



# **SCOTTISH COUNCIL of INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

## **Handbook on Accessibility**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
June 2006**

# Acknowledgements

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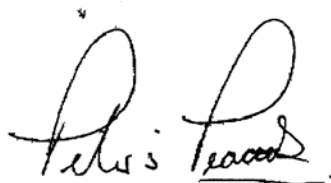
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**June 2006**

## **Ministerial Foreword**

I am very pleased to contribute to the foreword in the SCIS Handbook on Accessibility. All schools in Scotland aspire to ensure that children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work. However, some face barriers to learning which if not addressed by schools will limit their capacity to learn and succeed. It is important that schools take action to ensure that all disabled young people have the best opportunity to achieve their goals and that we do what we can to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum and to the physical environment of the school. All pupils benefit when disabled pupils are included appropriately in our schools. Children who learn together will learn to live together in society and in later life. The information contained in this very useful handbook will help school staff as they endeavour fully to include disabled pupils in the life and work of the school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Peacock'.

**Peter Peacock MSP**  
**Minister for Education and Young People**

## **Foreword**

In today's world education and learning are seen more and more as the keystones to participation in society. It is welcome and significant that the principles of inclusion in education, equality and diversity are also increasingly becoming a central part of education and learning.

The Disability Rights Commission believes that education and learning should ensure that disabled people have choices and opportunities that enable them to achieve their full potential and promote social inclusion. However, many disabled people still have difficulties in reaching equality with others in education – for example, disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications.

It is with this in mind that the DRC warmly welcomes the SCIS Handbook on Accessibility. This is an important document, not only because it builds on the learning from the Scottish Executive's Report on the First Round of Accessibility Strategies, but also because it demonstrates a commitment from the independent and grant-aided schools sector, to ensuring that disabled children and young people have access to the full range of learning opportunities in welcoming, supportive and inclusive environments.

I hope that independent and grant aided schools across Scotland will be able to use the handbook as a helpful tool in assisting disabled pupils to benefit fully from the school experience alongside their non disabled peers.

**Adam Gaines**  
**Director Scotland**  
**Disability Rights Commission**

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# 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Focus of the Handbook

The SCIS handbook has been prepared with emphasis on providing guidance and practical advice to governors, head teachers and staff of independent and grant-aided schools on how to improve accessibility for pupils with a disability. This is in line with the government's legislative programme, which places a duty on education authorities and bodies responsible for independent and grant-aided schools to overcome barriers to learning through careful planning and evaluation.

The focus of the handbook is on:

- the requirements and implications of the legislation for independent schools
- widening access for pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities
- the development of an ethos of accessibility for the school community

Throughout the handbook reference is made to:

legislation (shaded text)

good practice (bold type)

key points (in boxes).

## 1.2 Using the Handbook

Independent and grant-aided schools vary widely in terms of their size, pupil population, location, provision and practice. The handbook is offered as a toolkit to help schools to prepare their accessibility strategies in a way that suits their own circumstances and reflects the needs of their own community. The handbook is presented in sections

to allow the greatest flexibility of use for schools and to allow for amendments and updates to be made as required.

The format of the handbook enables different staff and different departments in schools to use selected sections of the handbook as and when they wish. For some schools this may be achieved by circulating photocopied sections of the handbook to relevant staff or staff groups. Other schools may wish to have the handbook available on their school intranet to remind staff of their planning duties to become more accessible to pupils and prospective pupils with a disability.

### **1.3 Equality and the Wider Agenda**

Access to education for children and young people with a disability has to be understood in context and as part of a wider agenda that seeks inclusion, equal opportunities and full participation of everyone in our society, including children and young people. At national and international levels, schools with an inclusive ethos are regarded as having the most appropriate environment to ensure equal rights and participation of all.

For many years children with a disability, who were unable to participate and learn in the schools provided, were excluded from them and in some cases were prevented from receiving education at all. It is still the case that disabled children and young people do not always receive the education they need and find themselves excluded, in an informal sense, from the education system.

By the late 1970s the concept of special educational needs was recognised, along with acknowledgement that many children experienced difficulty in learning when the teaching was not structured to match their level of understanding and ability. Special education aimed to meet the individual needs of pupils with disabilities or special needs, using a variety of teaching approaches. Often this was in separate schools or units.

More recently there has been a move towards greater inclusion of children and young people with a disability into mainstream schools. Access to education is a key element of equality. Children and young people with a disability have goals, dreams and aspirations in life that

are no different from those of anyone else and they should have equal opportunity to fulfil these.

As legislation to prevent disability discrimination has developed, schools have adjusted their practices. Improvements in identifying barriers to learning and in structuring teaching approaches to the needs of pupils have enabled many schools to provide for a more diverse range of pupil ability. Such an approach can bring benefits to the whole school community and can provide the most effective means of combating discrimination now and in future generations.

### **Key Points**

Increasing access to education for current and prospective pupils with a disability is a challenge that schools should actively plan for and promote.

Governors and head teachers should provide a clear lead in developing an ethos and culture in which all staff and pupils feel valued and fully included in the life of the school.

## **2: DISABILITY LEGISLATION AND TERMINOLOGY**

This section provides a summary of the relevant disability legislation and of schools' key responsibilities to children and young people. It also defines some of the legal terminology used in the legislation and provides examples that may help schools' understanding of the scope of their duties to current and prospective pupils with a disability.

### **Key Legislation**

#### **2.1 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was introduced to address barriers to participation in society that disabled people face.

**The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the disposal or management of premises.**

Note: SCIS provides separate advice on disability discrimination in relation to schools' duties as employers.

### **Disability**

Under the legislation a 'disabled person' is defined as being a person who has a disability. A person has a disability if he has:

**"a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amends and extends the meaning of disability in relation to mental illness and to cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis. For more detail see section 2.10.

## **2.2 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) – Disability Discrimination in Education**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) was introduced to make further provision against discrimination, on grounds of disability, in schools and other educational establishments. Part 2 of the Act is entitled Disability Discrimination in Education.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 amended and extended Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act to cover education. Chapter 1 applies specifically to school education and makes it unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils and prospective disabled pupils on the grounds of their disability. Chapter 2 deals with further and higher education.

Under the Act it is unlawful for a body responsible for a school to discriminate against a disabled pupil or prospective disabled pupil in any of the following areas:

- admission to the school (see 2.6)
- the provision of education and associated services (see 2.7)
- exclusion from the school (see 2.8)

(Reference section 28A, Part 4, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

For independent schools, the proprietors (i.e. the managers or governors) are the responsible bodies. For grant-aided schools, the responsible bodies are the managers.

## **2.3 Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 (DSPERA)**

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 requires education authorities and independent and grant-aided schools to prepare and implement accessibility strategies in order to improve access to education for pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities. For more detail see section 2.9.

## **An accessibility strategy is intended to:-**

- (a) increase the extent to which pupils with a disability can participate in the school's curriculum
- (b) improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with a disability are able to take advantage of the education and associated services provided by the school
- (c) improve communication with pupils with a disability and, in particular, improve the communication of information which is provided in writing, after taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

Pupils with a disability include those who may be admitted to the school, i.e. prospective pupils.

## **DRC Code of Practice**

The Code of Practice for Schools produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is recommended reading for all schools. The Code gives guidance on the legislation, on how the duties on schools should be interpreted and on the adjustments schools may be expected to make in order to comply with the legislation.

**2.4 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 is effective from December 2006 and places a duty on all public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons.** The Act also requires authorities to eliminate discrimination against disabled persons, to eliminate harassment of disabled persons, to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, encourage participation by disabled persons in public life and to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. Although independent schools are not public authorities, they should be aware of the duty on public authorities to consider discrimination against disabled persons in a more proactive way.

## 2.5 Discrimination

A school or responsible body discriminates against a disabled pupil or a prospective disabled pupil if:

- (a) for a reason which relates to his disability, it treats him less favourably than it treats or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply; and
- (b) it cannot show that the treatment is justified

(ref section 28B, Part 4, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

A school also discriminates against a disabled person if:

it fails to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage and it cannot show that its failure to take such steps is justified.(ref section 28B, Part 4, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

The responsible body must take such steps as is reasonable to ensure that disabled pupils are not to be substantially disadvantaged. (This is known as the 'reasonable adjustments' duty). This duty specifically applies to arrangements for admission and exclusion and to the provision of education and associated services. For more detail see section 2.12.

(ref section 28C, Part 4, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

## 2.6 Admissions

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against pupils and prospective pupils with a disability in respect of school admissions.

This covers:-

- the arrangements made for determining admission to the school; this includes criteria for deciding who will be admitted to the school when it is over-subscribed and the way it operates those criteria
- the terms on which the school offers pupils a place at the school
- refusing or deliberately not accepting an application for admission to the school from a disabled person.

A permitted form of selection is justified e.g. selection on merit, provided that there is no discrimination or unfair treatment on the grounds of disability (e.g. that candidates with dyslexia are not placed at an unfair disadvantage in the entrance examination).

Schools cannot wait until a disabled pupil has arrived before making adjustments as they may find themselves already in breach of the law. They need to think ahead to what they might need to do, and should keep policies under review to ensure that they do not discriminate against disabled children.

Independent schools are permitted to select pupils on the grounds of ability and aptitude. Some schools require prospective pupils to pass an entrance test. Schools can use entrance tests or examinations as part of their admissions process on the basis that merit is a 'permitted form of selection'. Examinations should be organised in such a way that they do not unfairly disadvantage pupils with a disability. For example, certain candidates may require a scribe, large print, extra time etc depending on their needs.

**Schools which are selective should ensure that their criteria for deciding who will be admitted to the school, if it is over-subscribed, are available to all interested parties and that their policies on admissions are applied fairly and consistently.**

## **2.7 Education and Associated Services**

The 2001 Act covers all education and associated services for pupils and prospective pupils – in essence all aspects of schools life, including extra-curricular activities and school trips.

Education and associated services should be interpreted widely to encompass all aspects of a pupil's educational experience. The Code of Practice refers to:-

- school admissions
- the curriculum
- teaching and learning
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework

- access to school facilities
- activities to supplement the curriculum (such as a drama group visiting the school)
- school sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunch times
- the serving of school meals
- interaction with peers
- assessment and exam arrangements
- school discipline and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs and activities
- school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation for the next phase of education

## **2.8 Exclusions**

It is against the law to discriminate against a disabled pupil by excluding him or her from the school because of their disability.

**It is unlawful to discriminate against pupils with a disability by excluding them from school for reasons related to their disability. This applies both to temporary and permanent exclusions.**

Independent schools should take reasonable steps to try to support pupils with a disability. Such steps might include:

- providing individual support plans to assist pupils with disabilities to manage situations they find difficult
- effective communication amongst staff to raise their awareness of potential difficulties and provide them with consistent management approaches
- providing staff development and training opportunities to increase staff confidence and skills.

## **2.9 Accessibility Strategies**

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002, requires bodies responsible for schools to prepare and implement strategies to improve, over time, access to education for disabled pupils. As part of existing planning, responsible bodies need to take account of their duties to disabled pupils and prospective pupils.

### **The strategy should detail plans to improve:**

- **access to the curriculum**
- **access to the physical environment**
- **communication and the delivery of school information normally provided in writing to pupils.**

The three areas of development should together improve access to education and associated services for current and prospective pupils with disabilities. School governors, head teachers and staff should consider and understand their duties under the legislation and plan to improve access to education for current and prospective pupils with a disability as part of their strategy. The legislation places an anticipatory duty on responsible bodies, which means that schools have an active duty to plan ahead.

Schools should prepare, implement and review an accessibility strategy, which can be a free-standing document or incorporated into school development planning. However it is presented, the plan should clearly state what improvements are planned to make the school more accessible to current and prospective pupils with a disability. The plan should be for a period of 3 years and should be reviewed annually. The Scottish Executive will monitor schools' progress in improving over time, access for pupils with a range of disabilities.

The duty to improve communication to pupils with a disability requires schools to take account of their disabilities and of any preferences that they or their parents express. Schools should be able to provide school information to pupils with disabilities in appropriate alternative forms within a reasonable time. Strategies must be in writing and must also be available in alternative forms on request. Accessibility strategies must be

kept under review and, if necessary, revised (see section 3 on Preparing Accessibility Strategies)

The 'reasonable adjustments' duty excludes requirements for physical alterations to be made to schools and for provision of auxiliary aids and services. Instead, both physical alterations to buildings and the provision of auxiliary aids and services should be considered as part of the more strategic approach under the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) Act (Scotland) 2002 to improve access through the implementation of accessibility strategies.

## **Scottish Executive Advice**

The Scottish Executive issued a guidance document, Planning to Improve Access to Education for Pupils with Disabilities: Guidance on Preparing Accessibility Strategies (September 2002), to responsible bodies on their obligations under the 2002 Act. The Guidance indicated that there could be overlap among the terms disabled, additional support needs and social emotional and behavioural difficulties.

A Report on the First Round of Accessibility Strategies (November, 2003) provided responsible bodies with an evaluation of current progress on:

- the preparation and implementation of strategies;
- an outline of key principles of good practice and general points for improvement; and
- guidance on early indicators of good practice with illustrations from the first strategies submitted to the Scottish Executive in April 2003.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

### **2.10 Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) defines a disabled person as being a person who has a disability. A person has a disability if he has:

“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The definition is broad and can cover pupils with physical and mental impairments, including children with a learning disability, sensory impairment, severe dyslexia, diabetes or epilepsy, pupils who are incontinent and pupils who have severe disfigurements or progressive conditions like muscular dystrophy.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extended the definition of disability to cover persons with cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis. Previously it was necessary for people with cancer, HIV infection or MS to show that condition had an effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities before it would constitute a disability. The 2005 Act deems persons who have been diagnosed with those conditions to be disabled for the purposes of the Act.

There are a number of other terms to be considered.

### **Mental Impairment**

Schedule 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that the term mental impairment includes an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness only if the illness is “clinically well recognised”. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 removes the condition for the illness to be clinically well recognised. A mental impairment will therefore constitute a disability if it has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s normal day-to-day activities.

The World Health Organisation’s official classification of diseases may be of use (ref ICD 10 – International Classification of diseases 10<sup>th</sup> edition). Illnesses such as depression, bulimia, and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) have been held to be mental impairments. Whether or not they are also disabilities will depend on the effect they have on the individual concerned.

### **Substantial**

The word ‘substantial’ when used in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 means ‘more than minor or trivial’ (unless the text indicates otherwise).

### **Long-term**

The effect of an impairment is said to be long-term if:

- it has lasted for at least twelve months
- it is likely to last for at least twelve months; or
- it is likely to last for the rest of the person's life

(Sch 1 Para 2(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### **Normal day-to-day Activities**

An impairment is said to affect the ability of someone to carry out normal day-to-day activities if it affects one of the following:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- hearing or eyesight
- memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
- perception of the risk of physical danger.

(Sch 1 Para 4(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

The effect of impairments in younger children may not be obvious if they are too young to have developed the ability in question. In considering the case for a child under six years, an impairment is treated as having a long-term adverse effect on the child's ability to carry out day-to-day activities if it would normally do so for people aged six or over. (Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations 1996) Definitions of impairments that affect ability to carry out day-to-day activities and examples are provided in the Appendix at the end of this section.

