

# Thwaites School

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN  
2026 - 2029

ENJOY LEARNING, ACHIEVE SUCCESS

# THWAITES SCHOOL

## Accessibility Plan

### 2026/2029

*At the time of publishing the following roles were held:*

|                                                                   |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Headteacher                                                       | Mark Redhead |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead                                      | Mark Redhead |
| Behaviour Lead                                                    | Mark Redhead |
| Designated Teacher for cared for or previously cared for children | Mark Redhead |
| Designated Mental Health Lead (not statutory)                     | Mark Redhead |
| Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO)                    | Sarah Morton |

Approved by

|              |                   |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Name:        | Mark Redhead      |
| Position:    | Headteacher       |
| Signed:      | <i>M. Redhead</i> |
| Date:        | 24/09/2026        |
| Review date: | 24/09/2029        |

Approved by

|           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| Name:     | Lewis Bawden       |
| Position: | SEND Link Governor |
| Signed:   | <i>L. Bawden</i>   |



| Review Table |                                                                                                                                       |            |              |             |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Version      | Description of Change                                                                                                                 | Date       | Approved By  | Next Review |
| 1.0          | Full review and rewrite of the Accessibility Plan for 2026–2029, informed by the accessibility review completed on 23 September 2026. | 24/09/2026 | Lewis Bawden | 24/09/2029  |

This Accessibility Plan will be reviewed at least annually and updated sooner where changes in pupils' needs, the premises, legislation or relevant guidance require it.

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## 1. Purpose and Legal Framework

Thwaites School is committed to ensuring that disabled pupils can participate fully in school life, learn alongside their peers and benefit from the opportunities the school provides. We have high expectations for every pupil and work to identify and remove barriers to access, learning and participation.

This Accessibility Plan covers **2026–2029**. It sets out our priorities and planned actions under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, including educational visits, clubs and other school activities.
- Improve the physical environment so that disabled pupils can make better use of the education, facilities and services provided.
- Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils where that information is normally provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled. We take account of pupils' needs and preferred formats and provide information within a reasonable time.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled 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.

“Substantial” means more than minor or trivial, and “long-term” generally means lasting, or likely to last, at least 12 months. Disability includes a range of physical, sensory, learning and mental health needs, including needs that may not be immediately apparent.

Special educational needs and disability are not interchangeable. A pupil may have special educational needs, a disability, or both.

The school also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments, including providing appropriate auxiliary aids and services, where disabled pupils would otherwise experience a substantial disadvantage. For pupils, changes to physical features are addressed through the separate accessibility planning duty.

We consider the needs of current and prospective pupils and plan improvements proactively. Actions are prioritised according to their likely benefit, urgency, feasibility and the resources required. Specialist advice will be sought where necessary.

The plan builds on the school's accessibility review completed on **23 September 2026** and relevant health and safety and fire risk assessments. It supports the school's Equality Policy and Objectives and complements the SEN and Disability Policy and SEND Information Report.

The governing body oversees implementation and the allocation of adequate resources. Progress will be reviewed at least annually, and the plan will be revised sooner where changing needs, circumstances or assessment findings require it.

## 2. Thwaites' Current Provision and Accessibility Barriers

Thwaites School is a small rural primary school with nursery provision. Staff know pupils and families well and use this knowledge, alongside assessment and consultation, to identify needs and adapt provision.

The accessibility review completed by the Headteacher on 23 September 2026 considered the physical environment, curriculum participation and communication. No current pupil was identified as being excluded from learning because of an access barrier. However, the review identified physical barriers that could affect prospective pupils or pupils whose needs change.

## 2.1 Access to the Curriculum and Support

Teaching, resources and classroom arrangements are adapted to pupils' individual needs. Pupil profiles are informed by staff, pupils and parents or carers and identify support and adjustments.

The Rainbow Room is on the ground floor and provides a space for emotional and sensory regulation. Pupils can request to use it, and staff may suggest its use where this would help. Available resources include sensory and comfort items, wobble cushions, chair resistance bands, weighted blankets, adapted books and resources supporting motor skills and literacy.

Staff receive SEND advice and in-house training from the SENDCO, alongside other relevant training. Further advice and training are sought when needs are identified.

If a pupil cannot access teaching or resources upstairs, ground-floor teaching arrangements and relocation of resources will be considered. Arrangements will support participation with peers and access to equivalent learning opportunities.

