

## Appendix 3 - Accessibility Strategy

### Letter and questionnaire to parents/carers:

County Office  
Children's Services Department  
The Castle, Winchester  
Hampshire SO23 8UG

Telephone 01962 846452  
Fax 01962 842355  
Textphone 0808 100 2484

Enquiries to Eric Smith

ES/03268AccessStratLetterParentCarer  
My reference /aj

Direct Line 01962 846245

Your reference

Date 26 March 2008

E-mail eric.smith@hants.gov.uk

Dear Parent/Carer

### Local Authority Accessibility Strategy

All Local Authorities (LA) are required, by law, to produce an Accessibility Strategy for the schools and services to schools for which they are responsible. This strategy focuses on:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled.

In Hampshire we are currently working on a new three year accessibility strategy and, as part of that process, we are very keen to gain the views and comments of children and young people and parents/carers who are likely to be affected by it. We have, quite deliberately, interpreted the phrase 'disabled pupils' very widely so that it incorporates the majority of children and young people with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities.

Officers in the Children's Services Department and other Hampshire County Council departments have started to review the existing strategy and consider what should be included in the revised strategy, initially for the three year period 2008 – 2011. We have invited 19 schools to contribute the views of children and young people. We have also met with some parents/carers, representatives of the County's SEN Advisory Groups and Children with Disabilities network. We have sought advice from these parents on how we might invite a larger number of parents/carers to contribute to this process. The purpose of this letter is, therefore, to invite you to let us have your views, and to send you the attached questionnaire which may help you to do so. It will also assist our collation of views if they are received in a similar format.



The questions on the enclosed questionnaire refer to the three access areas mentioned in the legislation (i.e. access to the curriculum, access to the physical environment and access to information) as well as an additional area, access to participation in the life of the school, which we feel is equally important.

It is important, at this point, for me to stress that this exercise will be totally confidential in that you, your child or his/her school will not be named or identified in any way and all responses will be treated as non-attributable. Once the responses have been collated and analysed, all the paperwork will be destroyed.

If you would like more background to our review of Hampshire County Council's Accessibility Strategy, you can see our current policy at [www.hants.gov.uk/education/departments/leastrategy/accessibilitystrategy/index.php](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/departments/leastrategy/accessibilitystrategy/index.php) and the framework for an Accessibility Strategy provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9171>

If you are prepared to let us have your views I would be most grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire **and return it to me by Friday, 11 April 2008.**

Yours sincerely

**Eric Smith**  
Education Officer SEN

## Accessibility Strategy – questionnaire for parents/carers

Hampshire County Council is working on a new, three year accessibility strategy for all schools in Hampshire. The accessibility strategy is a plan which tries to help children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities by:

- making it easier for them to learn
- making it easier for them to get around the school buildings and grounds
- making it easier for them to get written information
- making it easier for them to join in the life of the school.

### QUESTIONS:

#### 1. Curriculum

i) What things have made it easy for your child to learn in school/pre-school?

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ii) What would make it easier?

- e.g. - how support staff are used  
- is everyone aware of their disability/needs  
- what classes work well, and why  
- what classes do not work well, and why  
- how do teachers help your child / how could they help more

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**4. Access to participation**

i) What activities has your child been able to join in with at school?

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ii) What would have made it easier or helped him/her to take part in school activities?

- e.g. - what activities/clubs/teams has he/she joined  
- are there things he/she cannot join in with at school and, if so, why  
- would he/she like more help to make friends and, if so, what would help.

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Please return this questionnaire **(no later than Friday, 11 April, 2008)** to:  
Eric Smith  
Education Officer SEN  
Children's Services Department  
Ashburton Court East  
The Castle  
Winchester SO23 8UG

## Appendix 4 - Accessibility Strategy

### Summary of responses from parents:

Following meetings between Local Authority Officers and parents/carers, representatives of the County SEN Advisory groups and Children with Disabilities network a questionnaire was circulated to a wider group of parents/carers to consider those issues which might be taken into account in the revised accessibility strategy. A summary of responses is set out below.

#### I. Access to the curriculum

##### What things have made it easy for your child to learn in school/pre-school?

- enthusiastic and helpful LSA/SNAs
- being placed near the front of the class
- teachers that take notice and involve children in question and answer sessions
- an appropriate curriculum which is flexible to children's needs and pace
- an enthusiastic and committed 'head of department'
- access to appropriate and specialist equipment to support pupils' needs
- a caring and inclusive ethos
- high levels of staffing
- trained and experienced staff who understand pupils' needs and the differences between pupils with the same category of need
- having a statement of special educational needs
- the use of a lap-top (especially for children who tire easily)
- a happy, safe and fun environment
- well planned IEPs
- regular, reliable transport
- individual means of communication
- consistency of teaching methods and styles
- good visual aids and prompt cards
- a quiet space where children can 'chill out'
- after-school homework clubs
- a colour co-ordinated site map of the school and timetable
- the use of sign language, Makaton, PECS, etc
- being disapplied from the National Curriculum
- the availability of occupational and physiotherapy
- the use of home-school link books
- attending good pre-school provision
- specialist SEN resourced provision in mainstream schools
- the introduction of braille and a braille note-taker
- having specialist equipment together in one place and staff to introduce pupils to it.