### **2.11 Additional Support Needs**

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced a new framework for supporting children and young people who require additional help with their learning and their families. The framework is based on the concept of additional support needs (ASN). This replaces the former special educational needs (SEN) framework. The term ASN will apply to children or young people who, for whatever reason, require additional support, long or short term, in order to help them make the most of their school education.

A child or young person has additional support needs for the purposes of the ASL Act where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from the school education provided for the child or young person.

Many children who have ASN will also be defined as having a disability under the DDA. However, not all children who are defined as disabled under the DDA will have ASN. For example, those with severe asthma, arthritis, or diabetes may not have ASN, but may have rights under the DDA. Likewise, not all those with ASN have a disability.

### **Key Point**

As the statutory definition of disability is fairly broad, schools should ensure that there is an agreed understanding of their view of disability in preparing their accessibility plans.

## **2.12 Preventing Discrimination**

A school will discriminate against a disabled pupil or a disabled prospective pupil if

- (a) the pupil is treated less favourably
- (b) the school fails to take reasonable steps to avoid putting the disabled pupil at a substantial disadvantage.

### **Less favourable treatment**

If a school treats a pupil or prospective pupil with a disability less favourably than another because of his or her disability without justification, they may be breaking the law.

Example 1:

Parents who want their daughter with epilepsy admitted to a primary school are told that the school cannot take her unless she stops having fits. This is likely to be deemed less favourable treatment for a reason related to the child's disability and is therefore likely to be unlawful.

Example 2:

A disabled boy is admitted to a secondary school. The school wants him to have all his lessons in a separate room in case other children are frightened by his muscle spasms and involuntary noises. This is likely to be deemed less favourable treatment for a reason related to his disability and is therefore likely to be unlawful.

### **Justification for less favourable treatment**

In some cases, the school can treat a disabled pupil "less favourably" if it can provide justification that is both "substantial" and "material" to the particular case.

Example 3:

A pupil with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair is on a trip with her school to an outdoor centre. The teachers arrange for the school children to go on a 12-mile hike over difficult terrain, but having arranged for a detailed risk assessment to be carried out, it is clear from the assessment that, the disabled pupil should not go on the hike for health and safety reasons. In this case, the school may be able to justify the less favourable treatment.

### **Failure to take a "reasonable steps"**

Schools should also take "reasonable steps" to make sure that disabled pupils are not put at a "substantial disadvantage" compared to non-disabled pupils.

### **What is a "substantial disadvantage"?**

Schools should take account of a number of factors. These might include:

- the time and effort that the disabled child might need to expend;
- the inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled child might suffer;
- the loss of opportunity or lack of progress that a disabled child may make compared to other non-disabled children.

Examples of failing to make a reasonable adjustment:

- a secondary school does not make special arrangements for disabled pupils who are taking public examinations
- a deaf pupil who lip-reads is at a disadvantage because teachers continue speaking while facing away from him to write on a whiteboard
- a pupil with severe dyslexia is told she cannot have her teacher's lesson notes, and that she should be taking notes during lessons "like everyone else".

### **What is "reasonable"?**

The Act does not define "reasonable" – this depends on individual cases and will be a matter for the court to decide. However schools should take account of:

- the need to maintain academic, musical, sporting and other standards
- the financial resources available
- the practicalities and cost of making the particular adjustment
- the health and safety of the disabled pupil and others
- the interests of others

### **Justification for failing to take "reasonable steps"**

Not taking "reasonable steps" to avoid putting pupils at a substantial disadvantage can only be justified if there is a reason which is both substantial and material to the particular case.

### **Reasonable adjustments to buildings and the physical environment**

Schools do not have to remove or alter physical features under SENDA. However, the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 places a duty on responsible bodies to prepare and implement accessibility strategies. Accessibility strategies should plan proactively to improve over time access to the physical environment of the schools.

### **2.13 Auxiliary aids and Services**

Where pupils attend an independent school at their parents' expense, they may not have access to auxiliary aids and services through the ASN framework. Auxiliary aids and services are normally made available by the school and parents may, in certain circumstances, be charged for them. (The Code of Practice for Schools on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

However, responsible bodies should reflect on their approach to the provision of auxiliary aids and services. Independent schools are advised to strike a balance in terms of provision of auxiliary aids/services and charges to parents. Less favourable treatment might occur if charges were made at a level designed to deter pupils from coming to that school.

### **2.14 Conciliation Service**

Children and/or parents can take a case to the sheriff court and/or, with the consent of the responsible body, use the DRC's conciliation service. Responsible bodies can also seek to utilise the DRC conciliation service, with the consent of the child or parents.

## 2.15 Action

Head teachers should familiarise themselves with the duties imposed on responsible bodies by the DDA, SENDA and DSPERA, and ensure that boards of governors or managers are made aware of these duties.

Head teachers should provide the lead in improving schools' accessibility for disabled pupils and prospective pupils. They should ensure that staff with a role in planning improvements are given clear remits, that they understand their duties to disabled pupils and prospective pupils and that they are supported in their work.

In meeting the requirements of the Act, schools should ensure that:

- all staff, including new members are aware of their duties under the Act;
- staff receive disability equality training;
- steps are taken to ensure staff are informed about current and prospective pupils with a disability;
- policies for admission, exclusions and education and associated services are not discriminatory and provide the school with flexibility to respond to individual needs;
- all school policies are systematically reviewed to ensure they are not discriminatory;
- their general plans take account of the need to make "reasonable adjustments";
- there are plans to identify barriers to learning and target improvements for current and prospective pupils with a disability;
- they consult with a wide range of stakeholders;
- they have adequate and accessible internal complaints procedures.

## **APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF THE EFFECTS OF AN IMPAIRMENT**

### **Mobility**

This covers moving or changing position in a wide sense. Account should be taken of the extent to which, because of either a physical or a mental condition, a person is inhibited in getting around unaided or using a normal means of transport, in leaving home with or without assistance, in walking a short distance, climbing stairs, travelling in a car or completing a journey on public transport, sitting, standing, bending, or reaching, or getting around in an unfamiliar place.

#### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to travel a short journey as a passenger in a vehicle;
- inability to walk other than at a slow pace or with unsteady or jerky movements;
- difficulty in going up or down steps, stairs or gradients;
- inability to use one or more forms of public transport;
- inability to go out of doors unaccompanied.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- difficulty walking unaided a distance of about 1.5 kilometres or a mile without discomfort or having to stop - the distance in question would obviously vary according to the age of the person concerned and the type of terrain;
- inability to travel in a car for a journey lasting more than two hours without discomfort.

### **Manual dexterity**

This covers the ability to use hands and fingers with precision.

Account should be taken of the extent to which a person can manipulate the fingers on each hand or co-ordinate the use of both hands together to do a task. This includes the ability to do things like pick up or manipulate small objects, operate a range of equipment manually, or communicate through writing or typing on standard machinery. Loss of

function in the dominant hand would be expected to have a greater effect than equivalent loss in the non-dominant hand.

### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- loss of function in one or both hands such that the person cannot use the hand or hands;
- inability to handle a knife and fork at the same time;
- ability to press the buttons on keyboards or keypads but only much more slowly than is normal for most people.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to undertake activities requiring delicate hand movements, such as threading a small needle;
- inability to reach typing speeds standardised for secretarial work;
- inability to pick up a single small item, such as a pin.

## **Physical co-ordination**

This covers balanced and effective interaction of body movement, including hand and eye co-ordination. In the case of a child, it is necessary to take account of the level of achievement which would be normal for a person of the particular age. In any case, account should be taken of the ability to carry out "composite" activities such as walking and using hands at the same time.

### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- ability to pour liquid into another vessel only with unusual slowness or concentration;
- inability to place food into one's own mouth with fork/spoon without unusual concentration or assistance.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- mere clumsiness;
- inability to catch a tennis ball.

## **Continence**

This covers the ability to control urination and/or defecation. Account should be taken of the frequency and extent of the loss of control and the age of the individual.

### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- even infrequent loss of control of the bowels;
- loss of control of the bladder while asleep at least once a month;
- frequent minor faecal incontinence or frequent minor leakage from the bladder.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- infrequent loss of control of the bladder while asleep;
- infrequent minor leakage from the bladder.

## **Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects**

Account should be taken of a person's ability to repeat such functions or, for example, to bear weights over a reasonable period of time. Everyday objects might include such items as books, a kettle of water, bags of shopping, a briefcase, an overnight bag, a chair or other piece of light furniture.

### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to pick up objects of moderate weight with one hand
- inability to carry a moderately loaded tray steadily.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to carry heavy luggage without assistance;

- inability to move heavy objects without a mechanical aid.

## **Speech, hearing or eyesight**

This covers the ability to speak, hear or see and includes face-to-face, telephone and written communication.

### **(i) Speech**

Account should be taken of how far a person is able to speak clearly at a normal pace and rhythm and to understand someone else speaking normally in the person's native language. It is necessary to consider any effects on speech patterns or which impede the acquisition or processing of one's native language, for example by someone who has had a stroke.

#### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to give clear basic instructions orally to colleagues or providers of a service;
- inability to ask specific questions to clarify instructions;
- taking significantly longer than average to say things.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to articulate fluently due to a minor stutter, lisp or speech impediment;
- inability to speak in front of an audience;
- having a strong regional or foreign accent;
- inability to converse in a language which is not the speaker's native language.

### **(ii) Hearing**

If a person uses a hearing aid or similar device, what needs to be considered is the effect that would be experienced if the person were not using the hearing aid or device. Account should be taken of effects where the level of background noise is within such a range and of such a type that most people would be able to hear adequately.

## Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to hold a conversation with someone talking in a normal voice in a moderately noisy environment;
- inability to hear and understand another person speaking clearly over the voice telephone.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to hold a conversation in a very noisy place, such as a factory floor;
- inability to sing in tune.

### (iii) Eyesight

If a person's sight is corrected by spectacles or contact lenses, or could be corrected by them, what needs to be considered is the effect remaining while they are wearing such spectacles or lenses, in light of a level and type normally acceptable to most people for normal day-to-day activities.

## Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to see to pass the eyesight test for a standard driving test;
- inability to recognise by sight a known person across a moderately-sized room;
- total inability to distinguish colours;
- inability to read ordinary newsprint;
- inability to walk safely without bumping into things.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;

- inability to distinguish a known person across a substantial distance (e.g. playing field);
- inability to distinguish between red and green.

### **Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand**

Account should be taken of the person's ability to remember, organise his or her thoughts, plan a course of action and carry it out, take in new knowledge, or understand spoken or written instructions. This includes considering whether the person learns to do things significantly more slowly than is normal. Account should be taken of whether the person has persistent and significant difficulty in reading text in standard English or straightforward numbers.

#### Examples

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- intermittent loss of consciousness and associated confused behaviour;
- persistent inability to remember the names of familiar people such as family or friends;
- inability to adapt after a reasonable period to minor change in work routine;
- inability to write a cheque without assistance;
- considerable difficulty in following a short sequence such as a simple recipe or a brief list of domestic tasks.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- occasionally forgetting the name of a familiar person, such as a colleague;
- inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours;
- inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document without assistance;
- inability to read at faster than normal speed;
- minor problems with writing or spelling.

## **Perception of the risk of physical danger**

This includes both the underestimation and overestimation of physical danger, including danger to well-being. Account should be taken, for example, of whether the person is inclined to neglect basic functions such as eating, drinking, sleeping, keeping warm or personal hygiene; reckless behaviour which puts the person or others at risk; or excessive avoidance behaviour without a good cause.

### **Examples**

It would be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- to operate safely properly-maintained equipment;
- persistent inability to cross a road safely;
- inability to nourish oneself (assuming nourishment is available);
- inability to tell by touch that an object is very hot or cold.

It would not be reasonable to regard as having a substantial adverse effect:

- fear of significant heights;
- underestimating the risk associated with dangerous hobbies, such as mountain climbing;
- underestimating risks - other than obvious ones - in unfamiliar workplaces.

(All examples taken from the DRC's "Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability".)

## **Younger Children**

Children who are not yet 6 years old may have impairments which do not affect their normal day-to-day activities simply because of their age. For example an impairment which affects mobility or continence might be said not to have a substantial adverse effect since babies and younger children may not have developed any greater mobility or continence at that age in any case.

To avoid this problem, the law states that the impairment is to be taken as having a substantial adverse effect on the child's normal day-to-day activities, if it would have such an effect on the normal day-to-day activities of someone of 6 years or older. (Reg. 6, Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations 1996)

### **Recurring illnesses**

Where an impairment ceases to have a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, it is to be treated as continuing to have that effect if that effect is likely to recur. (Sch 1, Para 2(2), Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### **Former disabilities**

The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 apply with equal force to a person who was formerly disabled as to a person with a current disability. (Section 2 & Sch 2, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### **Progressive illnesses**

Where a person has a progressive condition (such as cancer, multiple sclerosis or muscular dystrophy or infection by the human immunodeficiency virus), and it has caused an impairment affecting his or her day-to-day activities, then it is deemed in law to be a substantial adverse effect, if the condition is likely to result in such an effect eventually. (Sch 1, Para 8, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### **Effects of medical intervention**

In considering whether a person's impairments have a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, the effects of medication, prostheses, aids, adaptations, equipment etc. are to be ignored. The one exception to this rule is spectacles and contact lenses. The corrective effect of these is taken into account when assessing someone's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. (Sch 1, Para 6, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

### **Severe disfigurement**

Severe disfigurement is deemed in law to have a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. (Sch 1, Para 3(1), Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

This does not apply to severe disfigurement caused by:

- tattoos which have not been removed;
- non-medical body piercing;
- anything attached by way of non-medical body piercing.

(Reg 5, Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations 1996)

### **Blind and Partially Sighted People**

Anyone who is either certified as blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist or registered as blind or partially sighted with the local authority is automatically deemed to be disabled for the purposes of the Act. (Disability Discrimination (Blind and Partially Sighted People) Regulations 2003)

Exceptions

None of the following are regarded as impairments for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995:

- addiction to or dependence on alcohol;
- addiction to or dependence on nicotine;
- addiction to or dependence to any other substance (unless due to medical prescription);
- seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hayfever) unless aggravating another condition;
- tendency to set fires;
- tendency to steal;
- tendency to physical or sexual abuse of other persons;
- exhibitionism;
- voyeurism.

(Regs 3 & 4, Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations 1996)

### **3: PREPARING ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES**

This section sets out the planning duties placed on responsible bodies by the DDA (as amended). It provides advice for responsible bodies and schools on procedures to take in preparing accessibility strategies.

Schools are required to address three distinct areas in their plans to improve access for pupils with a disability. The three areas of development should together improve access to education and associated services for current and prospective pupils with a disability. It is important that education and associated services are interpreted widely to encompass all aspects of a pupil's educational experience.

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002, requires responsible bodies of schools to prepare and implement accessibility strategies to address three distinct elements of planned improvements in access for pupils with disabilities:

- increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school to increase pupils' access to education and associated services; and
- improving communication with pupils with a disability in the provision of information provided in writing

## Key Points

Schools already plan improvements in their provision of education and manage the strategic allocation of their capital expenditure through school development planning.

Most schools will want to incorporate accessibility strategies into school development plans so that targets can be monitored and reviewed as part of whole school development and improvement.

Such an approach places schools in control of setting a pace for planning change that is manageable and takes account of their individual circumstances.

Consultation must be a continuing priority throughout the planning process in order to set the climate for an ethos of equality and fairness throughout the school.

