance?	☐			Main entrance accessible but steps around school as this is on three tiers.
23	Are steps needed for access to the main entrance?		☐		
24	Do all those steps have a contrasting colour edging?	☐			Repainted each summer
25	If there are steps, is a ramp provided to access the main entrance?			☐	
26	Is there a continuous handrail on each ramp and stair flight and landing to the main entrance?			☐	
27	Is it possible for a wheelchair user to get through the principal door unaided? (see guidance notes)		☐		Receptionist is always available to support
28	If no, is an alternative wheelchair accessible entrance provided? (see guidance notes)		☐		
4c Internal Facilities		Yes	No	N/a	Comments for school use

29	If there is a lobby at the principal entrance, is it possible for a wheelchair user to negotiate the doors?		☐		
30	Do all internal doors allow a wheelchair user to get through unaided?		☐		
31	Do all the corridors have a clear unobstructed width of 1.2m?		☐		
32	Does the school have a wheelchair accessible toilet?	☐			
33	Does the school have accessible changing rooms/shower facilities?		☐		Not fully accessible e.g. no hoists

4d Vertical movement		Yes	No	N/a	Comments for school use
34	How many storeys in the block? Tick appropriate box: a = single storey throughout b = single storey with some split level parts c = single storey with some 2/3 storey parts d = mainly 2 or 3 storey	c			
35	If the block is on more than one level, do the internal steps/stairs have contrast colour edgings?		☐		
36	Is there a continuous handrail on each internal stair flight and landing?	☐			
37	Does the school have a lift that can be used by wheelchair users? (see guidance notes)	☐			No lift into English, Science and Technology
38	Do you have any other sort of mechanical means provided to move between floors? If yes, please state		☐		
39	Is it possible for a wheelchair user to use all the fire exits from areas to which they have access?	☐			With assistance

4e	Sensory Impairment	Yes	No	N/a	Comments for school use
40	Are non-visual guides used to assist people to use the buildings? (see guidance notes)		☐		
41	Could any of the décor be confusing or disorientating for pupils with disabilities?		☐		
42	Is a hearing induction loop available (either fixed or portable) in the school? (see guidance notes)	☐			In main reception plus portable units located in SSC
43	Does the block have a "Soundfield" sound reinforcement system?		☐		
44	If there is a "Soundfield" system, in what area? (please state here)			☐	
45	Do emergency alarm systems cater for those with hearing impairment? (e.g. flashing light)		☐		Flashing lights in 70% of the school but not all school. Staff are always on site to aid students.

NOTES:

- The school is in the process of being updated and refurbished. The sixth form build adheres to all legislative requirements relating to access. Governors and staff are committed to equal access for everybody. The Science, Technology and English blocks are an issue as access to it is financially prohibitive and physically almost impossible to address.
- This is a checklist only for guidance
- Completing this form does not constitute a full access audit of the premises.

Target	Strategy	Outcomes	Timeframe	Achievement
Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum.	INSET. Training workshops. Review the specific needs for pupils living with a disability.	Teachers are aware of the relevant issues and can ensure that this group has equality of access to learning. The use of other professional partners has been made available.	Ongoing and as required.	All staff fully aware of school's commitment and differentiate the curriculum as required.
Training for Awareness Raising of Disability Issues.	Provide training for staff, pupils and parents.	Whole school community aware of issues relating to Access.	As required.	All staff fully aware of school's commitment.

Appendix 3 – Improving the delivery of written information

Target	Strategy	Outcomes	Timeframe	Achievement
Availability of written material in alternative formats.	The school will make itself aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes.	On request	Delivery of information to disabled pupils and adults
Raise the awareness of adults working at the school on the importance of good communications systems.	Arrange attendance at appropriate training courses.	Awareness raised.	Annual development and training as required	School is more effective in meeting the needs of pupils.

Appendix 4– Improving the Physical Access

Item	Achievement	Timeframe	Estimated Cost
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Accessible car parking.	Bays to be signed in accordance with Part M standards.	Completed Summer 2025	£11.5k
Dropped kerbs either side of main vehicle entrance.	Pedestrian access.	In place	
External stairs.	Repaint colour contrasted strips.	Repainted Oct 25	Internal staff Cost of paint only
Evacuation Chairs	Purchase Evacuation Chair for Student Services.	In place	£500
Access from Lower School to Upper School.	Insert ramped access.	Not a reasonable adjustment	N/A

Guidance Notes

Section 2	
3 to 10	PLEASE NOTE The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but the wider curriculum of the school, i.e. school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and school trips. The school can use information from this section of the audit, together with any other curriculum review to evaluate the achievement and participation of disabled pupils in different areas of the curriculum.
3	This links with the requirements of the Inclusion Statement in the National Curriculum 2000 where it states all teachers need to: i) set suitable learning challenges, ii) respond to pupils' diverse learning needs, iii) overcome potential barriers to learning and assessments for individuals and groups of pupils
4	How aware are all staff members of the need for flexibility in planning and delivery of the curriculum in order to ensure that all pupils are included appropriately in all curriculum activities?
7	In this case, 'additional effort' is not just about things like lip reading but also, say, for a child with cerebral palsy to keep their head up or to sit straight.
8	See guidance note to Q4

