

Provision for Pupils with Vision Impairment

Westbrook Primary School



Aim High, Learn Together, Feel Proud

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: 25 March 2024
Last reviewed on:	March 2024	
Next review due by:	March 2027	

General Aims:

- To provide a stimulating, friendly, supportive and independence enabling environment where students with a visual impairment feel safe, happy and secure and enjoy coming to school.
- To prepare the students for maximising their educational potential through setting achievable goals while retaining high expectations.
- For the students to enjoy full mainstream inclusion with appropriate differentiated support to ensure access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life including access to clubs and participation on school council and school trips. This can also involve the use of specialist technology and/or equipment to ensure access to all curriculum areas.
- To provide access to the expanded curriculum personalised to their needs eg. Braille, mobility, independence, social and life skills.

Towards Full Inclusion:

The aim of full inclusion in the mainstream class will be achieved through preparing the student for transition into the class and by preparing the whole school population through ongoing Visual Impairment awareness training. This will begin prior to placement. The VI Provision staff will support the teaching staff through direct teaching support in class and through regular joint planning meetings. The students will only be withdrawn for expanded core curriculum subjects such as Braille/keyboard skills, mobility, life skills and only in situations where to do so in class would be counter-productive for the child. The students will be encouraged to be advocates for their visual needs and to use their pupil voice to inform both staff and students about what is best for them. Staff will also be trained to enable self-advocacy in all curriculum areas when the student might need support.

Westbrook Primary has policies covering all aspects of school life. Where necessary, policies have been adapted to include the needs of the students with Visual Impairments. There may occasionally be times when reasonable adjustments will be necessary. Some of the policies that have been adapted are; Assessment, Environment, Displays, Marking, Hand-Writing, Health and Safety and also Home Learning. There are also Entry/Exit guidelines.

Marking Adaptations for students with VI

Marking and feedback can be given in the medium that best suits the student. This can be from a choice of typed answers where the student works on a laptop/PC/ipad,

written in clear print using a choice of thicker felt tip pens in green or black, in Braille, with smelly stickers and with verbal feedback for students with no vision. The student will be consulted on the best option for their vision.

Handwriting

Where possible the students with a visual impairment will follow the school policy on handwriting. However in some circumstances this may not be suitable. Braille users will learn a combination of Braille and touch typing. Students with certain visual impairments may learn a combination of handwriting and touch typing. Students may also choose their preferred writing tool from a choice of writing pens of varying thickness.

Braille

Access to Braille skills development, Braille reading/writing tools and Braille materials is a fundamental right of all children who are blind or have a severe visual impairment. It is integral to maximising opportunities for their participation in all aspects of life.

Introduction

Braille and print are alternative, but equal, routes to literacy. Successful literacy results in an enjoyment of the written word, the ability of the reader to gain information from written source material and the ability to make written records for a variety of purposes.

Aim:

The aim of Westbrook is to facilitate the learning of Braille as an alternative means of communication for pupils with a visual impairment, if it is appropriate to their intellectual and/or physical ability.

Learning and Teaching:

Deciding the most important medium

On admission to Westbrook, if a pupil's EHCP states they are a Braille user or learning Braille, appropriate provision will be put in place to accommodate their needs.

Pupils may be transferred to Braille from print for the following reasons:

- They can no longer read print
- Print has to be enlarged to such an extent that fluency is severely impaired or it is very tiring
- There is a poor visual prognosis

A decision will be made after discussion with relevant professionals, the pupil and parents/carers.

It is important to be aware that if a pupil's vision has deteriorated very quickly there may not be acceptance of 'being blind' or emotional readiness for learning Braille. In such cases a pupil might need considerable counselling and time to be able to accept the need to learn Braille.

Working in both Braille and print

Some younger pupils whose sight is deteriorating, or is likely to deteriorate, may be taught both print and Braille if they are able to cope with the added burden of work this entails. Whenever possible pupils who have print skills will be encouraged to maintain them.

Pupils who are making very little progress with Braille

For some pupils the decision may be taken to cease Braille instruction when it is felt that there has been little or no progress over a considerable period. Again this decision will be made only after consultation with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals. Other methods and technology for accessing literacy will be used.

Organisation

All new learners will be taught UEB (Unified English Braille).

Those needing Braille tuition receive individual lessons (45/50 minutes) as part of their weekly timetable. In some cases this may be 2-3 lessons per week.

All individual Braille sessions are delivered by qualified teachers/tutors following a personalised learning plan for each pupil.

Braille is delivered using various schemes specifically designed to introduce the Code in a structured format. The scheme used will depend on the pupil's age and ability, existing whole school reading scheme books will be adapted into the format needed for the child.