### 3.1 Leadership and Accessibility Groups

Before the planning process can begin, there needs to be a decision about who will have responsibility for the leadership role in improving access for current and prospective pupils with a disability.

It is recommended that a senior member of staff committed to equal opportunities should lead the preparation, implementation and review of the accessibility strategy.

Once leadership is determined, an accessibility group should be identified to assist with the planning process and carry forward an action plan of improvements on behalf of the responsible body. It is for individual schools to decide who has a role to play. Some schools may wish to have a governor involved and a local authority representative might be considered in some circumstances.

The size of accessibility groups will depend on the size of the schools. In small schools an accessibility group consisting of four to six members may have responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the

entire accessibility strategy. Large schools might allocate responsibilities for different planning duties across a number of departments.

It is important that responsibility for each of the three planning duties is covered:

- improvements in access to the curriculum;
- improvement to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services; and
- improvements in the provision of information normally provided in writing for pupils with a disability.

Accessibility Groups might include:

- the bursar/finance manager or someone with responsibility for the school's estate;
- pupils;
- parents;
- learning support staff and other school staff;
- representatives of relevant outside agencies such as health or voluntary sector organisations
- a school governor or manager

Example 1

**In one school, the head teacher believes it to be her role to lead the whole school in developing its accessibility strategy. She identified an Accessibility Team of 4 staff members that she chairs and assigned one member as Disability Co-ordinator.**

**The Accessibility Team are members of a further committee called the school's Accessibility Strategy Group to which they report 3 times a year. The head teacher chairs the Accessibility Strategy Group that is made up of about 30 members of staff, pupils and parents, each with a contribution to make. All parts of the school are represented.**

**When the school was developing its first accessibility strategy, each member of the Accessibility Strategy Group had a particular function in the audit process and was part of the**

**consultation that led to agreement of short, medium and long-term priorities for development.**

**Accessibility Strategy Group members provide feedback to and consult with the persons they represent so that the whole school is fully involved in improving accessibility.**

Example 2

**In another school the initial planning group included 4 members of staff.**

**During the process of examination, the following persons or resources were either consulted or actively involved in the drawing up of the strategy:-**

**Young person with experience of disability  
Educational psychologist  
Social Work Department  
School staff group  
School young people  
Health visitor  
Psychiatric nurse  
RNIB Scotland  
RNID  
ENQUIRE  
CALL CENTRE  
Learning and Teaching Scotland  
Scottish Society for Autism  
Scottish Sensory Centre  
Architect**

### **3.2 Introduction to Accessibility Strategies**

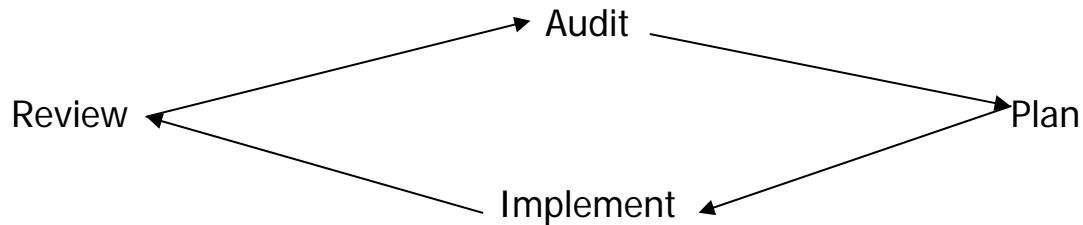
Schools should consider providing a brief account of their purpose, philosophy, aims and general characteristics as an introduction to their accessibility strategy. This can provide schools with the opportunity, to highlight existing strengths such as positive and inclusive ethos, as well as any major challenges to be overcome, such as limitations imposed by inaccessible buildings.

Introductory statements might include:

- reference to the requirements placed on them by relevant legislation
- the purpose of accessibility strategies
- reference to the National Priorities in Education
- values that underpin the education provided in schools
- age range of pupils
- pupil population and any form of permitted selection schools use
- any specialist educational provision schools provide, e.g. for musically gifted pupils or pupils with disabilities or additional support needs
- location and general surroundings
- school buildings and the physical environment

### 3.3 The Planning Process

The same process is used to improve accessibility as is used to plan for other school development and improvement, that is:



Consultation with all stakeholders must be a continuing priority throughout the planning process.

There may be pupils, staff, parents and others concerned with schools who can assist them to become more accessible. Planning groups should consult widely, taking account of views and suggestions from within and outwith schools. They may wish to seek expert help in determining what can be changed and where improvements can be made. They may find it helpful to consult with organisations that can provide advice on specific disabilities or with schools that are designed for pupils with disabilities.

Grant-aided and some independent special schools provide for pupils with a range of disabilities at a national level. Staff in these schools

have specialist skills and may be able to provide information and advice to schools on ways to eliminate or limit barriers to learning.

## **Audit**

A full detailed audit of all school provision is required to provide information about the schools' strengths as well as all the barriers or potential barriers to full participation of all pupils for all three planning duties.

Some schools have systems in place for collecting the kind of information required for the three audit areas, but others may in addition, need to consider setting targets to improve their auditing systems.

The audit tool provided in section 7 of the handbook could be used to gain an overview of provision across the school.

## **Plan**

Accessibility groups need to have access to appropriate information so they can plan for improvements. Following on from wide consultation with key stakeholders including relevant professionals, pupils, parents, staff, governors and others, accessibility groups should identify the priorities to be addressed each year for the period of the accessibility strategy.

Priorities should be written as SMART targets, that is:

- S** specific
- M** measurable
- A** achievable
- R** relevant
- T** timed

Priorities should cover the three planning duties:

- improvements in access to the curriculum;
- improvement to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services; and

- improvements in the provision of school information normally provided in writing, for pupils with a disability.

There is an overlap across the three areas and accessibility groups should decide how to structure accessibility strategies to suit the needs of their own schools. Improvements can be detailed under the three separate headings or grouped together.

Accessibility groups should take account of any other provision that is made in the school, such as after school clubs, and ensure that activities are accessible to pupils with a disability.

An action plan should be agreed that identifies the key person responsible for each target and when it will be achieved. Once agreed, it is important that head teachers and governors approve action plans.

Some schools may want to set some targets, which are less quantifiable in terms of specific outcomes, such as changing the ethos of schools' attitudes towards pupils with certain disabilities, or increasing the confidence of staff in supporting pupils with a range of disabilities.

## **Implement**

The purpose of the accessibility strategy is to improve practice by making schools more accessible to pupils with a disability. Good communication and full school involvement will facilitate the effective management and implementation of schools' identified priorities.

## **Review**

Schools should review annually what has been successfully achieved in their strategies and identify unmet or partially met targets that require to be carried forward into the next year.

Accessibility groups should agree priorities for the forthcoming year, consulting with everyone involved at each stage.

As part of the review process, responsible bodies and schools should develop quality assurance systems that monitor the impact of their accessibility strategies on the services they provide. It is important to ensure that planning is effective in improving access to education for current and prospective pupils with a disability. Schools should make full

use of the Quality Indicators for School Self Evaluation contained in the publication, How Good Is Our School, as well as those provided in section 7 of this document.

Responsible bodies and schools should bear in mind that:

- making services more accessible for pupils with a disability benefits everyone
- many adjustments can be made very easily, whilst others may take time

### **3.4 Action**

#### **Responsible bodies and head teachers should:**

- designate senior members of staff committed to accessibility to lead the preparation, implementation and review of accessibility strategies;
- provide clear remits to staff for the preparation, implementation, and review of accessibility strategies that include:
  - identifying accessibility groups to assist with accessibility planning and effective consultation;
  - allocating resources for making improvements
  - reporting procedures

### **Accessibility groups should:**

- audit school provision;
- arrange for wide and continuing consultation with pupils, parents and the whole school community;
- identify barriers to learning for current and prospective pupils with disabilities, as defined under the Act;
- identify priorities to improve access to the curriculum, the physical environment, and the provision of information for pupils with a disability;
- develop quality assurance systems to monitor the impact of targets on pupils' learning, attainment, the school ethos, and their access to education and associated services;
- prepare an action plan of SMART targets that specifies short, medium and long-term improvements to be achieved over the 3-year period covered by the strategy;
- note objectives to be addressed in the longer term, beyond a 3-year period, that are not adopted as planning priorities in the current accessibility strategy;
- seek approval of head teachers and governors or managers of the school for action plans and agreement on implementation;
- identify who is responsible for meeting targets;
- set time-scales for meeting targets;
- plan and manage the implementation of the priorities identified for year 1 of the plan and monitor the outcomes;
- at the end of year 1, review what has been successfully achieved and plan priorities for year 2. (Priorities should be planned in response to changing circumstances within schools or to pupil needs);
- provide progress reports to school management, governors and staff, pupils and parents as required.

## **4: ACCESS TO THE CURRICULUM**

Responsible bodies of independent schools are required to prepare an accessibility strategy to improve, over time, access to education for pupils with a disability. The accessibility strategy should detail schools' plans to improve access to the curriculum for current and prospective pupils with a disability.

This section provides advice for independent schools on how to improve access to the curriculum for current and prospective pupils with a disability.

The curriculum and the way it is delivered underpins everything that happens in schools.

### Key Points

Responsible bodies of independent and grant-aided schools are the governors or managers. On their behalf, head teachers are responsible for the management and delivery of the school curriculum.

Access to the curriculum is principally about entitlement, equal opportunity and all pupils being valued equally.

In all schools:

- the curriculum should enable all pupils to achieve their full potential and prepare them for participation in society
- access to the curriculum at an appropriate level, should be available to all pupils
- the curriculum should provide positive learning experiences and develop pupils' self esteem
- the curriculum should address matters of equality and fairness and challenge injustice

## **4.1 The Equality Context**

Schools should carry out an audit of current practice across all curriculum policies and practice. This will provide schools with an overall evaluation of services from which to plan improvement. However, improving access to the curriculum for disabled pupils is best achieved in the context of the ethos and culture of the school.

Schools can develop systems, policies and procedures that are inclusive, that challenge discrimination, and that promote positive attitudes amongst pupils, staff, parents and others involved.

Example

**One independent school has developed its accessibility strategy within the context of its existing commitment to equality:**

**“The accessibility strategy has been developed against the background of the school’s existing commitment to equality. We see consultation as a continuing priority in taking forward the strategy and setting the climate for an ethos of equality and fairness across the school.”**

An audit tool is provided in section 7 of this handbook. Schools can use the Quality Indicators to evaluate their provision and identify areas for improvement.

## **4.2 Policies, Methodology and Strategies**

Schools should take account of their duties to current and prospective pupils with a disability as they audit their curriculum policies, procedures and practice.

Schools should view curriculum policies as the translation of the values and aims of schools into the learning and teaching that is their purpose. Policies should provide staff with guidance on how to structure courses and study programmes and how to make adjustments for pupils with a disability. They should detail schools’ preferred methods of delivery, including whole class teaching, small group and/or individual teaching, and they should provide planning strategies, including:

## **Differentiation**

Pupils follow the same curriculum, which is presented in different ways to take account of their aptitudes, abilities and learning preferences (for example larger print, smaller groups, different teaching strategies)

## **Individualisation**

Aspects of the curriculum are altered to take account of individual needs (for example, documents are read to pupil, scribes record work, calculators used)

## **Adaptation**

The content of areas or courses is altered to allow pupils with disabilities to have comparative experiences or suitable alternatives (for example, a pupil with physical disability is provided with alternative physical tasks for physical education)

## **Enhancement**

The content of the curriculum is expanded to ensure abler pupils are suitably stimulated and challenged (for example, additional materials are provided at a suitable level to stimulate/stretch bright pupils)

## **Elaboration**

The content of the curriculum is adjusted by adding, replacing or removing some targets for pupils with specific learning difficulties, or is designed to suit pupils with complex needs.

## **Planning**

Improving access to the curriculum for current and prospective pupils with a disability should not be viewed narrowly but seen as an ongoing process that is part of school development.

## **Audit**

Schools might find it helpful to consider the following key questions when auditing the curriculum:

Do school policies include measures for supporting learning and teaching, which take into account current and prospective pupils with disabilities?

Are staff provided with guidance on a variety of teaching approaches and is there opportunity for teachers to share experiences of successful teaching strategies?

Is professional development regularly provided on learning and teaching, including differentiation?

Do teachers' forward plans for the class or group build on pupils' prior learning and where required include individual targets for disabled pupils?

Is the effectiveness of teaching, planning, guidance and support to staff monitored and evaluated?

Are the needs of pupils with a disability routinely considered when developing and implementing policies for the educational, social and recreational activities of the school?

Schools should consider all the disabilities listed in section 2 of this document Disability Discrimination. However, they may decide to improve access to the curriculum for current pupils with a disability and then plan further improvement for prospective pupils in future accessibility strategies.

### **4.3 Support for Learning**

Some schools have support for learning departments with support for learning staff who work closely with teachers to assist pupils with a disability. Where this is the case, support for learning staff will be key contributors to accessibility strategies.

Learning support teachers are the specialists in providing additional support for pupils with a disability. They have an important role in improving access to the curriculum. Learning support staff can assist class teachers by extracting pupils for individual or group work, or for help in developing learning skills. They can advise teachers on effective teaching approaches for pupils. However, the main responsibility for teaching pupils with a disability remains with teachers.

All teachers have responsibilities to pupils and prospective pupils with a disability and schools should ensure that they adopt consistent and rigorous approaches towards assessment so that pupils who need or may need additional support for learning are identified and supported appropriately.

Schools with no learning support departments should have systems in place to ensure that they provide additional support to pupils with a disability where it is required.

Example

**One school has produced a Policy and Procedures Document that sets out the schools approach to Support for Learning. An excerpt from the document states:**

**“The school aims to provide every child with the opportunity to achieve personal excellence. We acknowledge that occasionally this may be more difficult for certain children and this is why the Support for Learning Department exists to support pupils who are experiencing difficulty in their learning.**

**It is a whole school resource to staff, pupils and parents, offering assistance where a barrier to learning occurs. It aims to support pupils who are experiencing difficulty in their learning and to support teachers in the provision of learning experiences.”**

Schools should provide written policies and guidelines to ensure staff know what is expected of them and to assist them in identifying pupils who may have a disability and who may need support.

Support for Learning Policies should set out the school approach to providing support for pupils who require it. They should define the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and if employed, other support staff. Where appropriate they should define the 5 roles of learning support teachers:

- co-operative teaching
- tutoring
- specialist support
- staff development
- consultancy

Policies should provide guidance for staff on:

- working in partnership with parents and pupils;
- assessment procedures to be followed;
- recording, reporting, and transfer of information;
- planning support to meet pupils' individual learning needs.

It may be helpful for schools to include in their policies, a list of signs to look for to help staff identify pupils who may be experiencing difficulties and appropriate teaching strategies to help overcome these. Documents should include advice for staff on the stages to be followed in referring pupils for further assessment, including forms to be completed and contact person(s).

Schools may find they have to seek further assessment and/or advice from health, therapy or psychology services. Independent schools may wish to establish relationships with external agencies to assist them in supporting current and prospective pupils with a disability.