Section 3	
1115	This part of the duty covers planning to make all written information normally provided by the school to its pupils, available to disabled pupils, parents and staff. The school will need to consider how this information could be made more accessible over time.
12	For example, using ICT to produce information in different fonts, sizes, colour contrast, etc.
13	For example, by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams
Section 4 Accessible means giving independent physical access to and within the building regardless of ability or disability	
1-13	For the purpose of this audit, "teaching space" includes classrooms, shared activity areas, libraries, halls, specialist teaching rooms and gymnasia/sports halls. Please refer to recent net capacity survey information.
1-13	Social spaces - please include dining rooms, common rooms, etc., which are not included in "teaching spaces" (Q16).
16	For example, are the signs well placed for wheelchair users and suited to people with visual impairments?
17	This question includes pupils with SEN and disability; raising the alarm should be by both visual and audible means
20	Children with certain special educational needs (such as children on the autistic spectrum) may require areas to which they may be withdrawn.
21	The minimum car park space for disabled people is 6m x 3.6m - spaces should be marked "Parking for Disabled People". Remember
	it is not necessarily the driver who is disabled.
22	The route should be free of steps, slopes, gravel or uneven paving surfaces.
23	Any change in level or threshold more than 15mm high is counted as a step. Steps should have a rise of between 150mm and 170mm and have a depth (going) of between 280mm and 425mm. For school buildings the preferred dimensions are a rise of 150mm and a going of 280mm. (Other details of the design of steps are not required in this audit)

25	Ramps have very specific requirements. For the purpose of this questionnaire, EXISTING ramps are acceptable if slopes of 1:12 to 1:15 are no longer than 5m and slopes of 1:15 to 1:20 no longer than 10m. The ramp must be at least 1.2m wide and 1m wide measured between handrails. Handrails should be provided on both sides of ramps over 2m long. Ramps should stop 1.2m from the swing of a door and have an upstand/tapping rail on any open side. NEW ramps must be min 1.5m wide. Slopes are up to 2m long for slopes of 1:12, 3m for 1:13 and so on up to 10m for slopes of 1:20. Landing between flights must be at least 1.5m long. (Other details of the design of ramps and handrails are not required in this audit)
27	The clear opening should be at least 800mm - this is the dimension (measured with the door open) from the back of the door to the doorstep. In the case of double doors, the clear opening is measured with just one door open. It is not possible for a wheelchair user to independently pull or push two doors at once and sometimes the second leaf is bolted. Any intercom should be positioned between 0.75m and 1.2m above the ground so that wheelchair users can reach them. New main entrance doors should have a 1m clear opening and be powered.
28	Ideally, everyone should use the principal entrance unaided regardless of ability or disability. Some schools do not allow pupils to use the main (or principal) entrance. However, it would be sensible to make the principal entrance accessible to pupils so that governors, staff, and visitors can also use it. Any intercom should be positioned between 0.75m and 1.2m above the ground so that wheelchair users can reach them
29	The lobby should be designed to allow one door to shut before another is opened. These diagrams give guidance on layouts.
30	Internal doors are judged as in note to Q29 above.
32	Wheelchair accessible toilets have very specific requirements. The basic requirements are a room at least 2.2m x 1.5m with the basin
	arranged so that it can be used from the pan. It usually has a transfer space (from wheelchair) to one side of the pan. The door should be capable of opening out of the toilet and have at least 800mm clear opening. Some toilets are designed specifically for the needs of particular users. The toilet must have grab rails, positioned as shown. The tiling around the fittings must be a contrasting colour to aid people with visual impairments. (Other details of the design of toilets are not required in this audit)

33	Ideally, the toilet will have sufficient room for a level access shower, a changing bench and provision to take an overhead hoist. If not, facilities for showering and changing should be nearby.
34	Please answer this question by ticking the box that best represents the block you are auditing. 1 = single storey throughout 2 = single storey with some split level parts 3 = single storey with some 2/3 storey parts 4 = mainly 2 or 3 storey
35	Edgings (nosings) must stand out from the treads so that people with visual impairments easily distinguish them. Ideally they will be white or cream coloured. External concrete or stone steps may be painted (and repainted as they wear off) and internal steps should have proprietary nosings permanently fixed. Some types of nosings have coloured inserts which may be changed if not of a contrasting colour. Nosings should be 55mm wide on both the tread and the riser. Internal steps should have a rise of between 150mm and 170mm and have a depth (going) of at least 250mm. For school buildings the rise should not exceed 170mm, with a preferred going of 280mm. (Other details of the design of internal steps are not required in this questionnaire)
36	Handrails should be on both sides of stairs and ramps. They should be continuous from one end to the next (including landings) to act as a guide.
37	Lifts are complicated! Stringent legislation and regulation of physical size, control and circulation space cover their installation. For the purposes of this questionnaire, please give a simple YES/NO answer.
38	Movement between floors may be by wheelchair lift, platform lift, conventional lift. Stair lifts are not usually suitable for use in schools.
39	Fire exits need to have at least as clear opening of 750mm (see guidance to Q29) but in the case of double doors which must always both open in the event of a fire the clear opening includes the space with both doors open. Ramps should be provided to overcome steps.
40	Visual guides include tactile signs, lifts with tactile call and floor buttons, textures on walls and floors, tactile indications on handrails.
42	Hearing induction loops which enable a person with a hearing aid fitted with a "T" switch to pick up sounds can be fixed to the structure of the room or be portable. The teacher wears a microphone.

Useful Guidance:

- Inclusive Schooling - Children with Special Educational Needs - Statutory Guidance. Date of Issue November 2001. Ref: DfES/0774/2001
- Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils - Guidance. Date of Issue July 2002. Ref: LEA/0168/2002-08-20
- Index for Inclusion - Published by Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, 1 Redland Close, Elm Lane, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6U

July 2026

Next review date: July 2028

Adoption by the Governing Body



Headteacher

Date: July 2026



Chair of Governors

Date: July 2026



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The Joseph Whitaker School

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