



# **Accessibility Strategy 2009-2012**

Hampshire County Council  
Children's Services Department  
SEN Service

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## I. Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 was extended to cover education by including the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. In addition to its duties under Special Educational Needs (SEN) legislation, since September 2002, the Local Authority (LA) has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA:

- not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage
- to implement an accessibility strategy to increase access to school education for disabled pupils.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) published its original strategy in 2003 and this is now due for review. This revised strategy, covering the period 2009-2012, sets out how the Local Authority (LA) plans to increase access to school education for disabled pupils in the schools for which it is responsible. The strategy covers the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the 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 information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

This strategy takes into account significant changes in national policy both towards schools and local authorities and towards children and young people with disabilities and their families. Bearing these issues in mind HCC has quite deliberately chosen to interpret the term 'disabled pupils' very widely so that it incorporates the majority of children and young people with SEN and/or Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). There is a recognition that the achievement of the Every Child Matters outcomes for all children cannot be delivered by any one school operating in isolation. Thus there is now a focus on collaborative working between schools and partner agencies through developments such as:

- extended services and Children's Centre agenda
- education and behaviour improvement partnerships
- Schools Engagement Programme
- 14-19 curriculum

- school sports partnerships
- specialist schools' community plans.

Identifying and removing barriers to access and participation must take into account extended services, new ways of working and new approaches to curriculum delivery in and around partnerships of schools, both mainstream and special.

Since December 2006 there has been a legal duty on all public sector organisations to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, referred to as the Disability Equality Duty. This requires local authorities and schools to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled peoples' needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

## **1.1 Aiming High for Disabled Children**

The three priority areas for improving outcomes for disabled children in 'Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families' are:

- Access and empowerment
- Responsive services and timely support
- Improving quality and capacity.

These priority areas require improved access to information, facilities and inclusive activities and opportunities. This is reinforced by Public Service Agreement 12, which includes a new indicator based on parents' experiences. By 2012, this strategy should enable disabled young people and their parents to report a more favourable experience of curriculum participation, education and associated services and the information that is made available to them. Hampshire County Council's Accessibility Strategy complements and is consistent with the key elements of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme.

## **1.2 Removing Barriers to Achievement**

This strategy sets out the government's vision for enabling children with special educational needs to realise their potential and to improve provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs. The strategy proposes action in four key areas:

- **Early intervention:** to ensure that children who have difficulties with learning receive help as soon as possible and that parents have access to suitable childcare. This will need greater co-ordination between health, education and social care in dealing with young children with SEN and disabilities
- **Removing barriers to learning:** to ensure that more children with SEN attend mainstream schools and are able to participate fully in school life. This will need specialist expertise and resources to support them in school
- **Raising expectations and achievement:** by developing teachers' skills and strategies for meeting children's SEN needs
- **Developing improvements in partnership:** including consistency in the management of SEN, delegated funding to schools and greater integration of education, health and social care in meeting the needs of children and families.

The Accessibility Strategy complements and is consistent with the key elements of the Removing Barriers to Achievement Strategy.

## **2. Starting points**

### **2.1 The purpose and direction of the local authority's strategy: vision and values**

The Accessibility Strategy contributes to the delivery of the priorities, values and key policy commitments of Hampshire County Council:

The corporate priorities:

- Hampshire safer and more secure for all
- Maximising well-being
- Enhancing our quality of place.

The corporate values:

- Removing barriers to opportunity and improving choice for all
- Responding to the improvements that people say they want

- Planning for and investing in the future
- Encouraging partnerships, participation and contribution.

The Children and Young People's Plan commitment:

- to working with special schools and mainstream schools with specialist provision to improve the range and quality of their provision and to build the capacity of mainstream education to further reduce and remove barriers to participation and learning.

### **The Maximising Well-being in Education Policy**

Hampshire County Council is committed to maintaining a high quality, comprehensive and inclusive education system offering choice and diversity in which every learner:

- is given appropriate support to access education fully
- is accorded equal worth, protected from harm and enabled to be healthy
- respects and accords equal worth to others and acknowledges one another's rights and responsibilities
- enjoys learning and is enabled to achieve well
- is equipped with the values, knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to live life to the full.