Example

**One independent school has established a working relationship with their local education authority. The head teacher initiated a service level agreement between the school and the education department. The agreement has allowed the school's learning support teacher to form strong links with the Principal Psychologist and with learning support staff in some local**

**authority schools. School staff are able to access staff development and training opportunities run by the local authority and to benefit from collaboration with other education professionals.**

**The school has piloted a staged intervention programme for pupils who require additional support for learning.**

**An excerpt from the leaflet for parents describes the process:**

**“Staged intervention is a process implemented by the local authority and adopted by the school to support learning. It provides schools with a structured planning and record keeping system for individual pupils who require additional support for their overall learning needs. It is an inclusive approach, which involves parents/carers, pupils, relevant school staff and support services when necessary.**

**Staged Intervention provides:**

- **an agreed action plan for individual pupils**
- **a structured monitoring and review cycle**
- **a record of achievement and intervention for pupils as they progress through school”**

Staged Intervention is reproduced as an Appendix to this section of the handbook.

#### **4.4 Resources, Aids and Equipment**

Schools should provide realistic support and resources to improve access for pupils with disabilities, in addition to that provided for the majority of pupils. Amounts of funding allocated will vary, depending on a number of factors, including school size, purpose, pupil population, and available funds. The effectiveness of funding resources used to support pupils with a disability should be monitored.

To support pupils with a disability schools should:

- build up a range of learning materials that are suitable for pupils with specific learning difficulties;
- ensure specialist equipment is accessible. It is important that any future supply of computers are accessible or can be easily modified to suit pupils with a disability;
- have designated staff to co-ordinate support for current and prospective pupils with a disability. Some schools employ learning support teachers and learning support assistants. Within a mainstream setting, there is no set ratio for the allocation of additional support for pupils with a disability. The allocation of learning support teachers will vary from school to school;
- establish links with other agencies such as health and voluntary organisations so that if required they are able to enlist their help in supporting pupils and prospective pupils with a disability.

#### **4.5 Staff Development and Training**

Staff development and training should be an ongoing priority for schools as they plan to become more inclusive and accessible to current and prospective pupils with a disability.

Appropriate professional development opportunities and staff in-service training should be provided for staff to extend their knowledge and confidence in working with pupils with a disability.

Staff should be encouraged to share good practice in teaching approaches and in the use of resources and equipment.

#### **4.6 Evaluation and Review**

Schools should have plans to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes of priorities set within their accessibility strategies. They should ensure there is frequent and effective communication with everyone involved.

## **Some key questions to ask:**

Does the school have procedures for systematically identifying learning needs of pupils and addressing barriers to learning?

How well does the school adapt teaching and learning to suit individuals or groups of pupils with differing abilities or aptitudes, ensuring that all are challenged at an appropriate level?

How effectively do learning support and other specialist staff contribute to meeting the needs of pupils with a disability?

How well does the school address discrimination and promote a sense of fairness and equality throughout the school?

To what extent does the school welcome diversity and embrace difference?

To what extent do staff work collaboratively to support pupils with a disability, including where appropriate with outside agencies?

Are pupils with a disability able to participate in all subjects alongside their peers?

Are pupils with a disability consulted, listened to and included in all school activities?

## **4.7 Evaluating Provision**

The tables in section 7 give the relevant quality indicators for improving access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability. Accessibility groups should keep a record of the sources of evidence upon which they base their evaluation.

## 4.8 Action

Schools should develop clear policies, guidance and advice that indicate their commitment to:

- equal opportunities and entitlement for all pupils;
- promoting a positive ethos and culture in which all pupils and staff feel valued;
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum to suit the needs of all pupils, that encourages them to become independent learners and provides them with knowledge and skills to prepare for adulthood;
- using different teaching approaches, including for example, individual or small group work;
- the use of a range of learning and teaching methods and approaches that take account of pupils' different learning styles and interests;
- using assessment as part of the learning process to identify pupils who may need additional support for learning;
- the professional development of staff that provides them with opportunities for training to ensure they have the knowledge and skills confidently to deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils including current and prospective pupils with a disability;
- the use of a variety of resources including ICT to improve access to the curriculum for pupils with a disability;
- the allocation of additional resources to improve accessibility for current and prospective pupils with disabilities;
- systematic quality assurance procedures for monitoring the impact of targets on pupils' progress.

## **APPENDIX 2: STAGED INTERVENTION**

Below is an example of a staged intervention approach used in one education authority. At the time of writing this handbook, Records of Needs were still being opened. However, after 14 November 2005 when the Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004 is commenced Records of Needs will no longer be opened. A new statutory planning document will be prepared for those children and young people who require significant additional support from outwith education, as well as from within education itself. Schools can refer to the code of practice which can be accessed through the LT Scotland Inclusive Education website which also contains an example of a type of staged intervention approach (page 27).

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/inclusiveeducation/>

### **Stage 1**

- Initial concerns identified by teacher, parent/carer or pupil
  - Differentiation in place/extra support from teacher
  - Teacher still has concerns – registers concerns with head of learning support and/or by completing appropriate form
  - SLANT\* could be involved for consultation, initial work/advice, or assessment
  - Review and evaluation process continues
  - Concerns resolved – remain on stage 1 or remove from process
  - Concerns continue – move to stage 2, 3 or 4
  - Stage 2 meeting set up – parents/guardians/house master invited to attend
- \* SLANT is the local education authority Support for Learning Area Network Team

## **Stage 2**

- Consultation between teacher and head of learning support, parent/carer and pupil, learning support teacher and support agencies where appropriate
- Psychological services may be involved at this point for consultation
- Agreed action plan/additional support
- Next steps planned- review date set
- Next steps implemented
- Monitor and review
- Pupil may remain at stage 2, move to stage 3 or back to stage 1

## **Stage 3**

- Possible involvement with psychological services and other agencies- may lead to Individualised Educational Programme (IEP)
- Monitor and review- pupil may remain at stage 3, move to stage 4 or go back to stage 2

## **Stage 4**

- Record of Needs
- Will have IEP

## **5: ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

This section covers the physical environment, which can be defined as the buildings, vehicles, playground and sports fields used by the school. The same considerations used to evaluate the accessibility of the school campus should also be used when planning external trips and activities. Good practice would also include the transport arrangements to external venues.

The process described within this section of the handbook will help identify where there are physical barriers restricting access for pupils with a disability, staff and visitors and then look to identify strategies whereby these barriers can be removed or minimised. Whilst this process might involve alterations to the building this is not the only option and schools should ensure that management strategies have also been taken into consideration.

When disability is discussed the majority of people immediately consider wheelchairs and yet only a small percentage of people who would be classed as being disabled will actually use a wheelchair. Within this section readers are encouraged not just to consider mobility but also users who have sensory impairments, communication and language difficulties and learning difficulties.

## Key Points

Schools should recognise the need to consider a broad range of disabilities and the extent to which the school ethos is inclusive if they are going to make significant improvements. It is through attention to detail and making many small but relevant changes for the majority of users that schools are most likely to develop effective accessibility strategies rather than in individual large projects which might benefit a few.

Within the wider school community there are likely to be individuals who represent the whole range of disabilities that are covered by current legislation. Consultation with this group will go a long way to informing the accessibility group of changes required.

Within the Scottish education system, there are a number of grant-aided special schools providing specialist services for children with mobility, hearing, visual and learning difficulties. When writing their accessibility strategies, these schools would provide a source of advice from specialists in a particular field. Consultation is an important element in achieving a good working strategy.

Many schools will have a number of different buildings, possibly over a number of different sites. For the purpose of this exercise each building needs to be considered in isolation.

The starting point for each school is the production of an audit report. This will establish a base line and identify the limitations of a particular building. The school can then compile an action list prioritising different tasks into short term – within one year, medium term – within 1 to 3 years and long term – 4 years or more.

Each project should identify the budget that is going to be required, the source of the funding and the person who is responsible for completing the project. It would be reasonable where there are multiple buildings and locations for the action list to amalgamate all the projects across all buildings.

## 5.1 The Audit

There are a number of different approaches that can be adopted. The approach best suited to a particular school will depend on the size of the school and the resources available. The options are as follows:

- summary audit completed in-house by staff with some building experience
- detailed audit completed in-house by staff with building trade qualifications
- hire a professional consultant

As the quality of the audit identifies the necessary improvements to the school environment the school should use professional input in completing the audit within the resources available.

There are many sources of audit tools that are extremely useful when carrying out an audit. When searching the web the problem is the overwhelming number of options that can be considered. Three different examples have been reviewed and are worthy of consideration.

1: The Centre for Accessible Environments has published Access Audits that provides a guide and checklist for appraising the accessibility of public buildings. It also contains an informative video which schools may find useful.

2: The Department for Education and Employment publication Building Bulletin No 91 Access for Disabled People to School Buildings is the most comprehensive publication and should be considered by all schools. An example of the audit tool from this publication is reproduced in section 5.12.

3: A modified version of the Bulletin No 91 has been developed. This is reproduced in section 5.12. This tool can be used in conjunction with the CD that is included with this guide. The CD provides illustrations from existing school buildings. It identifies barriers found in many schools that should be identified by the audit.

The **Accessibility Group** should consider the three options detailed above and determine what is appropriate for their school considering the experience, resources, training and time available. In most cases it should be possible to carry out an audit using internal resources, supported by appropriate training for staff. A few larger schools may feel the need to take on board external resources to help complete the audit. Section 5.14 provides a list of advantages and disadvantages of these different options. It is important to remember that changes identified by the audit are not just for the benefit of persons with a disability but will prove to be beneficial for the whole school community.

For smaller schools, where there are no building professionals on staff, option 3 is most likely to be the appropriate audit tool if used in conjunction with the photo CD that accompanies this guide. Building Bulletin No 91 and Dundee Schools Physical Access – Good Practice Guide are recommended additional reading. There are no technical questions included in the audit and it is restricted to 4 pages, which makes it more manageable. A good audit is based on common sense and good observation. An example of the format is reproduced in section 5.13.

Where a school has a Master of Works or a Property Manager the audit tool prepared by the Department of Education – Building Bulletin No 91 is likely to be the preferred option. This is a very detailed document extending to some 15 pages. As this needs to be completed for each building considerable time needs to be allocated to this task. This option can also be considered by smaller schools where specialist staff are not employed. There are some questions that are of a technical nature but these should not be used as a justification for precluding this option. Where smaller schools do not have the necessary professional skills in-house these can easily be overcome through training. The time taken to complete this audit by a non-professional is likely to be the major consideration when selecting which tool to use. The audit questions are reproduced in section 5.12.

If the school elects to employ an external consultant there are a number of factors to be taken into consideration when selecting a consultant.

- Proven experience within this field of work
- Experience within the education sector
- References from other clients especially schools
- Appropriate professional liability insurance

The consultant should be provided with a written brief regarding the school's expectations from the audit.

The outcome of the audit should be the identification of a number of different projects that can then be prioritised for action.

The following report identifies how this information might be displayed.

### **Summary Report – last updated (Date)**

<b>Short Term Within one year</b>	<b>Medium Term Within 2 – 3 years</b>	<b>Long Term 4 years or more</b>
1: Refurbishment of Reception area	6: Replace corridor double doors with single wide door with visibility panels	9: Change sounders on fire alarm to sounders and strobe light
2: Provision of ramped access to Games Hall	7: Replace workbench in chemistry lab to provide a variable height option	10: Replace flagstone and chip paths with tar-macadam surface
3: Fitting Induction loop to main hall	8: Replace iron-mongery in old school to lever type handles	
4: Signage for whole campus		
5: Change décor for meeting room		

## **Detailed Report – Project 1:**

### **Full Description of Work to be carried out**

Reception area to be refurbished. Reception desk to be fitted with an induction loop system, an additional low-level desk surface for wheelchair access and décor changed to provide better contrast for visually impaired. Access door to be fitted with high and low visibility panels with electronic opener and reception seating to be replaced with firm upright chairs with additional space for wheelchair users. Coffee table to be integrated between seats to remove any obstacles. Plan of whole school to be prepared for wall mounting.

### **Authorisation required**

Property Committee

Report to be issued for March 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting by 28<sup>th</sup> February

## **Estimated budget costs**

Painting	£ 500
Furniture	£3,500
Induction Loop	£ 500
Electronic Door	£2,750
Carpet	£ 900
Total	£8,150

## **Source of funding**

Repairs and Maintenance Budget

## **Manager responsible for the project**

Bursar - Mr A N Other

## **Time scale for completion**

1<sup>st</sup> July – 20<sup>th</sup> August

Health and Safety Issues

Risk assess the demolition of existing structure  
Work area will need to be secured and temporary alternative access provided.

Potential Contractors

A J Building Contractors  
James & Son Builders  
A1 Building Services

Criteria used to measure success of project

Visitor Survey

The Accessibility Group should meet on a regular basis, probably once per term, review the progress of each project and produce a minute recording progress for the Governors.

The school's Accessibility Strategy is required by law to cover a period of three years and to be reviewed and evaluated regularly within that cycle. Depending on the size of the school the audit may need to be repeated for each review – but it is more likely that the audit needs to be undertaken every second cycle especially if the original projects have been completed and where there has been no significant change to the operation or the use of a particular building. Where there has been a new build or a major refurbishment then a limited update of the audit might be required for that building on the campus. If the strategy was challenged this would also be an indicator that the audit needed to be carried out again.

In completing an audit the school needs to consider all the potential users of a building. The users may not be restricted to pupils and staff. The building may also require to be accessible to the extended school family such as parents, grand parents, guardians and friends. The building may also be hired out to members of the public where there is no prior knowledge of who might attend.

Example

**One school had a member of staff who was deaf and wore a hearing aid. The school's Accessibility Group ensured that in consulting with stakeholders, it included consultation with staff, pupils and parents with a disability.**

The school needs to consider the widest possible use especially of these public areas. Where the removal of a physical barrier cannot be achieved alternative management strategies need to be considered. Where there are barriers that cannot be addressed within a reasonable timescale and budget, the school needs to consult with users and potential users on alternative management strategies to minimise the impact of these barriers.

Example

**One school had a pupil where both parents used wheel chairs. The main school building that was used for parents evenings**

**was unsuitable for wheel chairs and staff made arrangements for the parents evening to be held in the school dining hall where access was not a problem.**

When a school is considering a new building project or the extensive refurbishment of an existing property accessibility should be an important part of the architect's brief. Just because a building conforms to current building regulations does not necessarily ensure that the building is uniformly accessible. An accessibility audit should be carried out as part of the planning process so that any barriers for persons with a disability can be removed during the design process.

The principals of Universal Design have identified the following seven elements as essential in terms of making a building universally accessible. These elements need to be considered when completing the audit.

Transport

External Environment, Approach and Entrance

Level Change

Circulation and Way Finding

Internal Environments

Security and Safety

Equipment and Products

Each of the above elements are considered in more detail within the following section.

## **5.2 Transport**

How do users of the building get to school? City centre schools will need to consider a wide range of options such as public bus, private coach, car, taxi, train, underground, bike and walking. For rural schools the range is likely to be smaller.

When completing the audit the accessibility group may find it helpful to consider the broad range of disabilities including, for example, mobility, sensory impairment, communication and language difficulties and learning difficulties. The impact of a particular disability might vary depending on the feature encountered.