When a pupil has retained a reasonable knowledge of the Braille Code and is considered responsible enough to look after equipment, they may be introduced to, (and later allocated) a BrailleNote or similar device. Individual tuition is provided prior to the pupil being given the equipment to use independently. However, training may also be ongoing if necessary.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is a continuous process, in which progress is made, or difficulties encountered in each lesson inform the content of the next lesson. Progress is recorded on a record sheet in the pupil's file. Pupils are assessed annually to monitor progress and a report is written for the Annual Review.

Staff Training

All new teaching staff (VI) will learn Braille as part of their MQTVI Diploma which they will be expected to begin within two years of joining the VI team..

All new classroom support staff will be required to complete an on-line certificate course in UEB within three months of joining the staff. Other teaching staff are encouraged to learn Braille. All staff are regularly kept up to date with any changes in Braille

Involving parents

Parents will be encouraged to become familiar with Braille by:-

- Being invited to attend Braille workshops
- Being encouraged to complete an on-line UEB Braille course.

Resources

All pupils are provided with their relevant code of Braille which is UEB.

Reading Schemes in UEB are purchased as soon as they become available.

All classrooms are provided with the appropriate number of Perkins Braille machines. All signage is labelled in Braille.

Displays

All external/corridor and displays internal to the area of the school each student with a VI is based in, will cater for the visual access needs of those students. Displays will be of high contrasting colours with block colour as backing paper. There will be no patterned backing paper to reduce visual clutter. Typed text will be a minimum font size of 24, preferably in Aerial bold. When there is a student who uses Braille, the display will have Braille in each bottom corner of the display with attached print version. There may also be sound buttons located in the bottom corners of the display.

Home Learning

Any adaptations to homework for students with a visual impairment will be planned in conjunction with the VI team and the class teacher. When the child is learning Braille for example, the quantity of homework may be reduced as it may take more time. This will be adapted to suit each student while maintaining high expectations.

Environment

The environment of the new build has been designed with the needs of the students with VI in mind. The corridors are designed to be clutter free, the classes are designed to keep all bags and coats tidied away. Children and all staff will receive regular VI awareness training including training on the dangers of trip hazards from chairs, bags etc. There will be a whole school focus on always walking on the left in corridors for ease of flow for student traffic and to assist students who need to trail.

Health and Safety

Educational Visits and risk assessments; Where possible a member of the VI team will be present on an educational visit. When this is not possible, the student will always be near an adult who will be known to the student. If necessary and in unfamiliar surroundings the adult may use the sighted guide technique where the child holds their elbow/wrist for guidance. They may also do this with a responsible and experienced peer under adult supervision.

All risk assessments and pre-planning for educational visits will incorporate the needs of the students with a visual impairment as necessary. The teacher in charge of the VI will be involved in training on this for all staff.

Assessment

All assessment materials will be provided in the students preferred medium. All formal assessments will follow the rules set out in www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2 and nib.org.uk/examaccess

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the VI unit are the responsibility of the VI leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in VI and providing a strategic lead and direction for this area;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses and indicates areas for further improvement.

A named Governor is also responsible for liaising with the VI leader to ensure this policy is monitored and reviewed.

The quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and Centre lead as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and review.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

Guiding Principles for Entry Criteria for Placement at Westbrook Primary VI Provision for students with a Visual Impairment

Admissions Criteria and Referral Procedure for a pupil being considered for placement at the Westbrook VI Provision will include:

One of the child's primary needs must be visual impairment. This can include:

- A severe visual impairment or total blindness.
- A degenerative visual condition.
- Registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted/visually impaired)
- The child will be of primary age and will have broadly average cognitive, social and communication skills.

Exit Criteria

There may be occasions when Westbrook is no longer the best Provision for the student. This may include the following but is not an exhaustive list:

- If the child's visual impairment becomes a secondary need to other special educational needs e.g. physical, behavioural, communication, or if the placement is no longer appropriate for the child's age, aptitude or primary needs.
- This may be recommended by the SEN panel at Annual Review and will involve the class teachers, QTVI teachers and any other professionals involved with the child. This will also include the views of both parents and child.
- If the placement is no longer compatible with the efficient education of the other students with whom the child is being educated.
- If the placement of the child no longer constitutes an efficient use of resources.
- If the child's vision improves to no longer being sufficient for registration as Sight Impaired (as in some rare cases with medical intervention)
- If the child is assessed to be able to succeed academically and socially with a similar level of independence as his/her peers in their local school.