## 2.2 Access to the Physical Environment

The school entrance, reception, hall and ground-floor classrooms can be reached without steps. There is a small weather threshold at the entrance; no access difficulty was identified with it during the review. The Rainbow Room is also on the ground floor.

The review identified the following barriers:

- Uneven surfaces and parking on the pavement can affect the approach to the front entrance.
- Some doorways may restrict wheelchair access, and some doors are heavy. Clear opening widths and ease of use require further assessment.
- Furniture in some circulation areas may need repositioning to improve access.
- One classroom, used for KS2 mathematics and music, is reached by a flight of steps.
- The upstairs classroom and library are reached by stairs.
- The exit from a downstairs classroom to the main playground has two steps. The alternative external route is uneven and also includes steps.
- Access to the field is difficult for wheelchair users because of the connecting path.
- Some large outdoor play equipment may be difficult for pupils with mobility needs to use.
- There is currently no wheelchair-accessible toilet.

The smaller front playground is more readily accessible and has seating. Its use may form part of an individual arrangement, but any proposal will consider play opportunities, supervision and inclusion with peers.

A ramp has been suggested as a possible improvement to the main playground route. Its suitability, design and cost require professional assessment. Other physical adaptations will similarly be informed by specialist advice and individual needs.

## 2.3 Emergency Evacuation

The Fire Risk Assessment dated 24 November 2025 informs the school's evacuation planning. Individual arrangements will be assessed where a pupil or other person needs assistance to evacuate safely, including because of mobility, sensory or communication needs.

By 23 September 2026, the school had confirmed that reception clutter had been removed, both hall/reception doors opened easily, the photocopier had been moved away from the alarm call point, and fire extinguishers were signed and bracketed.

Fire-door smoke seals had been ordered, with installation pending, and the identified door latches remained outstanding. These actions remain subject to follow-up through the school's fire safety arrangements. Weekly documented fire-door checks were planned alongside Monday afternoon alarm testing.

## 2.4 Access to Information

Staff adapt instructions, timetables and learning materials to pupils' ages and needs. Available approaches include visual support, explanation and reading information aloud. Enlarged print, digital resources, typing and audio formats can be considered according to individual requirements.

School communications are normally issued through the school's usual channels. Alternative formats or methods can be arranged where a pupil, parent or carer needs them.

The action plan will strengthen arrangements for identifying communication preferences, organising suitable formats and checking that information is accessible and understood.

## 3. Consultation and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Consultation

This plan draws on the Headteacher's accessibility review completed on 23 September 2026, the July 2025 health and safety audit and the November 2025 Fire Risk Assessment. Existing pupil profiles also provide information about individual needs and support, informed by staff, pupils and parents or carers.

As actions are developed and reviewed, we will seek the views of pupils, parents or carers, the SENDCO and relevant staff. Consultation will include disabled pupils and their families, using accessible ways for them to contribute. We will not assume that one person's experience represents the needs of everyone with a similar disability.

We will seek advice from Cumberland Council and relevant specialists where necessary, particularly for building adaptations, physical access and safe evacuation. Consultation and specialist advice will inform priorities, proposed solutions and reviews of their effectiveness.

### 3.2 Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for approving the plan, overseeing its implementation and ensuring that adequate resources are allocated. It will:

- Review progress at least annually and challenge delays or unresolved barriers.
- Consider accessibility when making decisions about budgets, maintenance and building improvements.
- Ensure that the plan remains consistent with the school's equality objectives and relevant policies.
- Ensure that the plan is published and available in accessible formats on request.

The governor responsible for health and safety will support scrutiny of physical access and evacuation arrangements and report relevant findings to the governing body.

### 3.3 Headteacher

The Headteacher will coordinate implementation of the plan and will:

- Ensure that actions have clear responsibilities, timescales and measures of success.
- Arrange appropriate consultation and specialist advice.
- Identify resource requirements and bring proposals to the governing body where necessary.
- Monitor progress and maintain records of completed actions and outstanding work.
- Ensure that changing pupil needs inform access arrangements and priorities.
- Coordinate accessibility improvements with maintenance, health and safety and fire safety work.