Factors that need to be taken into consideration may include:

- distance to be travelled
- dedicated provision for disabled vehicle access
- availability of parking close to the main entrance
- location and design of signposts
- supervision of campus
- provision of drop off areas within the school campus
- pedestrian crossings close to the school
- parking restrictions adjacent to the main entrance

### **5.3 External Environment, Approach and Entrance**

Many schools will have a policy of banning all vehicles from playgrounds or limiting the access for vehicles to certain areas and times. If this is the case the existing policy needs to be reviewed to establish whether it restricts users with a disability. Whether it is for a regular user or an occasional visitor, the school should provide a limited number of dedicated parking spaces immediately adjacent to the main buildings.

The nature of the surface material needs to be considered. Paving stones, blocks and chips create barriers to access for some pupils with motor impairments. However a bland tar-macadam surface that is good for wheel chairs and pupils with a motor impairment is extremely difficult for someone with a visual impairment to negotiate if additional contrast, texture and waymarking is not provided.

Level change is one of the major considerations both internally and externally. Very few schools enjoy a completely level site. Where level change occurs difficulties may be eliminated by the provision of ramps either at the main entrance or at another location. If a ramp is located anywhere other than the main entrance it should be clearly sign-posted and easily accessible.

Example

**When carrying out an audit one school identified that the alternative wheelchair access to the sports hall involved a ramp**

**of some 50 meters that was poorly lit and overgrown by shrubs. When the user reached the door there was no means of gaining entry without assistance from staff on the inside of the building. There was no means of communicating or gaining the attention of staff on the inside. The group identified that the approach could be dramatically improved by making improvements to the lighting and by maintaining the vegetation. The group also identified that by providing a door entry system the wheelchair user could be independent and would not be treated differently from other users of the building.**

Factors which need to be taken into consideration may include:

- location and design of street furniture and other playground equipment
- location and design of door entry system
- provision of suitable signage and wayfinding
- provision of lighting

## **5.4 Level Change**

For many schools the problem of having a portfolio of listed buildings provides an added dimension to the difficulties in making the campus more accessible. In many situations the design does not lend itself to change nor would planning permission be granted. Where this is the case the solution is likely to be through management of the facility and negotiation with the users and potential users.

Example

**One school encountering this problem had another building that was accessible. Staff concentrated all resources in this building and when necessary they moved from their existing locations to teach pupils or meet with parents in this building. Initially this option was not universally accepted by teaching staff. With investment in electronic teaching aids, staff and pupils became quickly accustomed to changing classrooms.**

Where there are small changes in levels, ramps and hoists might provide an acceptable option at a reasonable cost. However this option might be impracticable for some schools where pupils need access to a number of

floors. Where, for example, listed building restrictions are in operation, schools may consider alternatives to the provision of stair hoists or lifts. When assessing alternatives such as stair hoists staff need to consider the health and safety implications of any alterations that could restrict the volume and number of users of a staircase.

When drawing up fire evacuation procedures the school should take account of how they would manage egress for users with a disability. If the school has residential accommodation staff may need to consider providing audio visual and sensory alarm systems such as vibrating pillows.

Factors which need to be taken into consideration may include:

- design and materials used for the construction of stairs
- lighting
- provision of handrails
- notification of change of levels

## **5.5 Circulation and Way Finding**

This aspect of school management is often overlooked or given limited consideration. For the majority of pupils there are very limited entry points into the life of the school. Schools should consider how they provide induction visits and ensure new year groups and other new starts are informed of the location of facilities within the campus. With independent schools increasingly opening their doors to a much wider user base it is essential that attention be given to circulation and signage. When considering signage, thought should be given to the location, height and legibility for a broad range of users. Uniformity of signage is another important consideration with good contrast between the lettering and background. The accessibility group should identify a standard to be implemented across the whole school campus.

Where the school has many different buildings sharing a campus consideration should also be given to providing a site plan near the entrance that clearly identifies the function of each building and where visitors should report their arrival.

Factors which need to be taken into consideration may include:

- uniformity of signs
- use of prominent landmarks to assist wayfinding
- choice of floor finishes and colour coding to assist wayfinding
- inclusion of Braille combination signs where appropriate
- provision of site map

## 5.6 Internal Environments

There are some important issues for Accessibility Groups to consider when looking at the internal environment of the school. Many schools have over time been subject to additions and alterations and each of these have had to conform to the then current building regulations. This has led to very variable stock of properties and there is often little uniformity in the standards and fixtures and fittings.

If one considers just one feature such as doors one would be able to see an enormous diversification of styles. The Accessibility Group needs to consider doors for the widest range of user groups and ages of users. They need to decide whether the following features are relevant:

Automatic / Manual  
Single / Double / Rotating  
Internal / External  
Weight  
Speed of Closure  
Frequency of Use  
Ironmongery  
Visual Contrast  
Fire  
Security  
Visibility Panels

Example

**One school which was updating their fire prevention system took the opportunity to replace all the heavy double swing doors with a single high level visibility panel in the corridors with fire doors that were permanently open which were linked**

**to the fire alarm system and only closed automatically when the system was activated. This dramatically improved the flow of pupils and reduced the number of accidents involving pupils injured by doors.**

Other areas that need to be considered under this heading are as follows:

Décor

Lighting

Ventilation

Fixtures and fittings

Sound proofing

Factors, which need to be taken into consideration, may include:

- decoration that provides a good contrast between different objects and surfaces
- design of stairs to ensure good definition between the raisers and treads with the nosings in a contrasting colour to the rest of the step.
- ironmongery on doors that have a lever action rather than a rotating action
- design of ventilation system that takes into consideration the ambient noise
- levels of noise transferred between public and teaching areas

Example

**One school fitted a sound field system to benefit a pupil with a hearing impairment. The class teacher reported that it had been of benefit to the whole class as the level of noise in the classroom had dropped and she had less strain on her voice as she didn't have to raise her voice to make herself heard.**

## **5.7 Security and Safety**

In recent years many schools have introduced a number of measures to improve security. For most this involves some kind of door entry system and registration of visitors. Few of these measures would provide an effective deterrent against a third party who wished to gain unauthorised

access to a school. Many of these systems are a direct barrier for persons with a disability seeking access to the school.

Example

**One school had introduced a communication system at the main school door that was linked to the school office. When reviewing the arrangements the accessibility group identified that the location was too high for someone in a wheel chair to operate and pupils and visitors would be unable to hear the verbal instructions given by the receptionist. Additionally pupils and visitors with visual impairment would not be able to identify which buttons to press. There was no camera in the office to enable the receptionist to monitor if any of the users required assistance and the office was not in direct line of sight with the doors. The Accessibility Group recommended a number of changes to the location and design of the door entry system and for a monitoring camera to be installed.**

Factors which need to be taken into consideration may include:

- fire evacuation procedures, which take into consideration the evacuation of a person with a disability.
- provision of refuge areas for a person with ambulant problems where stairs need to be negotiated for the egress from a building
- provision of training for staff to enable them to deal with the evacuation of people with a disability. There might well be manual handling and health and safety considerations when training staff in appropriate evacuation techniques.

## **5.8 Equipment and Products**

There are some general steps which may be taken to improve accessibility. In general the appropriate equipment will be specific to the individual. Consultation with staff and pupils is very important to ensure that appropriate assistance is provided.

The general items that should be considered are as follows;

- adjustable seating and tables
- dedicated toilet facilities

- access to catering for persons with a disability
- accessible public telephones for wheel chair users and with the potential addition of Braille buttons
- audio visual aids with print size and font suitable for pupils and visitors with a visual impairment
- modifications to accommodation

Example

**One school had a member of staff who had a medical condition that was triggered by flickering fluorescent lights. After discussions with the member of staff the lights in the department were changed eliminating the problem.**

Example

**One pupil with a visual impairment was due to move schools. The occupational therapist advising the family had a long list of potential changes that would help the pupil but when these were discussed with the pupil he expressed a preference not to be treated differently. A much reduced package of assistance was agreed. The school had agreed to meet the original specification if this was what the pupil required.**

The Accessibility Group needs to prioritise which areas in the school need to be addressed. When dealing with pupils and staff the school will generally have a reasonable period of notice when they can review the current arrangements. Where areas within the school campus such as the school hall or sports facilities are let out for use by the general public the school is less likely to have prior knowledge of the requirements of visitors and this is where the group may need to prioritise any remedial work that is required.

Example

**One school had a large hall that was used for school functions and was also hired out to the public for a range of functions including dances and weddings. When reviewing the use of the hall staff identified the need for a ramp and handrails to improve access for those with ambulant problems. They also identified the need for an audio loop system for those with hearing difficulties. When decorating the hall the school had ensured that there was a good contrast in the colours used for**

**doors and their surrounds. The ironmongery on the doors was changed to a lever type that was more easily operated and seen by a wide range of users. The school also added an additional section to the checklist used by staff liaising with external hires to ensure that accessibility requirements were always discussed with potential users.**

## **5.9 Quality Indicators**

Within the document "How Good is Our School" there are three quality indicators that refer to the physical environment.

### Accommodation and Facilities (QI 6.1)

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- Sufficiency
- Range
- Appropriateness
- Arrangements to ensure Health and Safety

### Provision of Resources (QI 6.2)

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- Sufficiency of available finance
- Sufficiency, range and suitability of resources

### Organisation and use of resources and space (QI 6.3)

This quality indicator is concerned with the following themes:

- Organisation and accessibility
- Use of resources
- Display and presentation of items of interest

The following table asks a number of questions that can be answered by yes or no responses. Schools should aim to achieve positive responses to all questions.

Question	Yes	No
Has the school set up a Strategy Group involving a range of staff and chaired by the Head teacher, school or unit Co-ordinator, or a member of the Senior Management Team?		
Does this group meet at least once per term?		
Has the school appointed a number of staff to an Accessibility Sub Group?		
Has an Audit been completed?		
Has the Audit been reviewed / updated within the last twelve months?		
Did the Audit produce an Action List with individual projects detailed, budgeted, prioritised and allocated to an individual?		
Have the Governors made available adequate resources for these projects to be completed?		
Have these projects been completed within the specified timetable?		
Has the Strategy Group reviewed these projects and reported to the Board of Governors?		
Have users been consulted over the effectiveness of the changes that have been introduced?		
Have all staff been trained on Accessibility issues?		
Has the strategy been challenged by any third party?		
Where structural changes have not been effected have alternative managed solutions been introduced?		
Are these options generally advertised and understood by the users of the facilities?		

The Accessibility Group should consider what actions are needed if they answer no to any of the above questions.

## 5.10 Evaluation and Review

In order to identify their strengths and areas that require to be developed, accessibility groups can carry out an overall evaluation of the physical environment using selected quality indicators. The tables in section 7 give the relevant quality indicators for improving access to the physical environment for pupils with a disability. The Accessibility groups should keep a record of the sources of evidence upon which they base their evaluation.

## 5.11 Action

Head teachers should identify members of staff to form an accessibility group.

The accessibility group should:

- carry out an audit of the physical environment
- identify where there are physical restrictions for pupils, staff and visitors
- identify an action list to show how these restrictions can be removed or minimised
- Identify for each project, when it is going to be completed and who within the organisation is going to be responsible for managing it
- have the action list approved by the board of governors and appropriate resources made available
- regularly review the action list and where necessary update the audit

## 5.12 Extracts from Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings

### ACCESS AUDIT CHECKLIST

Ref	Title	sheet no.
<b>A</b>	Approach and car parking	01
<b>B</b>	Routes and external level change, including ramps and steps	02
<b>C</b>	Entrances, including reception	03/04
<b>D</b>	Horizontal movement and assembly	05/06
<b>E</b>	Vertical movement and internal level change	07/08/09
<b>F</b>	Doors	10
<b>G</b>	Lavatories	11/12/02
<b>H</b>	Fixtures and fittings	13
<b>J</b>	Information	14
<b>K</b>	Means of escape	15
<b>S</b>	Supplementary (referenced S/01, S/02 etc)	S/

- Checklist sheets should be completed with relevance to all the specific areas to which they apply.
- Supplementary sheets should be attached as necessary. More than one checklist sheet should be used for differing areas when appropriate, e.g. when a number of individual buildings or departments may be involved.
- Boxes should be completed, or left blank, in relation to those areas surveyed, and deletions made where choices can be eliminated. A blank should be seen as a positive means of completing the proforma, reflecting a situation a situation which can be assessed as essentially neutral or satisfactory.
- It is intended that the checklist sheets should be photocopied.

### **BB91: November 2003**

An accessibility audit enables barriers to access to be identified so that reasonable adjustments can be made. These checklists have been update on *excel* format to include a comments box, in which items should be noted in relation to accessibility for people who have disabilities listed below:

Wheelchair users / Ambulant/ Dexterity

Visual / Auditory / Comprehension

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1					
	a)				
	b)				
	c)				
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

**'A' Approach and car parking**

Date:...../...../..... Location.....

No	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
<b>1.</b>	Is the building within convenient walking distance of:				
	a) a public highway?				
	b) public transport?				
	c) car parking?				
<b>2.</b>	Is the route clearly marked/found?				
<b>3.</b>	Is the route full of kerbs				
<b>4.</b>	Is the surface smooth and slip resistant?				
<b>5.</b>	Is the route wide enough?				
<b>6.</b>	Is it free of such hazards as bollards, litter bins, outward opening windows and doors or overhanging projections?				
<b>7.</b>	Is it adequately lit?				
<b>8.</b>	Is it identified by visual, audible and tactile information?				
<b>9.</b>	Is there car parking with people with reduced mobility?				
<b>10.</b>	Is it clearly marked out, signed, easily found and kept free from misuse?				
<b>11.</b>	Is it as near the entrance as possible?				
<b>12.</b>	Is it suitably surfaced?				
<b>13.</b>	Is the route to the building kept free of snow, ice and fallen leaves?				
<b>14.</b>	Is the route level (i.e. No gradient steeper than 1:20 and no steps)? see checklist B, sheet 2				

**'B' Routes and external level change. Including ramps and steps**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Item	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is there a ramp, with level surface at <b>top/intermediate/bottom</b> ? (delete)				
2.	Is it wide enough and suitability graded?				
3.	Is the surface slip resistant?				
4.	Are there kerbs and are there edges protected to prevent accidents?				
5.	Are there handrails to <b>one</b> or <b>both</b> sides? (delete)				
6.	If a permanent ramp (or regarded levels) cannot be formed (perhaps to a Listed Building) is a portable ramp available?				
7.	Are there ( <b>alternative</b> ) steps? (delete)				
8.	Identified by visual/tactile information?				
9.	Are there handrails to <b>one</b> or <b>both</b> sides? (delete)				
10.	Are ramps and steps adequately lit?				
11.	Are treads and risers consistent in depth and height?				
12.	Are all nosing marked and/or <b>readily identifiable</b> ? (delete)				
13.	Are landing of <b>adequate size</b> and are they provided at <b>intermediate levels</b> in long flight? (delete)				
14.	If safe and convenient ramps and steps cannot be provided is vertical movement by powered means an alternative? see checklist E, sheets 8 and 9				

**`C' Entrances, including reception**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is the door clearly distinguished from the facade?				
2.	If glass is it visible when closed?				
3.	Does the clear <b>door opening</b> or <b>one leaf</b> when opened permit passage of a wheelchair or double buggy? (delete)				
4.	Does it have a <b>level or flush</b> threshold, and a <b>recessed matwell</b> ? (delete)				
5.	Is there visibility through the <b>door/way</b> from both sides at <b>standing</b> and <b>seated</b> levels? (delete)				
6.	Is there a minimum 300mm wide wheelchair manoeuvre space beside the leading edge of the door to clear doorswing?				
7.	Can the door furniture be used at both <b>standing</b> and <b>seated</b> height? (delete)				
8.	Can it be easily grasped and operated?				
9.	If the door has a closer mechanism does it have: (a) delayed closure action? (b) Slow-action closer? (c) Minimal closure pressure?				
10.	If the door is power-operated does it have visual and tactile information?				
11.	If the door is security-protected is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?				
12.	If there is a lobby, do the inner and outer doors meet the same criteria?				

