

North East Vision Friendly Schools Award



How can you use the North East Vision Friendly Schools Award?

The Standard is a self-evaluation tool to be used by senior leadership teams in schools. It requires evidence linked to the sections below:

- Leadership and Management
- Transition
- The Physical Environment
- Learners with Vision Impairment (VI)
- Teaching and Learning – the Inclusive Curriculum
- Working in Partnership

QTVI - Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment

RQHS/HS - Registered Qualified Habilitation Specialist/Habilitation Specialist.



How to achieve the award?

One of the core functions of the Local Authority is to enable and challenge schools around their accessibility and inclusivity. The Vision friendly Schools Award helps schools to review their strengths and areas for improvement.

Assessment will be via local arrangements and will include qualified specialists from the area of sensory impairment and a SEND advisor/consultant.

There are six steps to achieving the award:

- Step 1** Use the standards in the Vision Friendly Schools Award to provide a baseline for what has currently been achieved by school.
- Step 2** As you move through the document notice the bullet points. Standards next to a circle (bullet point) are those which indicate a 'good' level of practice. Those with a star (bullet point) indicate 'outstanding' practice.
- Step 3** Create a Portfolio of Evidence (this can be electronic or paper based)
- Step 4** Include key actions in the school's Development Plan with timescales for achievements. Add this to your evidence portfolio.
- Step 5** The Award will be presented when the Action Plan is complete, and the school has submitted a portfolio of evidence.
- Step 6** The award will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis to ensure standards of inclusivity are maintained.