### 3.4 SENDCO and Staff

The SENDCO will support the identification of barriers affecting disabled pupils and advise on teaching, resources, communication and staff development. They will work with pupils, families, staff and relevant professionals to plan and review support.

All staff will implement agreed adjustments, use resources appropriately and report barriers or difficulties to the Headteacher or SENDCO. Staff will contribute to reviews by identifying what is working and where further improvement is needed.

### 3.5 Pupils and Families

Pupils and families will be encouraged to share their experiences, communication preferences and suggestions for improvement. Their views will help the school assess whether arrangements support learning, independence and participation.

The school remains responsible for identifying and addressing barriers; pupils and families are not expected to devise technical solutions or fund reasonable adjustments.

## 4. Accessibility Action Plan

This action plan covers access to the curriculum, the physical environment and written information. It combines improvements identified through the September 2026 accessibility review with arrangements for responding to changing needs.

The Headteacher will maintain progress records. Where an action is delayed, the reason, interim arrangements and revised completion date will be recorded and reported to governors. New or urgent individual needs will be addressed when identified rather than waiting for a scheduled review.

### 4.1 Access to the Curriculum

| Target and action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Responsibility                                      | Timescale                                                                         | Resources                                                                      | Measure of success                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plan accessible teaching locations.</b> Identify suitable ground-floor arrangements for activities currently taught in rooms reached by steps or stairs, including KS2 mathematics, music and access to library resources. Consider space, equipment and learning alongside peers. | Headteacher and teaching staff, supported by SENDCO | Initial arrangements documented by December 2026; reviewed when needs change      | Staff planning time; any equipment or relocation costs to be identified        | A workable alternative is identified for each affected activity, with any remaining limitations recorded for action.    |
| <b>Maintain access to lessons and wider activities.</b> Review individual adjustments through pupil profiles and when planning visits, clubs, PE and outdoor learning. Seek pupil and family feedback about participation.                                                            | Teaching staff and SENDCO; Headteacher oversight    | During existing pupil reviews and before relevant activities throughout 2026–2029 | Existing planning time and resources; additional support assessed individually | Identified barriers have recorded adjustments, and reviews show whether pupils can participate meaningfully with peers. |
| <b>Match staff knowledge and resources to identified needs.</b> Review training and equipment needs, including sensory, communication and physical access needs. Obtain specialist advice where required.                                                                             | Headteacher and SENDCO                              | Initial review by December 2026; annually and when needs change                   | Staff development time; training and equipment costs assessed as required      | Staff working with a pupil understand and can implement the agreed support; its effectiveness is reviewed.              |

### 4.2 Access to the Physical Environment

| Target and action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Responsibility                                           | Timescale                                                                   | Resources                                                           | Measure of success                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Improve circulation and everyday access.</b> Review furniture, mats, doorways and heavy doors. Reposition movable obstructions where practicable. Check step edges, contrasting markings and handrails, arranging maintenance where needed. Assess door alterations with regard to fire safety. | Headteacher, supported by the health and safety governor | Practicable layout improvements by December 2026; ongoing checks thereafter | Staff time and maintenance budget; specialist advice where required | Routes remain clear, identified maintenance is completed, and unresolved doorway or door-operation barriers are recorded for assessment. |

| Target and action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Responsibility                                                   | Timescale                                                                                     | Resources                                                                            | Measure of success                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Assess arrival and outdoor access.</b><br>Seek advice on the entrance approaches, the stepped playground exit, alternative paths, field access and participation in outdoor play. Assess the suggested ramp and other options.                                                                    | Headteacher, with local authority or suitably qualified advisers | Advice and options sought by March 2027                                                       | Assessment costs to be confirmed                                                     | Options identify how access and participation could improve, with feasibility, safety considerations and indicative costs recorded.                                                                        |
| <b>Assess accessible toilet provision.</b><br>Obtain advice on a suitable location, space requirements, associated access and potential costs.                                                                                                                                                       | Headteacher, with local authority or suitably qualified advisers | Options assessed by March 2027                                                                | Survey/design costs to be confirmed                                                  | A documented appraisal identifies feasible provision, constraints and funding requirements.                                                                                                                |
| <b>Agree and implement a prioritised improvement programme.</b> Use specialist advice to decide which physical adaptations will proceed, their funding and completion dates. Link opportunities to planned maintenance or refurbishment. Record interim arrangements and reasons for deferring work. | Headteacher and governing body                                   | Programme agreed by July 2027; delivery and annual review through 2029                        | Costed proposals and identified funding; allocation through governing body decisions | Each outstanding barrier has an agreed response, owner and review date. Approved works are completed to their agreed schedule and checked for effectiveness.                                               |
| <b>Ensure evacuation planning addresses disability.</b> Seek competent advice on mobility, sensory and communication needs, including arrangements for anyone unable to use stairs. Put individual evacuation arrangements in place where needed and ensure relevant staff understand them.          | Headteacher, with competent fire-safety advice                   | Review alongside the Fire Risk Assessment by November 2026; sooner where a need is identified | Adviser and staff time; equipment or training costs assessed where required          | Evacuation arrangements address identified assistance needs and are reviewed through appropriate practice and feedback. Track outstanding fire-door work separately through the fire-safety action record. |