**`C' Entrances, including reception (continued)**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
13.	Do lobby layouts enable all users to clear one door before going through the next?				
14.	Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual impairments and wheelchair users with reduced eye-levels?				
15.	Does the lighting installation take account of the needs of visually disabled people?				
16.	Are the floor surfaces: a) slip-resistant, even when wet? b) so hard that they cause acoustic confusion? c) firm for wheelchair manoeuvre				
17.	Do junctions between floor surfaces present tripping hazard or cause visual confusion?				
18.	Is any reception point suitable for approach and use from both side by people in standing and seated positions				
19.	Is it fitted with an induction loop?				
20.	If public telephone is available (say at reception, is it, and its instructions): (a) at a height suitable for all users? (b) equipped with inductive coupling?				
21.	For those progressing to other parts of the building is information providing by signs, supported by tactile information such as a map or model?				

**'D' Horizontal movement and assembly**

Date: ...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is any corridor/passageway/aisle wide enough for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre and for other people to pass?				
2.	Is any corridor, etc, free from obstruction wheelchair users and hazards to people with impaired vision?				
3.	Do any lobbies allow users, (inc, w.ch users) to clear on e door before approaching the next with minimal manoeuvre?				
4.	Is turning space available for w.ch. users?				
5.	Do natural and artificial lighting avoid glare and silhouetting?				
6.	Are there visual clues for orientation?				
7.	Do floor surfaces: (a) allow ease of movement for wheelchair users? (b) avoid light reflection and sound reverberation?				
8.	Do textured surfaces convey useful information for people with impaired vision??				
9.	Are direction and information signs (inc means of escape) visible from both sitting and standing eye levels, and are they in <b>upper</b> and <b>lower</b> case (delete), and large enough type to be read by those with impaired vision?				
10.	Are there tactile signs and information for those with impaired vision?				
11.	Is the maintenance of these items checked regularly?				

**'D' Horizontal movement and assembly (continued)**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
12.	Is lighting designed to meet a wide range of needs?				
13.	Is sufficient circulation space allowed for wheelchair users?				
14.	Is it maintained clear of obstructions which could create hazards for people with visual disabilities?				
15.	Are seating arrangements/spaces suitable for use by people with visual disabilities?				
16.	Are all areas for assembly/meeting equipped with an induction loop system?				
17.	If the use of an induction loop system is precluded is an infra-red system checked regularly?				
18.	Is the functioning and operation of the induction loop or infra-red system checked regularly?				
19.	Are telephones fitted with inductive loop couplers?				
20.	Is a minicom available for use by people with hearing disabilities				

**'E' Vertical movement and internal level change**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is the location of any <b>step/stairs/ramp</b> clearly indicated by use of <b>sign/colour/contrast/texture lighting?</b> (delete)				
2.	Does any <b>step/stairs/ramp</b> have a handrail to <b>one/both</b> side(s), and do(es) <b>it/they</b> extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom of any flight? (delete)				
3.	Is any level change clearly lit?				
4.	Is the pitch (risers & treads) of <b>step/stairs</b> or any <b>ramp</b> consistent, and are nosings clearly identifiable? (delete)				
5.	If there are landings are they large enough to permit passing and turning manoeuvres, and are they provided in any long flight?				
6.	Is any short rise within a single storey ramped; if so is the ramped surface indicated, and is it slip-resistant?				
7.	Does any ramp pitch exceed <b>1:12/1:16/1:20?</b> (delete)				
8.	If a permanent ramp cannot be provided (perhaps a <b>Listed Building</b> ) can a moveable ramp be made available?				
9.	Are steps available as an alternative to any ramp or ramped surface?				
10.	Where level change is less than a full storey in height is a power-operated system appropriate? ( <b>Platform Lift/Stairlift/Lift</b> -see 11, 12 & 13)? (delete)				

**'E' Vertical movement and internal level change (continued)**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
11.	<p><b>Platform Lift</b> (delete)</p> <p>(a) Are the controls at both levels identifiable, and reachable from <b>sitting</b> and <b>standing</b> levels? (delete)</p> <p>(b) Is the platform adequate for wheelchair use and manoeuvre?</p> <p>(c) In the event of a power failure does the platform return to lower level?</p> <p>(d) Is the equipment maintained and its operation checked regularly?</p>				
12.	<p><b>Stairlift</b> (delete)</p> <p>(a) Are the controls at all levels identifiable, and reachable from <b>sitting</b> and <b>standing</b> levels? (delete)</p> <p>(b) Is the platform adequate for wheelchair use and manoeuvre?</p> <p>(c) Is approach <b>convenient</b> and <b>safe</b> at all appropriate landings? (delete)</p> <p>(d) Does the stairlift have a 'Soft-start' action?</p> <p>(e) When not in use is the platform powered to fold away to avoid obstruction?</p> <p>(f) In the event of a power failure does the platform return to lower level?</p> <p>(g) Is the equipment maintained and its operation checked regularly?</p>				

**'E' Vertical movement and internal level change (continued)**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
13.	<p><b>Lift</b></p> <p>(a) Is the lift's location clear[y defined <b>by visual</b> and <b>tactile</b> information? (delete)</p> <p>(b) Are controls at all floors visible, identifiable and reachable from <b>sitting</b> and <b>standing</b> levels? (delete)</p> <p>(c) Is there adequate, unobstructed space at each floor lift entry for wheelchair manoeuvre?</p> <p>(d) Does the lift door open widely enough for wheelchair user access?</p> <p>(e) Does door operation allow slow entry and exit?</p> <p>(f) Do the lift car internal dimensions allow sufficient space for a <b>wheelchair user</b> and <b>carer?</b> (delete)</p> <p>(g) Does the car have appropriate support rails?</p> <p>(h) Are the lift car controls. inc. emergency call, located within reach of all users and with visual and tactile Information?</p> <p>(i) Is there audible floor indication?</p> <p>G) Is the lift an '<b>Evacuation Lift</b>'? (see Means of Escape, Sheet 16)</p> <p>(k) Is the lift regularly maintained and its functional operation routinely checked?</p>				

ACCESS AUDIT CHECKLIST

**'F' Doors**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Do the doors serve a <b>functional/safety</b> purpose? (delete)				
2.	Can they be readily distinguished?				
3.	If glass, are they visible when shut?				
4.	Can people <b>standing</b> or <b>sitting</b> in a wheelchair see each other, and be seen from either side of the door? (delete)				
5.	Does the clear opening width permit wheelchair access?				
6.	On the <b>opening</b> side of the door is there sufficient space (300mm) to allow the door handle to be grasped and the door swung past a wheelchair footplate?				
7.	Is any door furniture/handle at a height for <b>standing/sitting</b> use? (delete)				
8.	Are door/handles clearly distinguished?				
9.	Can the door furniture/handles be easily <b>operated/grasped</b> ? (delete)				
10.	If <b>door closers / mechanisms</b> are fitted do they provide the following: (delete) (a) security linkage? (b) delay-action closure? (c) slow-action closure? (d) minimum closure pressure?				
11.	Is door/mechanism function checked regularly?				

**'G' Lavatories**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is WC provision made for people with disabilities?				
2.	Do all lavatory areas have slip-resistant floors?				
3.	Are they easy to distinguish by colour contrast from walls?				
4.	Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?				
5.	Are all door fittings/locks easily gripped and operated?				
6.	Can ambulant disabled people manoeuvre and raise and lower themselves in standard cubicles?				
7.	Is provision made for <b>wheelchair users</b> ? If so:				
8.	Is wheelchair approach free of <b>steps / narrow doors / obstructions</b> , etc? (delete)				
9.	Is the location clearly signed?				
10.	Is there sufficient space at entry to the compartment for wheelchair manoeuvre and door opening?				
11.	Are the door fittings/locks and light switches easily reached and operated?				
12.	Is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?				
13.	Can the emergency call system be operated from floor level?  <i>(continued)</i>				

**'G' Lavatories (continued)**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Questions	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
14.	Is the wheelchair WC compartment large enough to permit manoeuvre for <b>frontal / lateral/angled / backward</b> transfer, <b>with</b> or <b>without</b> assistance? (delete)				
15.	Are the fittings arranged to facilitate these manoeuvres?				
16.	Are handwashing and drying facilities within reach of someone seated on the WC?				
17.	Is the tap appropriate for use by someone with limited dexterity, grip or strength?				
18.	Are suitable grab rails fitted in all the appropriate positions to facilitate use of the WC?				
19.	Is the manoeuvring area free of obstruction, e.g. <b>boxed-in pipework / radiators / cleaner's equipment / disposal bins / occasional storage</b> , etc., and is a difficulty caused by the activity of <b>service contractors</b> ? (delete)				
20.	If there is more than one <b>standard layout</b> WC compartment provided, are they handed to offer a left-sided approach and a right-sided approach?				

ACCESS AUDIT CHECKLIST

**'H' Fixtures and fittings**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is any <b>servery / counter</b> accessible to all users, including those with hearing impairments?				
2.	If the building has fixed seating are there also associated spaces for wheelchair users and at regular intervals on long routes?				
3.	Is it possible for wheelchair users and people with other disabilities to approach and use all vending machines/drinking water dispensers, etc?				
4.	Is it possible for people with disabilities to serve as volunteers?				
5.	Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?				
6.	Where there are display stands, bookstalls etc. are they <b>visible / reachable / accessible by people with disabilities?</b>				
7.	In any eating/meeting space do tables, chairs and the layout allow for use by wheelchair users and other people with disabilities?				
8.	In any staff accommodation is it suitable for use by people with disabilities, including wheelchair users, with <b>slip-resistant floor, reduced level kitchen units and sink and lever action taps?</b>				
9.	Are all relevant locations clearly signed?				

**'J' Information**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is the building equipped to provide hearing assistance?				
2.	Does lighting installation of the building take into account the needs of people with visual disabilities?				
3.	Is there a tactile plan or diagram of the building?				
4.	Are there large-print versions of information about the <b>building / activities</b> available?				
5.	Is there 'Braille' information available for people with visual disabilities?				
6.	Is there an 'audio' version of information about the building available?				
7.	Where there are staff available in the building at information/refreshment facilities, are they trained in communication with people with <b>physical</b> and <b>sensory disabilities</b> ?				
8.	Where a payphone is provided does it have a hearing aid coupler?				
9.	Are all relevant locations clearly signed?				

**'K' Means of escape**

Date:...../...../..... Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.	Is there a <b>visible</b> as well as <b>audible</b> fire alarm system? (delete)				
2.	Are final exit routes as accessible to all, including wheelchair users, as are the entry routes?				
3.	Is evacuation from <b>upper</b> and <b>lower</b> levels possible using an <b>evacuation lift / platform lift</b> with a protected power supply? (delete)				
4.	If people with disabilities cannot evacuate from the building independently are designated and signed refuges available?				
5.	If refuges are available are they equipped with 'carry chairs'?				
6.	Is there a 'management evacuation strategy' for staff, congregation and visitors, and are staff trained in evacuation procedures?				
7.	Is the evacuation strategy checked regularly for its effectiveness?				
8.	Are evacuation routes checked routinely and regularly for freedom from <b>combustible materials / obstacles / locked doors?</b> (delete)				
9.	Are all fire warning devices and detectors checked routinely and regularly?				

**'S' Supplementary**

Date:...../...../.....Location:.....

No.	Question	Y	N	Comments	Strategy
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

### 5.13 Modified Audit Tool

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No: \_\_\_\_\_

**Function:** Office General Classroom      Specialised Classroom      Public      Residential      Sports

**Frequency of Use:** 5 days    7 days      8.00am – 5.00pm      Evenings    24 Hours      Occasional

Please note that there is an alternative Audit Tool prepared by the Department of Education and Employment – Building Bulletin No 91 that is more comprehensive.

Notes:

Function and Frequency of Use: More than one category can be highlighted

Please place either a **✓** or a **X** in the box. If it is an **X** there should also be an entry in the remedial section.

Codes      W = Wheelchair

A = Ambulant

V = Visual

H = Hearing

**L = Learning**

If required please use the reverse of each page to record additional information.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Approach to Building</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Can the building be approached by</b>							
	<b>- Walking?</b>							
	<b>- Vehicle?</b>							
	<b>- Public Transport?</b>							
<b>2</b>	<b>Is there dedicated disabled parking?</b>							
<b>3</b>	<b>Is the route clearly sign- posted?</b>							
<b>4</b>	<b>If there are any changes in levels will they adversely affect disabled persons?</b>							
<b>5</b>	<b>Are there any changes in surface materials and will they adversely affect disable persons?</b>							
<b>6</b>	<b>Are there any special arrangements / adaptations for disabled persons?</b>							
<b>7</b>	<b>Would a disabled visitor know about any special provision?</b>							
<b>8</b>	<b>Is there adequate lighting?</b>							

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Within the building</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Is there access to a reception area?</b>							
<b>10</b>	<b>Is the reception area modified to specifically deal with any disabilities?</b>							
<b>11</b>	<b>Where there are changes in levels within the building can they be managed by a disabled person?</b>							
<b>12</b>	<b>Where there are changes in levels are there any special arrangements for disabled persons?</b>							
	<b>- Ramps</b>							
	<b>- Handrails</b>							
	<b>- Stairs</b>							
	<b>- Hoists</b>							
	<b>- Lifts</b>							
<b>13</b>	<b>Are these arrangements clearly sign-posted?</b>							

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Within the building - continued</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Is there access to services?</b>							
	- Toilets							
	- Catering							
	- Telephone							
<b>15</b>	<b>Does the design of doors make it easy for disabled persons to use them?</b>							
	- Weight							
	- Number of doors							
	- Automatic closures / openers							
	- Vision panels							
	- Speed of closing mechanism							
	- Ironmongery							

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Within the building - continued</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>
<b>16</b>	Do the floor coverings provide additional functions for disabled persons?							
	- Route finding							
	- Sound proofing							
	- Tactile							
	- Contrast							
	- Obstructions							
	- Smooth surface							
<b>17</b>	Are there any modifications to the furniture?							
	- Adjustable height							
	- Sound loops							
<b>18</b>	Are signs and switches easily identifiable?							
	- Height							
	- Contrast							
	- Tactile							
<b>19</b>	Are the levels of lighting adequate?							