The Vision Friendly Standard and Self-Evaluation



1. Leadership and Management

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>1.1 Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Teacher/SMT and SEND (and other staff) have had the opportunity to access Vision Friendly Schools Awareness training. • The school Accessibility Plan is improving the minimum standard for accessibility for the vision impaired. ★ Relevant staff have accessed Vision Friendly Schools training and there is a commitment to ongoing training in the area of vision impairment. 	<p>School improvement plan and/or Accessibility plan (website)</p> <p>Governor / Head teacher report</p> <p>School newsletter</p> <p>Training courses accessed and attended</p>	
<p>1.2 School Ethos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School/setting welcomes learners with VI, meets with parents/carers, listens to views and has an awareness of the learner with VI's individual needs and how they are met. • Self-advocacy, independence and confidence are promoted. • There are equally high expectations and standards for learners with VI adhering to school rules • Good channels of communication are established between home and school so that any parent/carer or school concerns can be addressed promptly. ★ Learners with VI and their parents/carer are involved in trying to make the school more vision friendly. 	<p>Surveys of learners/staff views</p> <p>Assemblies, peer awareness training</p> <p>Positive learner attitudes in school and the community</p> <p>Participation in national awareness days e.g. Dotty Day/World Braille Day, Shades for Sight etc.</p> <p>Staff meetings</p> <p>School website, brochures, displays,</p> <p>Productions</p> <p>Learners with VI have the opportunity to input into school council plans</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>1.3 Meeting Statutory Obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are policies in place and they meet basic legal requirements including the Equality Act 2010 and SEN Code Of Practice 2014, SEN and Children and Families Act. • Keeping learners with VI safe in education. • There is multi agency assessment to determine the individual learner (VI) needs. <p>★ UKAAF minimum print standards are followed.</p>	<p>Policies and documents:</p> <p>SEN, Inclusion, Equal Opportunities SEN Information report Governor reports Low reporting of discrimination incidents No exclusion of learners with VI Good attendance Risk Assessments/PEEP Multi Agency communication/Meeting notes Safeguarding Policy – refers to vulnerability of VI learners Liaison with QTVI to ensure statutory obligations are met UKAAF checklist completed</p>	
<p>1.4 Monitoring and accountability of VI Friendly Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist advice is implemented and adhered to. • Expectations from within the Mainstream Guidance (SEN Planning Tool) document and individual pupil specialist strategies/advice adhered to. • School/setting SENDCo monitoring implementation of advice. • Detailed provision map is shared with vision team and/or the local authority SEND Team. 	<p>Self-evaluation of the strategies in place.</p> <p>Examples of solutions to identified barriers.</p> <p>Evidence of actions taken following monitoring visits.</p> <p>Provision map.</p> <p>Feedback from parents/carers that setting meets the needs of their vision impaired learner and specialist advice is implemented.</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>1.5 Management of VI strategies within SEN procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress of learners with VI is carefully monitored and shared with parents/carers. • Newly inducted staff receive awareness training on Vision Friendly Schools. • All staff (including new and supply staff) have access to the specialist strategies appropriate to individual learners with VI and are implementing strategies. • External specialist staff invited to review meetings in line with local authority expectations. • Additional provision is clearly identified for those learners with VI at school SEN Support and those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). • The SENDCo considers specialist advice when devising SEN support plans for learners with VI. • The advice from a QTVI is included in the reports and considered at annual reviews. • Views of learners with VI are gathered as part of the review process. • Parent/carer views are sought at review meetings in line with local authority expectations. <p>★ SENDCo lesson observations monitor access for learners with vision impairment.</p>	<p>Guidance to staff on VI and inclusion</p> <p>Staff meeting minutes</p> <p>Training records minutes</p> <p>Documents related to SEN procedures</p> <p>Learning plans</p> <p>Annual Review information</p> <p>Provision Map</p> <p>Induction procedures</p> <p>Learner with VI profiles</p> <p>There is a costed provision map</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>1.6 Roles and responsibilities to support VI Friendly school strategies and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is aware of its responsibilities to supporting learners with VI. • Support assistants assigned to work with learners with VI are allocated time for induction and ongoing training in the specialist aspects of the role, including the need to encourage independence. • School recognises that allocated assistants are providing essential support to learners with VI to reduce barriers to learning and are not removed from this role. • Exam access arrangements are made in liaison with QTVI in line with submission dates. • School finances provision of specialist consumable resources. • School take responsibility for care of specialist equipment. ★ Job roles are regularly reviewed for those supporting learners with VI. ★ Assistants have allocated time to produce resources and complete transcription. 	<p>Staff job descriptions (including support staff).</p> <p>Curriculum coordinators ensure that planning includes evidence of differentiation for learners with VI.</p> <p>System for ensuring work is modified or transcribed in time for lesson and course of action if not adhered to.</p> <p>Governor reports.</p> <p>Training files.</p> <p>Performance management records.</p> <p>Equipment loan agreement.</p> <p>Procedures outlining processes to ensure safety and security of specialist equipment.</p> <p>Records of equipment held in school and notes of any servicing or repairs required.</p> <p>Exam access arrangements applied for and implemented.</p> <p>Feedback from parents/carers that their child is well supported by school staff in relation to their VI.</p>	

2. Transition

Arrangements should be made to facilitate transfer within and between phases/settings, ensuring that everyone involved is advised and informed of changes. It is important that the learner with VI becomes confident within the new environment as soon as possible (either arriving into setting or moving on).

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>Prior to school entry, liaison takes place with the SENDCo and/or headteacher of the receiving school and to establish an induction programme involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service training to address the needs of the school staff. • Additional resources and specialist provision (e.g. mobility). • Opportunities for the learner with VI and parents/carers to familiarise themselves with the school environment and staff. • Orientation and mobility skills development (with guidance from the Habilitation Specialist if appropriate). • Becoming familiar with the physical layout of the building/classroom and the routines and procedures of the day including lunch arrangements. • Facilitate Habilitation Specialist /QTVI in completing an environmental audit to ensure safety and accessibility. • Necessary adaptations in terms of building, lighting and external areas are being made. • Risk assessments completed and procedures established in relation to particular events such as fires and the safety of the learner with VI. • Partnership with the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) personal adviser, offers support in transition planning and the provision of careers advice (taking advice from QTVI). • Referral is made to the appropriate agencies (e.g. social care, disability resource teams, voluntary bodies etc), to ensure they have appropriate advice regarding the full range of personal and technical support available. • The views/concerns of Pparents/carers as equal stakeholders of learners with VI are sought and addressed as part of the transition process ★ School staff have additional qualifications/have completed courses in the area of vision impairment/habilitation. 	<p>Meeting notes and action plan identified for induction including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dates of familiarisation visits • training for staff • adaptations in place following advice from environmental audit • risk assessments/PEEP in place • Identifying person responsible for following up different areas and co-ordinated by named person • Parent/carer views • Outcomes within EHCP • Sight Guide – My Guide – certified course completed to safely guide learners with VI • Training from a Habilitation Specialist Partnership Agreement with VI service 	

3. The Physical Environment

The setting has considered how they can make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment to make it more accessible for a learner with VI.