#### 4.3 Access to Written Information

| Target and action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Responsibility                                                    | Timescale                                                                       | Resources                                                                | Measure of success                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Identify communication needs and preferences.</b> Include access to written information in pupil support reviews and discussions with families. Record useful formats and methods without collecting unnecessary personal information.                                                                               | SENDCO, teaching staff and office staff                           | Arrangements reviewed by December 2026; then at admission and when needs change | Existing staff time and pupil records                                    | Relevant staff know the agreed communication arrangements and use them consistently.                                                  |
| <b>Organise suitable accessible formats.</b> Review how learning materials, instructions and school information can be provided through enlarged print, clear layouts, visual support, accessible digital material, audio or adult explanation. Identify external support for formats the school cannot produce itself. | SENDCO and teaching staff; office staff for family communications | Arrangements documented by March 2027; materials adapted when required          | Existing equipment and software; specialist services costed where needed | Required information is supplied within a reasonable time in a form the pupil can use. Pupil and family feedback informs adjustments. |

| Target and action                                                                                                                                                                                            | Responsibility         | Timescale                            | Resources         | Measure of success                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Check that information remains usable.</b><br>Review a sample of adapted materials and seek feedback from pupils and families using alternative formats.<br>Explain how to request communication support. | Headteacher and SENDCO | By July 2027 and annually thereafter | Staff review time | Feedback confirms whether information is accessible and understood; any difficulties lead to recorded improvements. |

## 5. Monitoring, Review, Publication and Related Policies

### 5.1 Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor progress against the action plan and report to the governing body at least annually. Reviews will consider:

- Whether actions have been completed within the agreed timescales.
- The effect of improvements on pupils' access, participation and independence.
- Feedback from pupils, parents or carers and staff.
- New or changing needs, assessment findings and specialist advice.
- Outstanding barriers, resource requirements and any revised priorities.

Completed actions will be recorded with their completion dates. Where work is delayed or an approach proves ineffective, the school will record the reasons, review interim arrangements and agree revised action.

This plan covers **2026–2029** and will be reviewed at least annually. It will be updated sooner where changes in pupils' needs, the premises, legislation or relevant guidance require it. A replacement plan will be agreed before the end of the planning period.

The governing body will approve substantive revisions and oversee decisions about resources. Progress will also inform the annual review of the school's equality objectives and published equality information.

### 5.2 Publication and Access

The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website. Paper copies will be available free of charge from the school office.

Pupils, parents, carers and other members of the school community can request an accessible format or assistance to understand the plan. The school will discuss individual communication needs and arrange a suitable response.

Published information will protect pupils' and families' privacy. Individual support and evacuation arrangements will be held separately and shared with those who need them.



### 5.3 Concerns and Complaints

Concerns about accessibility should be raised with the Headteacher so that barriers can be considered promptly. Complaints will be addressed through the school's Complaints Procedure. Reasonable adjustments will be made where needed to enable access to that procedure.

### 5.4 Related Policies and Documents

This plan should be read alongside:

- Equality Policy and Objectives.
- SEN and Disability Policy.
- SEND Information Report.
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures.
- Attendance Policy.
- Complaints Procedure.
- Relevant health and safety arrangements, the Fire Risk Assessment and associated action records.
- School curriculum information, educational visit arrangements and school improvement planning.

These documents provide the detailed procedures supporting this plan. They will be checked for consistency when accessibility arrangements or priorities change.