Item No.	Within the building - continued	W	A	V	H	L	Next Steps	Time Scale
<b>20</b>	Do the evacuation procedures allow for disabled persons?							
<b>21</b>	Any other observations							

### 5.14 Advantages and Disadvantages

The following table identifies the main advantages and disadvantages of each of these options

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>In-house non professional staff</b>	
Cost	Time
Know the operation of the school	Liability in-house
Control over the process	Lack of experience in this type of work
Sense of ownership	Too familiar with the building to be objective
<b>In-house professional</b>	
Cost	Time
Know the operation of the school	Liability in-house
Control over the process	Lack of experience in this type of work
Sense of ownership	Too familiar with the building to be objective
<b>Professional Consultant</b>	
Speed	Cost
Accuracy	Likely to identify far more detail than in-house
Guarantee	No control over final outcome
Liability held by third party if subsequently challenged	Don't know the school as well as own staff
	No sense of ownership

## **6: COMMUNICATION AND DELIVERY OF INFORMATION**

Responsible bodies are required to improve communication with pupils with a disability in all learning situations. Pupils with a disability should be able to ask questions and express opinions about aspects of school life in the same way as their peers. Pupils with a disability should receive appropriate support to enable them to communicate with their peers and with staff, in formal learning activities and in non-classroom situations such as in the dining room or in the school corridors or office where they encounter different staff.

Effective communication between the school and parents is important to enable pupils to gain maximum benefit from their learning experience.

This section sets out the steps schools should take to improve how pupils with a disability can express their views on school matters. It provides advice for schools on what to consider in improving the delivery of school information normally provided in writing.

### **Key Points**

Pupils with a disability have a right to express their views and opinions and to have them listened to.

They have the right to participate in decisions about matters that relate to their education.

Any information that is important to enable pupils to learn or to be able to participate in school activities should be made available for pupils with a disability in suitable formats.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child confirms that children have the right to express their views and to have their views taken seriously and given due weight.

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to participate in decision making processes that may be relevant to their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard – within the family, the school or the community.

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 (DSPERA), requires responsible bodies of schools to prepare accessibility strategies to address three distinct elements of planned improvements in access for:

- Improvements in access to the curriculum;
- Improvement to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services; and
- Improvements in the provision of information provided in writing for pupils with a disability.

## **6.1 Schools' Duties**

Schools should take account of their duties to pupils with a disability and take steps to improve:

- How pupils with a disability can express their views on matters that affect their education, care and welfare, and how schools consider and act upon their views; and
- The delivery of school information provided in writing to pupils with a disability in alternative formats.

## **6.2 Improving Communication**

Communication is central to all learning. It is the basis upon which all pupils are able to engage in meaningful interaction with others and participate in school and family life and in society. All pupils should be encouraged to develop effective communication skills and to interact with their peers and staff within the learning environment.

Pupils with a disability should have access to all information that is provided within the school environment. Schools should consider notices and signage they use to provide information for way finding, health and safety or school activities and ensure that they are accessible to everyone.

It is important that the communication needs of pupils with a disability are considered in wider curriculum activities such as school clubs, shows and performances. Where necessary, schools should provide appropriate support.

Head teachers and senior managers should ensure that policies for assessment are in place so that pupils who need or may need additional support with communication are identified and supported appropriately. Schools need to work in partnership with parents and encourage their participation at all stages.

Effective communication between the school and parents of all pupils is an important element in the education process. Where pupils require additional support for learning it is even more important that parents are

involved. For parents to be fully involved in their son's or daughter's education, school information and communication has to be accessible and easily understood. Schools may need to take steps to ensure information is provided to parents in suitable ways and formats.

Example

**In cases where regular two-way communication is required, some schools use e-mail and mobile phone text messages to keep parents informed in school matters and involved with their children's progress.**

In supporting pupils' communication needs, schools may find they have to seek further assessment and/or advice from professionals such as speech and language therapists or services for the deaf or visually impaired. Independent schools may wish to establish relationships with external agencies to assist them in supporting current and prospective pupils who need additional help with communication.

Schools should take steps to ensure that pupils with a disability are able to communicate in all learning situations. Pupils with a disability should be able to communicate with staff in non-classroom situations, such as in the school office, and in the dining room with lunchtime staff. This may involve staff training. The communication needs of pupils with a disability should also be considered in activities such as after school clubs and sports activities.

### **6.3 Consulting Pupils**

Schools should encourage all pupils to be active learners and to express their views and opinions on school matters, including their personal preferences for learning. Most schools have a number of ways of consulting pupils. Many have pupil groups or councils made up of elected pupil representatives and systems in place to facilitate regular two-way communication between pupils and staff.

Arrangements that schools make to consult pupils will vary according to school size and pupil population and age. Schools should ensure that pupils with a disability have equal opportunity to be representatives on pupil groups or councils, to have the chance to contribute to discussions and debates and to influence school organisation and management.

Example

**When one school was preparing its first accessibility strategy, it consulted all of its pupils. The school issued questionnaires to every pupil to ask what they considered to be the barriers to learning.**

**Teachers worked with the youngest pupils to assist them to express their views. They read the questions to small groups of pupils and encouraged them to express their opinions. Following a short group discussion, some pupils were able to write about their views. Others expressed them verbally and teachers recorded them.**

**Senior staff analysed the results of the questionnaire and pupils were informed of the proposed improvements.**

Some pupils with a disability may require additional support to enable them to express their views and opinions. They may need to have materials provided in alternative formats and some pupils with a disability may require special aids or equipment to enable them to communicate effectively.

#### **6.4 Provision of School Information in Alternative Formats**

The duty on schools to improve the provision of school information to pupils with a disability in alternative formats covers all information normally provided in writing. It includes classroom materials, handouts, textbooks and test and exam papers. Information in alternative formats for class use should be provided within a reasonable timescale so that pupils are not placed at a disadvantage in relation to other pupils. Good forward planning is required.

So that pupils with a disability are fully included and involved in school life, some information may be better delivered orally, either individually or in class or school meetings.

Example

**In one school all pupils have individual access to school information on the school website. Computers are available for pupils in classrooms, homework areas and in out of school areas**

**so that they can access information at all times. The school also provides pupils with written bulletins followed by meetings where information is given orally.**

Much of the information provided in the school environment is written. Posters and displays usually have written explanations or information that some pupils may need help to understand. Schools should consider information they provide on notice boards such as sports events, competitions, and school events, and ensure that it reaches all pupils. Care should be taken that written instructions about assignments and homework are accessible to pupils with a disability. Some pupils find it difficult to copy accurately from a blackboard. Often schools can make simple adjustments such as providing printed information to ensure pupils receive complete information.

Schools may need to consider making information for some pupils available in large print or in audio formats. They may have to consider the use of sign language – either on video or by using appropriately qualified staff.

Schools that do not have current pupils who require alternative systems of communication or alternative formats for written information, should plan ahead. There are organisations that can advise schools about how to provide materials in alternative formats and about communication technologies. Grant-aided schools and some independent special schools may be able to provide advice and information.

It is important to note that the duty to provide materials in alternative formats may apply where schools require prospective pupils to pass an entrance test. Schools that select pupils on this basis should offer to provide materials in alternative formats if required.

## **6.5 Evaluating Provision**

In order to identify their strengths and areas that require to be developed, accessibility groups can carry out an overall evaluation of the school's communications and of their procedures for the effective delivery of information to pupils and prospective pupils with a disability. Accessibility groups should keep a record of the sources of evidence upon which they base their evaluation.

The tables in section 7 give the relevant quality indicator for improving school communications to pupils and to parents of pupils with a disability.

## 6.6 Action

Schools should take steps to improve:

- How pupils with a disability can express their views on matters that affect their education, care and welfare, and how they consider and act upon their views
- The delivery of school information in alternative formats to pupils with a disability
- Their use of signs and notices throughout the school environment to convey information and ensure that they are accessible to everyone

Schools should:

- Reduce barriers to participation by paying attention to the use of language and communication and the level of understanding throughout the school
- Foster a whole school ethos in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to express their opinions and make decisions
- Use assessment procedures to identify pupils who need information to be provided in alternative formats or who require other kinds of communication aids or equipment
- Provide opportunities for pupils with a disability to express their views and opinions on school matters
- Involve pupils with a disability and support them in making decisions about their education
- Provide information to pupils with a disability in appropriate alternative formats and in good time
- Provide training and professional development to assist staff to improve and develop their skills and confidence
- Provide for the communication needs of pupils with a disability in wider curriculum activities such as school clubs, shows and performances
- Work in partnership with parents

## **7: SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION**

This section provides an audit tool that schools can use for self-evaluation. In order to plan to improve accessibility, schools need to identify where their current strengths are and where they need to make improvements. It is intended that schools use the audit materials flexibly to suit their own particular needs.

### **7.1 Gaining an Overview**

Accessibility groups can carry out an overall evaluation of their provision for each of the three planning duties by asking some key questions in relation to pupils with a disability (see sections 4.6, 5.14 and 6.6). Some schools may find this a helpful way to identify priority areas for improvement.

The following tables invite schools to pose the questions below in relation to current and prospective pupils with a disability:-

- How good is our school at making the curriculum accessible?
- How good is the environment for learning?
- How good is the school at identifying and meeting the communication needs of all its pupils?

Accessibility groups and schools can use tables 1, 2 and 3 to gain an overview of their practice and its accessibility to pupils with a disability. They should consider the quality of their provision and assess how good it is using the levels provided in "How good is our school"?

### **7.2 The Full Audit Tool**

Schools can then use the full audit tool provided in this section to plan for improvements in each area. This section can also be used as a helpful check list as and when schools review their accessibility strategies.

### **7.3 HMIE Inspections**

The quality indicators selected in this section include all those currently evaluated by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in inspections of primary, secondary and special schools in Scotland. Others have been included to enable independent and grant-aided schools to audit school aims and policies, for which they have individual responsibility; and to ensure that the spirit of legislation is embedded in all school policies and practices. The attached Appendix outlines the approach to be taken by HMIE in evaluating schools' accessibility strategy.

**Table 1 Gaining an Overview: Improving Access to the Curriculum**

How good is our school at making the curriculum accessible to current and prospective pupils with a disability?

Key questions	School provision	QI	Evaluation
How well does the school promote equality of opportunity that ensures that all pupils including those with a disability can participate in and gain full benefit from the learning experience? What is the level and range of courses offered?	Structure of the curriculum	1.1	
	Climate and relationships	5.1	
	Expectations and promoting achievements	5.2	
	Equality and fairness	5.3	
How good are the learning, teaching and achievement of pupils with a disability?	The teaching process	3.2	
	Pupils' learning experiences	3.3	
	Meeting pupils' needs	3.4	
How well are barriers to learning identified and addressed?	Personal and social development	4.2	
	Learning Support	4.5	
How well is provision led and managed and its impact evaluated?	Self-evaluation	7.2	
	Leadership	7.4	

**Table 2 Gaining an Overview: Improving Access to the physical environment**

How good is the environment for learning for current and prospective pupils with a disability?

Key questions	School provision	QI	Evaluation
How well does the school promote equality of opportunity that ensures that all pupils including those with a disability can participate in and gain full benefit from the learning experience?	Climate and relationships	5.1	
	Equality and fairness	5.3	
How well are barriers to learning identified and addressed?	Pupils' learning experiences	3.3	
	Meeting pupils' needs	3.4	
	Personal and social development	4.2	
	Learning Support	4.5	
How well is the physical environment managed to support the learning of all pupils	Accommodation and facilities	6.1	
How well is provision led and managed and its impact evaluated?	Self-evaluation	7.2	
	Leadership	7.4	

**Table 3 Gaining an Overview: Improving communication and delivery of school information for pupils with a disability**

How good is the school at identifying and meeting the individual communication needs for all its pupils?

Key questions	School provision	QI	Evaluation
How well does the school promote equality of opportunity that ensures that all pupils including those with a disability can participate in and gain full benefit from the learning experience?	Climate and relationships Equality and fairness	5.1 5.3	
How good are the learning, teaching and achievement of pupils with a disability?	Pupils' learning experiences Meeting pupils' needs	3.3 3.4	
How good is the school at supporting pupils and meeting their individual emotional, social and physical needs?	Pastoral care	4.1	
How well does the school communicate with and involve all stakeholders?	Partnership with parents, governors, managers and the community	5.4	
How well is provision led and managed and its impact evaluated?	Self-evaluation Leadership	7.2 7.4	

## The Full Audit Tool

### 1. How good is the school at ensuring that current and prospective pupils with a disability can participate fully in its life and work?

#### Structure of the curriculum QI 1.1

- Breadth and balance
- Integration, permeation
- Timetabling and arrangements for pupil choice

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
Do pupils with a disability or additional support needs have full access to a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The curriculum is adapted to suit the individual needs of pupils who experience difficulties</li> <li>• All pupils, including those with additional support needs, have access to appropriate support at key transition points</li> <li>• Any departure from the ordinary arrangements for the curriculum are agreed with pupils and parents</li> </ul>		

**2. How good is the school at structuring teaching approaches to match the learning needs of pupils with a disability?**

**The teaching process QI 3.2**

- Range and appropriateness of teaching approaches
- Teacher-pupil interaction
- Clarity and purposefulness of questioning

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>Do arrangements for, and approaches to teaching ensure that all pupils in the class are assisted to learn?</p> <p>Are tasks and learning activities effectively matched to the needs of pupils, including pupils with a disability and those from different linguistic/cultural background?</p> <p>To what extent does the school involve other professionals in addressing barriers to learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has clear guidance on supporting pupils with additional support needs</li> <li>• The school has a learning support policy which is shared with staff and parents</li> <li>• The school has clear procedures for supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties</li> <li>• Teaching is targeted to pupils' strengths, and takes account of the full range of abilities, aptitudes and different cultural/linguistic backgrounds</li> <li>• Teachers make clear and effective use of a range questioning techniques</li> <li>• The school has access to a range of specialists (for example, health and therapy personnel, educational psychologists), and where appropriate can enlist their help to address barriers to learning for pupils with a disability.</li> </ul>		

### 3. How good is the school at ensuring that pupils with a disability gain full benefit from the learning experience?

#### **Pupils' learning experiences QI 3.3**

- Extent to which the learning environment stimulates and motivates pupils
- Pace of learning
- Personal responsibility for learning, independent thinking and active involvement in learning
- Interaction with others

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>Is the school environment stimulating, challenging and conducive to learning?</p> <p>Are pupils with a disability fully engaged in the whole learning experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classrooms and learning areas in the school provide stimulating, safe learning environments for all pupils.</li> <li>• All pupils are encouraged to be active, independent learners and to seek help if they need it</li> <li>• Pupils, including pupils with a disability are well motivated and success is recognised and acknowledged</li> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to progress at their own pace and take responsibility for their own learning</li> <li>• Pupils with a disability are included and involved in all aspects of school life</li> </ul>		

#### 4. How good are the learning teaching and achievement of pupils with a disability?

##### Meeting pupils' needs QI 3.4

- Choice of tasks, activities and resources
- Provision for pupils with differing abilities and aptitudes
- Identification of learning needs

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well are the educational needs of pupils with a disability and additional support needs identified, assessed, recorded and shared?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a written policy on assessment of pupils who are experiencing difficulties in learning.</li> <li>• The policy provides staff with clear guidance on the steps to take and who to inform if they suspect a pupil may require additional support.</li> <li>• The results of assessments are recorded, analysed and shared with relevant staff, parents, and where appropriate with pupils</li> <li>• The school has effective and efficient procedures for identifying pupils needs and reviews of progress for pupils who need additional support</li> </ul>		

## 5. How well does the school ensure the care, welfare and protection of pupils with a disability?

### Pastoral care QI 4.1

- Arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare and protection of pupils
- Provision for meeting the emotional, physical and social needs of individual pupils