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>3.1 Lighting:</p> <p>Should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As consistent as possible throughout the building. • Good quality, even and without glare. • Controllable, with blinds for natural light and /or dimmer switches for artificial light. 	<p>Signage</p> <p>Displays</p> <p>Accessibility Plan</p> <p>Inclusive learning environments</p> <p>Photos of before and after</p>	
<p>3.2 Colour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfaces are painted with a matt finish to avoid glare. Pale colours are preferable. • Walls are contrasted to floors. • Door frames are painted in a contrasting colour to the walls. • Door handles are a contrasting colour to the door. • Floors are plain with a non-glare surface. 	<p>Photos before and after</p> <p>Onsite tour</p>	
<p>3.3 Signage and displays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-lit – without glare. • Simple and colour contrasted to the background e.g. black on white, black on yellow. • Positioned at eye level. 	<p>Modified displays appropriate to the learner with VI – Large Print/ Braille</p> <p>Accessible school menus</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>3.4 Physical Access:</p> <p>Does the setting allow learners with VI to be independent? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stairs and steps • Changes in level • Doorways • Cloakrooms, bathrooms and toilets (uncluttered) • Teaching areas – consistent room layout • Communal areas • Pathways • Storage areas (consistent) • Walk ways are kept clear of obstacles (at floor and head height). • Edges of playground equipment stand out visually from the background. 	<p>Steps edged with contrasting paint</p> <p>Use of rooms to reduce barriers</p> <p>Additional handrails</p>	
<p>3.5 Fixtures and Fittings:</p> <p>Try to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture is matt finished and contrasts with its surroundings. • Storage areas are clearly labelled in an appropriate format and easily accessible. • Flooring such as mats are a contrasting colour to the background (and are held securely). • Coat pegs are a contrasting colour with uncluttered access. • Bins and other obstacles are clearly marked or put away (avoid clutter). • Learners with VI are told of any changes to the physical environment. 	<p>Photographs – before and after or your ideal room</p> <p>Larger changes could be noted in the school accessibility plan</p>	