### **What would make it easier/better?**

- ensuring that schools have adequate funding and resources
- having automatic doors that work properly and are not tampered with by other children
- fewer LSA changeovers during the school day
- higher staffing levels (both teachers and LSAs)
- providing practical life and self-help skills; more appropriate, relevant and interesting experiences
- greater links between mainstream and special schools so that children with disabilities are not seen as 'different'
- better day-to-day communication with schools so that projects, topics etc can be shared and talked about after school and carried on at home
- better communication when supply teachers are used
- early withdrawal from classes to avoid 'crowds'
- FE type provision to allow children to experience a more adult environment.

## **2. Physical access**

### **What is it about the buildings and grounds that make it easier to get around and to learn?**

- automatic doors that work properly
- ramps
- disabled toilets
- a field which is softer to play on than concrete
- good wheelchair access to move around toilets and hoists
- 'outside' classrooms
- wheelchair swings and roundabouts
- multi-sensory rooms
- good signage/pictures/symbols
- the whole school being on one level
- play areas adapted for children with physical disabilities
- not moving furniture around so that children become used to where it is (and don't bump into it)
- clear people movement rules in corridors/footpaths (e.g. 'keep to the left')
- light, bright walls
- hydro pool
- wide corridors
- soundproofing and soundfield systems.

### **What would make it easier?**

- small, individual teaching/counselling/therapy/rest rooms
- using textured paving to warn people of possible dangers (e.g. low fencing, etc)
- lighting and sound levels that are sensitive to children with sensory impairments
- quiet outdoor areas
- separate play areas for younger/older pupils
- wheelchair users being able to park close to the school
- ensuring that specialist equipment is available
- low, dropped kerbs to facilitate wheelchair access.

### **3. Access to information**

**When instructions or information are given out or used in the classroom, is it in a form your child can understand?**

- Yes
- I'm sure it is
- No, but his SNA translates it into a form he can understand
- Yes. The use of Makaton, PECS, schedule boards and English throughout the day making learning easier
- Not to my knowledge – the LSAs are expected to interpret for him. Instructions need to be differentiated; visual aids and visual timetables work well
- There are only 7 children in my daughter's class so they have time to check that she has understood
- When my son wasn't hearing very well the school and the HI advisor arranged for a radio aid to be provided (although he didn't like using it!)
- Using symbols, pictures, Makaton, computers, role play, books and tapes.

### **What could be done to make things easier?**

- open plan buildings mean that children can be distracted by noise from outside of the classroom and it is important to regularly check that they have understood what has been said
- use home-school link books to provide information which can help to reinforce things at home
- ensure that children know that any member of staff will help with information
- planning and discussion with special needs staff to ensure that children are accessing the curriculum
- ensure that LSA support is always available
- the use of e-mail
- better communication aids

- regular visits from speech and language therapists
- more training in Makaton
- not having too many supply teachers, which leads to confusion
- having SATs, etc in a picture format and spread over more time (for children who tire quickly)
- small groups with specialist staff
- use notes with symbols, pictures, simple words etc.

#### **4. Access to participation**

##### **What activities has your child been able to join in with at school?**

- bowling
- wheelchair football
- homework club
- drama (very good for role play and body language, etc)
- music
- physical education
- school outings (sometimes with parent and/or SNA)
- School is totally inclusive; there are no activities which her class does that she can not take part in
- Her special needs school and mainstream school would not have coped with her needs
- swimming (sometimes with LSA help)
- karate
- football
- Ironically, the clubs run by outside groups are more willing to involve him. Not experiencing special needs, I have never felt that he would be welcome at the school-run clubs as they can't communicate with him without his LSA
- residential week
- horse riding
- Parallel Olympics
- cooking
- religious festivals
- sports day
- Dance class after school but she was the only child with special needs in it and couldn't keep up with the others so it wasn't a good idea
- All activities; when the risk was too high (e.g. a week away at Stubbington or swimming) we have always been able to come up with an answer (such as me going along) so that he could attend
- Hampshire Sport
- school outings

- walking club
- KidzClub.

**What would have made it easier or helped him/her to take part in school activities?**

- having some activities differentiated by development age rather than chronological age
- 1-to-1 support (e.g. LSAs or helpers) for after-school or outside school activities
- after-school clubs and activities in special schools (as in mainstream schools)
- sign language clubs to help communication
- facilitating friendships
- using flexible 'rules' for sports and games to take into account children's special needs
- more imaginative lesson plans in PE for children with poor hand-eye co-ordination
- transport facilities to allow children to attend after-school clubs and activities
- all staff knowing about and understanding the nature of a child's needs/difficulties
- making early contact with the secondary school, at primary/secondary transition, and begin to take part in activities there, so that children are already known to children at the secondary school when they move
- the use of a play table with tactile games which both VI and sighted children can use
- adapting board games (e.g. 'Cluedo'), using large print and/or braille cards which VI and sighted children can use in the playground
- being aware that the interests of some VI children (because they cannot access 'usual' childhood interests) may be very different from other children (e.g. current affairs) and making provision for this.