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>To what extent does the school promote pupils' welfare, safety and protection?</p> <p>How well does the school address the emotional, physical and social needs of all its pupils including pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school effectively implements policies and procedures to support and protect all pupils</li> <li>• Issues such as bullying, racial or disability discrimination are effectively handled</li> <li>• Pupils' concerns or complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively</li> <li>• Staff are sensitive and alert to pupils' needs, including those pupils with a disability or who are vulnerable</li> <li>• The school values all pupils equally and promotes a climate of openness, respect and trust</li> <li>• The school works in partnership with parents and ensures relevant information about pupils with a disability is shared with staff</li> </ul>		

**6. How well does the school promote the personal and social development of pupils with a disability?**

**Personal and social development QI 4.2**

- Planned approaches to promoting personal and social development
- Pupils' progress in developing positive attitudes and personal and social skills
- Contribution of extra-curricular and other activities

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well does the school provide for the personal and social development of pupils with a disability?</p> <p>To what extent does the school take account of the individual needs of pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are planned opportunities for all pupils to focus on equality and anti-discrimination issues</li> <li>• The school provides appropriate support, personalised programmes, and assistance to enable pupils with a disability to be included in formal and informal curricular activities</li> </ul>		

## 7. How effective is the school at providing appropriate support for learning for pupils who require it?

### Learning Support QI 4.5

- Programmes to support pupils' learning
- Pupils' progress and attainment
- Implementation of the roles of learning support

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How good is the school at supporting pupils with a disability who need additional support for learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes of work for pupils with a disability or additional support needs are well designed and suitably differentiated to take account of individual needs</li> <li>• Key staff regularly monitor and review the progress of pupils with individualised educational programmes</li> <li>• The school makes effective use of the resources it has to support pupils with a disability and those who need additional support for learning</li> <li>• Learning support staff provide high quality provision that effectively fulfils the roles of learning support including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well planned co-operative teaching</li> <li>• Individual/tutorial support</li> <li>• Well-informed advice to colleagues</li> <li>• Liaison with external specialists and services</li> <li>• Advice to senior managers and class teachers about the curriculum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

**8. How well does the school address the requirements of legislation relating to accessibility for pupils with a disability?**

**Implementation of legislation relating to disabilities QI 4.6**

- Knowledge and understanding of legislation and related procedures
- Meeting the requirements of legislation
- Procedures for implementing legislation

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well do headteachers and senior managers understand their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) to pupils and prospective pupils with a disability?</p> <p>How well does the school plan to become more accessible to current and prospective pupils with disabilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The headteacher and senior managers are knowledgeable about the legislation and advice relating to current and prospective pupils with a disability</li> <li>• The school has effective policies and procedures in place to enable it to effectively fulfil its duties to current and prospective pupils with a disability</li> <li>• Staff are clear about their roles and remits in planning and improving accessibility</li> <li>• Senior managers and learning support staff work closely together to ensure provision for pupils with a disability is effectively managed</li> </ul>		

**9. How good is the school at ensuring that pupils with a disability participate fully in its life and work?**

**Climate and relationships QI 5.1**

- Sense of identity and pride in the school
- Reception and atmosphere
- Pupil and staff morale
- Pupil/staff relationships
- Pupils' behaviour and discipline

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>To what extent does the school ensure that pupils with a disability are fully involved in the school community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has effective systems for communicating and consulting with all pupils including pupils with a disability so that they are included in and can influence decisions about school matters</li> <li>• There is a positive atmosphere throughout the school and parents of pupils with a disability are always made welcome</li> <li>• Parents of pupils with a disability are encouraged to express their views or concerns and participate fully in decisions affecting the education and welfare of their child or young person.</li> </ul>		

**10. How good is the school at ensuring that current and prospective pupils with a disability can participate fully in its life and work?**

**Equality and fairness QI 5.3**

- Sense of equality and fairness
- Ensuring equality and fairness

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>To what extent does the school promote a sense of fairness and equal opportunity throughout that welcomes diversity and embraces difference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a whole school approach to promoting equality of opportunity. All pupils are assisted to feel confident in recognising and addressing discrimination.</li> <li>• The school values all pupils equally</li> <li>• The school consults effectively with parents, carers, and all its staff and pupils on all school matters.</li> </ul>		

**11. How well does the school communicate with parents of pupils with a disability?**

<p><b>Partnership with parents, governors, managers and the community QI 5.4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement to parents to be involved in their child's learning and the life of the school</li> <li>• Procedures for communicating with parents</li> <li>• Information given to parents about the work of the school</li> <li>• Links between the school and governors/managers</li> <li>• The school's links with the community</li> </ul>
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Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>Does the school support and encourage parents of pupils with a disability to be partners in their children's education?</p> <p>To what extent does the school communicate with parents, governors/managers, and the local community about aspects of its work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has clear procedures for working in partnership with parents that are shared with parents and staff</li> <li>• The school involves parents of pupils with a disability in their children's learning through effective communication</li> <li>• The school's commitment to providing for pupils with a disability is made clear in its statement of purpose and other communications</li> <li>• There is effective two way communication between the school and parents, governors/managers and the local community</li> </ul>		

## 12. How good is the environment for learning for pupils with a disability?

### Accommodation and facilities QI 6.1

- Sufficiency, range and appropriateness
- Arrangements to ensure health and safety

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well is the physical environment of the school organised to meet the needs of current pupils with a disability?</p> <p>To what extent does the school make use of ICT to meet the needs of pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has systems for identifying physical barriers for current and prospective pupils with a disability which it implements effectively</li> <li>• There are short, medium and long term targets to improve access to the physical environment for pupils with a disability</li> <li>• Policies and procedures for health and safety are effectively implemented</li> <li>• Learning environments are well managed and where necessary, adjustments are made to suit the needs of pupils with a disability;</li> <li>• The school makes very good use of specialist resources to support pupils with a disability, including the use of ICT to support learning</li> </ul>		

**13. How good is the school at ensuring current and prospective pupils with a disability can participate fully in its life and work?**

**Aims and Policies QI 7.1**

- Clarity and appropriateness of aims
- Effectiveness of procedures and policies

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well do the school's purpose, policies and ethos promote and support the inclusion of pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has written policies that reflect its purpose, values and aims</li> <li>• The school's policies promote a positive ethos and a sense of equality and fairness</li> <li>• The school policies reflect legislative requirements in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)</li> <li>• The school has developed and implemented an accessibility strategy to improve access for pupils with a disability</li> </ul>		

**14. How good is the school at monitoring and evaluating the impact of planning to develop and improve access for current and prospective pupils with a disability?**

**Self-evaluation QI 7.2**

- Processes of self evaluation
- Monitoring and evaluation by promoted staff
- Reporting on standards and quality

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How good are the school's approaches to monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision for pupils with a disability?</p> <p>How good is the school at monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of planning to improve access for current and prospective pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers monitor the teaching process for pupils with a disability</li> <li>• Senior managers ensure that systematic quality assurance procedures to monitor and evaluate school provision are applied when evaluating provision for and achievements of pupils with a disability</li> <li>• Planning to improve access for pupils with a disability is part of general school improvement planning that is routinely monitored and evaluated</li> <li>• The success criteria set to measure the success of previous targets to improve accessibility have been met or exceeded</li> </ul>		

**15. How well is provision for pupils with a disability led and managed and its impact evaluated?**

**Leadership QI 7.4**

- Leadership qualities
- Professional competence and commitment
- Relationships with people and development of teamwork

Questions to be asked	Best Practice	Strengths	Areas for improvement
<p>How well does the school plan and manage and seek to improve its capacity to provide high quality education for pupils with a disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior managers delegate responsibilities effectively and monitor outcomes for all pupils</li> <li>• Senior managers provide clear, strategic direction which takes into account the views of all stakeholders, for example, by providing clear remits for staff who have a role in meeting the needs of pupils with a disability</li> <li>• The headteacher has a clear view of the school's capacity to meet the needs of all its pupils and has links with outside agencies to consult in circumstances where the additional support needs of pupils with a disability are not fully met</li> </ul>		

## **APPENDIX 4: HMIE PROFILE FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

### **ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY**

HMIE will be evaluating schools' strategies for accessibility. The legislative background to this aspect of the inspection is outlined overleaf.

One or more members of the inspection team will:

- look at key documentation;
- interview relevant member(s) of staff (accessibility may be included in an interview covering wider aspects of support for pupils).

Please note that inspection activities will not be extensive or exhaustive. Inspectors will focus on how a school's approaches have impacted on pupils' experiences.

In order to facilitate the inspection, schools will be asked to provide information under the following headings. Schools may wish to make cross references to existing documents and make these documents available to HMIE.

**All schools will be required to include a copy of their current accessibility strategy when they return the profile in advance of the inspection. This should cover:-**

- strategies to facilitate access to the curriculum:
- strategies to facilitate access to the school's physical environment:
- strategies to improve communication and the delivery of school information:

## LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

### **Education (Disability Strategy and Pupils' Educational Records) Act 2002**

The section on accessibility strategies within this Act puts a requirement on bodies responsible for schools (local authorities, proprietors of independent schools, and boards of management in grant aided and self-governing schools) to prepare and implement accessibility strategies which will, over time, increase access to education for pupils with disabilities. The strategy must cover the following three duties:

- increasing the extent to which pupils can participate in the curriculum
- improving the physical environment of the school to make it more accessible
- improving communication with pupils with disabilities, including making information available in alternative forms if required.

Explanatory notes to the Act refer specifically to HMIE:

*The existing powers of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (contained in sections 9 to 12 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (asp 6)) will enable them to establish **whether accessibility strategies are in place and whether they are being implemented and reviewed** as required.*

## **8: REFERENCES, PUBLICATIONS AND SUPPLIERS**

- 8.01 Access for Disabled People to School Buildings –  
Management and Design Guide  
Building Bulletin 91  
Department for Education and Employment  
The Stationery Office May 1999 ISBN 0 11 271062 X
- 8.02 Access Audit  
Centre for Accessible Environments  
Nutmeg House  
60 Gainsford Street  
London SE1 2NY  
ISBN 0 903976 30 7
- 8.03 Acoustic design of Schools  
Building Bulletin 93  
Department for Education and Employment
- 8.04 Inclusive School Design – Accommodating pupils with special  
educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools  
Building Bulletin 94  
Department for Education and Employment  
The Stationery Office 2001  
ISBN 0 11 271109 X
- 8.05 Building Sight  
Royal National Institute for the Blind  
224 Great Portland Street  
London  
W1N 6AA
- 8.06 Designing for Accessibility – Inclusive Environments  
Centre for Accessibility  
ISBN 1 85946 143 3
- 8.07 A Design Guide for the Use of Colour and Contrast to Improve the  
Built Environment for Visually Impaired People  
Dulux Technical Group  
ICI Paints
- 8.08 Automatic Door Systems  
Centre for Accessibility  
ISBN 1 85946 171 9

- 8.09 Architectural Ironmongery  
Centre for Accessibility  
ISBN 1 85946 170 0
- 8.10 Internal Floor Finishes – Improving Access for all  
Centre for Accessibility  
ISBN 0 903976 28 5
- 8.11 Dundee Schools Physical Access – Good Practice Guide  
Dundee City Council  
Education Department
- 8.12 See it Right  
Royal National Institute for the Blind  
RNIB Peterborough  
Bakewell Road  
Orton Southgate  
Peterborough PE2 6XU
- 8.13 The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act, SE (2002), HMSO.
- 8.14 Disability Discrimination Act (1995)DES.
- 8.15 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) DRC.
- 8.16 Guidance on Preparing Accessibility Strategies '(Scottish Executive, 2002).
- 8.17 Inclusion and Equality: Part 2: Evaluating education for pupils with additional support needs in mainstream schools: How good is our school? Quality Management in Education, HMIE, 2004
- 8.18 Planning to Improve Access to Education for Pupils with Disabilities: Guidance on Preparing Accessibility Strategies, SE, (2002) Astron.
- 8.19 Report on the First Round of Accessibility Strategies, SE (2003), Astron.
- 8.20 Disability Rights Commission – Code of Practice for Schools 2002
- 8.21 Disability Rights Commission – The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, Scotland (due December 2005)

- 8.22 Planning to Improve Access to Education for Pupils with Disabilities: Guidance on Preparing Accessibility Strategies – The Scottish Executive
- 8.23 Report on the First Round of Accessibility Strategies – compiled jointly by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education and the Disability rights Commission
- 8.24 A Manual of Good Practice in Special Educational Needs – The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department, 1998
- 8.25 How Good is Our School?: 2002 Edition – self Evaluation using Quality Indicators, HMIE, 2002
- 8.26 Effective Provision for Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) SOEID, 1994
- 8.27 The Same As You? A review of services for people with learning disabilities- Scottish Executive, May 2000

The following web sites provide a good source of information on a wide range of subjects to help improve accessibility. The inclusion of sites which sell products does not infer that this product is any better than other products out in the market place and individual schools need to check for themselves prior to making any purchase.

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/management](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management) - information on management and design for schools

[www.keytools.com](http://www.keytools.com) - Hardware and software supplier for disabled applications

[www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk) - advice on accessibility issues and training

[www.dyslexia.com](http://www.dyslexia.com) - products and advice on dyslexia

[www.dyslexia-teacher.com](http://www.dyslexia-teacher.com) - products and advice on dyslexia

[www.texthelp.com](http://www.texthelp.com) - software supplier for disabled applications

[www.penfriend.biz](http://www.penfriend.biz) - software supplier for disabled applications

[www.barrybennett.co.uk](http://www.barrybennett.co.uk) - manufacturer of furniture for disabled persons

[www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk) - products and advice for hearing disabilities

[www.posturite.co.uk](http://www.posturite.co.uk) - provider of products for hearing disabilities

[www.connevans.com](http://www.connevans.com) - provider of products for hearing disabilities

[www.teachlogic.co.uk](http://www.teachlogic.co.uk) - sound systems for classrooms

[www.soundfiled.info](http://www.soundfiled.info) - sound systems for classrooms

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk) - information, product and services for hearing disabilities and a good example of web page design

[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk) - information, products and services for hearing disabilities

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk) - information, products and services on visual disabilities

[www.kellysearch.com](http://www.kellysearch.com) a search engine for companies and products

[www.activemobility.co.uk](http://www.activemobility.co.uk) - online shop for a wide range of disability products

[www.otsystems.co.uk](http://www.otsystems.co.uk) - manufacturer of automatic door opener and closure products

[www.ihear.co.uk](http://www.ihear.co.uk) - manufacturer of workplace hearing solutions

[www.deaf-alerter.com](http://www.deaf-alerter.com) - manufacturer of fire alarm and public address messaging systems for deaf people

[www.disabilityaccessco.com](http://www.disabilityaccessco.com) - manufacturer of access lifts

[www.dorma-uk.co.uk](http://www.dorma-uk.co.uk) - manufacturer of door closers and door furniture

[www.productselector.co.uk](http://www.productselector.co.uk) a search engine for companies and products

[www.sightandsound.co.uk](http://www.sightandsound.co.uk) - products for hearing and visual disabilities

[www.voicepower.co.uk](http://www.voicepower.co.uk) - software for dyslexic students

## **9: PHOTOGRAPHIC EXAMPLES**

**The pictures are available as a computer-based interactive tool, which can be accessed online via the following link:**  
**[www.scis.org.uk/accessibility\\_guidelines/open.html](http://www.scis.org.uk/accessibility_guidelines/open.html)**