4. Learners with VI

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>4.1 Monitoring performance of learners with VI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of learner(s) with VI is monitored and reported on to parents/carers. • School supports learners with VI in accessing specialist curriculum – time, place. • Embedding specialist curriculum into the mainstream curriculum. • Learners with VI have individual targets set in conjunction with QTVI based on assessment information which is shared with them and discussed with parents/carers. • Staff have high expectation of learner with VI’s achievement. • Parents/carers as equal stakeholders of learners with VI attend regular reviews where their thoughts and views about progress are sought. <p>★ All staff are aware of barriers to learning for learners with VI.</p>	<p>Assessment data is available.</p> <p>School SEN register</p> <p>Learners with VI are achieving age-related expectations in KS1 and 2</p> <p>Engagement Model and PIVATs</p> <p>Attendance and exclusions</p> <p>EHCP/SEN Support Plan/IEP</p> <p>Timetabling arrangements e.g. touch typing, mobility, Independent Living Skills, Pre/post tutoring, 1:1 interventions, Braille teaching</p>	
<p>4.2 Celebrating achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays show examples of learner achievement and celebration of work for those learners with VI. • Learners with VI are aware of how their work is valued. • Achievements of learners with VI are recognised and celebrated through assemblies, award systems and through contact with parents and carers. • Feedback to learners with VI in appropriate way on completed work e.g. Braille stickers. <p>★ Celebrate diversity, including role models with a vision impairment.</p>	<p>Displays</p> <p>Awards given</p> <p>Number of learners with VI gaining awards</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>4.3 Learners working together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer awareness of vision impairment. • Consideration of paired working. • Equal opportunity to access curriculum and out of school /extra-curricular activities. • Ensure VI is not a barrier to participation. • Partners – able to choose partner. ★ School facilitates opportunities for links with other learners with VI in other schools if appropriate. 	<p>Peer awareness sessions booked in and extended to provide on-going awareness</p> <p>Celebration within the school – displays or school website news</p> <p>Lunchtime buddy system in place with additional training for those peers providing support</p> <p>Advice from sensory teams gained in order for VI learner to access out of school activities successfully</p> <p>Ideas for accessible playground activities</p> <p>Braille club</p> <p>Goal ball</p> <p>Buddy bench or similar strategy available for break and lunch times</p>	
<p>4.4 Empowering learners with VI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with VI are given the opportunity to contribute their views, support is offered to help them do so. • Time is made available to address concerns expressed by the learner with VI or family. • Learners with VI attend their EHCP reviews if appropriate. • School facilitate access to support – counselling support groups as appropriate. • Learners with VI are encouraged to have high aspirations and future goals which are realistic. • School staff consolidate independence skills. ★ Learners with VI have opportunities and are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and planning their own programme of support, appropriate to their age and ability. ★ Learners with VI are involved in staff and peer awareness training if this is appropriate. 	<p>Family and learner with VI's views and outcomes changes implemented are recorded</p> <p>Learners with VI presence in awareness training or attendance at reviews recorded.</p> <p>Questionnaire/feedback from learner with VI about their views</p> <p>Evidence of consolidation of skills e.g. testimonials from children, feedback from parents/carers, Hab specialist records</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>4.5 Care and wellbeing – Health and Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with VI feel able to communicate any concerns and have a point of contact in school. • Learner with VI is given time within the school week to learn about safety e.g. online, habilitation skills (road safety and independent living skills training). • The parent/ carers, as equal stakeholders of learners with VI, will feel able to communicate concerns and have a point of contact in school. ★ School works with QTVI to be aware of extra focus on specialist curriculum for health, wellbeing, personal development. 	<p>Named person</p> <p>Learner with VI can explain how they would seek support</p> <p>Timetabled regular session and appropriate facilities available,</p>	

5. Teaching and Learning - The Inclusive Curriculum

A learner with VI may miss incidental learning opportunities and visual clues such as body language, gestures and facial expression. They may require a multi-sensory approach, more frequent adult intervention, differentiated activities specific to the learner's visual needs, opportunities for first-hand experiences and handling of real objects, extra time to explore objects/activities and complete tasks. Every learner with VI will have different needs, but they should have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum.

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>5.1 Classroom management - Think ACCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – appropriate seating position C – clear and clutter free C – contrast E – easy to locate S – spacing S – size and style <p>(A) Appropriate seating position –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most (but not all) learners with VI benefit from sitting close to the focus of the activity. • The learner with VI is not positioned facing a window. • The learner with VI may need to move around the setting freely to position themselves in the best place to view an activity. • If a learner with VI needs specialist IT to magnify toys, books and activities they may need to have this set up near a plug socket. 	<p>Passport or individual learning plan outlining adaptations/modifications required.</p> <p>Seating plan</p> <p>Observation feedback</p> <p>Learner with VI feedback</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>(C) Clear and clutter free –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep any print neat and of good quality. • Use a simple font such as comic sans or Sassoon for labels. • Pictures may need to be enlarged and modified. 	<p>Examples of modifications of work provided</p>	
<p>(C) Contrast -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure white boards are clean and use a black/red marker. • Use a contrasting background for visual demonstrations. • Fibre tipped pens give better contrast than crayons or coloured pencils. • Use of coloured Pritt Stick. 	<p>Observation feedback</p>	
<p>(E) Easy to locate –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure toys/activities/learning materials are kept in the same place. • Keep the classroom layout the same. • Keep the classroom tidy. 		
<p>(S) Spacing –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space makes things more visible. • Consider the spacing of words in books. 	<p>Observation Photographs</p>	
<p>(S) Size or style –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure print on labels and in books is easy for the learner with VI to see * Remember that braille or large print may be required, please ask your QTVI for advice. 		

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>5.3 Positive image in the curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources e.g. stories with characters who have vision impairment. ★ Learners with VI are made aware of the contribution to society of adults with a vision impairment (and invite role models into school where appropriate). 	<p>Examples of where school has used visitors</p>	
<p>5.4 Planning and inclusive curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom planning shows actions for adaptations linked to learners with VI accessing the curriculum where appropriate. Time is set aside for VI staff liaison with class teacher . Planning shared in advance to allow time for modification and transcription of resources produced in appropriate medium. Adaptation of activities to ensure tasks are achievable within the time set. Reduced timetable to allow time for pre/post teaching where appropriate. ★ VI friendly strategies embedded within whole class teaching and learning opportunities. 	<p>Teaching plans evidencing adaptations for learner with VI, evidence of safety aspects to consider for learner with VI and how to minimise risks e.g. practical subjects</p> <p>Differentiation</p> <p>Timetabled time to liaise with QTVI, examples of discussion re modification of work – before and after</p> <p>Planning sheets</p> <p>Transcription requests</p> <p>Timetabled agreed sessions for pre-post teaching, extended specialist curriculum</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>5.5 Assistive technology for access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with VI have access to appropriate specialist equipment and they are trained to use it independently (e.g. Low Vision Aids, Close Circuit Televisions etc). • Learners with VI have access to a named person on site to provide any necessary support. • School staff encourage learner with VI to use the equipment. • Arrangements are in place for charging and there are routines to ensure equipment is ready and functioning. • School provides safe storage for equipment that learners with VI have independent access to. <p>★ Learners have access to 'accessibility' features within operating systems.</p>	<p>Allocated time to develop specialist skills with technology and area for these sessions</p> <p>Identified person known to learner with VI and staff identified to support – can be written into plan</p> <p>Evidence of routine can be seen or explained by learner with VI</p> <p>Identified place and space for equipment</p> <p>Ease of access features are enabled</p>	
<p>5.6 Educational visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessments are completed with the learner with VI's vision difficulties in mind. • Venues have been contacted prior to the visit to ensure access e.g. touching the animals/exhibits. <p>★ Additional preparatory visits for VI learners take place.</p>	<p>Planning of visit including the access arrangements and safety/Risk assessment in place before trip.</p> <p>Learner with VI testimonial</p>	

6. Working in Partnership

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>6.1 Parents and carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform parents/carers of upcoming visits. • Give time and more feedback. • Enhance communication channels. • Personalised, if the parent/carer has VI themselves make appropriate adjustments. • Address any concerns regarding medical needs re VI. • Follow up after appointments to gain up to date information. • Parents/carers have been given the opportunity to be involved in the assessment process and are encouraged and supported, if necessary, to make their contribution. ★ Parents/carers are invited and/or contribute to pupil specific vision awareness training. 	<p>Parental feedback, testimonials, emails, questionnaire</p> <p>EHCP/Medical care plan</p> <p>Hospital letters</p>	

Standard	Examples of Evidence for Standard	School Evidence
<p>6.2 Working with other services and agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate room for specialist staff to conduct assessments and undertake 1-1 teaching. • School keeps sensory team informed of reasons for absence. • School seeks to safeguard external agencies by keeping them informed with relevant information. • School provides support if learner with VI is unfamiliar with visiting VI staff. • School coordinates multi-agency meetings when appropriate. • School shares information regarding multi-agency involvement. • School shares information regarding learner with VI behaviours. • Parents/carers of learners with VI are informed of all visits to school from specialist staff and parent/carers are copied into any relevant paperwork. ★ School are involved in collaborative multi-agency working around a pupil to ensure continuity of approach between home and school and share best practice. 	<p>Regular space identified and ready for visit</p> <p>School contacts VI service if the learner with VI is absent in advance of visit</p> <p>Change of timetable</p> <p>Meeting notes</p> <p>CPOMs</p> <p>Emails, meeting notes etc</p> <p>Communication focused meetings additional to child in need/TAF and EHCP review meetings</p>	



For further information contact:

Your regional Vision Impairment team lead at

Different formats

If you would like this information in a different format such as Braille, large print, on CD/MP3, or in a different language please contact us.

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