Hampshire County Council believes that the following principles should guide educational provision for all learners in all educational settings:

- schools and colleges are learning communities with cultures that promote and support effective teaching with active and participative learning
- the school or college ethos places a high value on developing self-esteem and ensuring that learning takes place in a stimulating, purposeful and creative environment.
- the curriculum is broad, rich and innovative, so that it is responsive to the different learning needs of every child and young person and delivers their entitlement to appropriate education and training
- there is excellence in attainment and achievement with high aspirations and an entitlement to good progress for all
- timely and appropriate information is shared and used between and within schools and other appropriate agencies to inform effective learning

- all children and young people are supported to overcome barriers to learning. Their learning moves at a challenging but realistic pace
- good behaviour is promoted and poor behaviour is managed well
- the school or college works in close partnership with parents and other partners and demonstrates a commitment to its local community.

From the earliest years through to higher and adult education every learner in Hampshire will be given opportunities to develop high self-esteem, respect for others and positive and socially responsible behaviour enabling them to play a full role in society.

For children and young people with disabilities this means that:

- education providers have a responsibility to ensure that everyone in Hampshire can participate fully in any learning opportunity
- there should be a continuum of provision to meet a continuum of need
- all children and young people should receive high quality education that meets their needs in their local communities through varied and flexible provision.

The County Council has also committed to the Every Disabled Child Matters Local Authority Charter, within which is an assurance that the local authority will work towards making “all universal services, including extended schools and children’s centres, accessible to disabled children”.

## **2.2 Information from pupil data and school audits**

Future priorities for the development of data and information:

- Work with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to ensure health data better inform strategic planning
- Develop work with the Joint Information Link (JIL)
- Work with the Access team to complete the school accommodation and sites audit
- Improve the provision and quality of information on pre-school children with SEN and ensure appropriate information exchange at key points of transition.

## **2.3 Views of those consulted during the development of the strategy**

Initial consultation on the strategy was undertaken with two groups; children and young people who are likely to be directly affected by the policy and parents/carers of children and young people who are likely to be affected by the policy.

With regard to the first group, 19 schools were approached and asked whether they would be prepared to hold a facilitated discussion with pupils about accessibility issues. Copies of letters sent to headteachers and parents/carers; a copy of the consent form and questionnaire used with pupils groups are attached at Appendix A. The participating schools were a mixture of primary and secondary special schools, primary and secondary mainstream schools with resourced provision and a mainstream primary school.

Thirteen schools replied to the consultation exercise and their responses were collated, analysed and summarised. The summary of responses is attached at Appendix B. The summary of responses was, and will continue to be, used to inform the direction and priorities of the Accessibility Strategy.

A letter and a questionnaire was also sent to representatives of parent/carer groups. Copies are attached at Appendix C. The responses were collated, analysed and summarised and the summary information was and will continue to be used to inform the direction and priorities of the Accessibility Strategy. A summary of responses is attached at Appendix D.

The Accessibility Strategy was, in the light of the informal consultation exercises, amended and was subsequently circulated for formal consultation. A list of those consulted is attached at Appendix E.

## **3. The main priorities in the local authority's strategy**

### **3.1 Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils**

Guidance is available both nationally and locally to support schools and pupils to increase access to the curriculum. Key documents include the National Curriculum 2000 which highlights, in its inclusion statement, how schools might address the needs of disabled pupils, 'Supporting the target setting process' published by the Department for Education and Schools/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (DfES/QCA) and many documents available via the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) National Strategies.

In the past three years the Local Authority has continued to provide guidance and resources to enhance curriculum access for all from the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS), the Hampshire

Education Psychology Service (HEPS), the Specialist Teacher Advisory (STA) Service and the SEN Service. Furthermore, a summary of progress and availability of provision, training and resources for key areas of special educational need have now been published as position statements for the following:

Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN); Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD); Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD); Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD); Physical Disabilities (PD); Hearing Impairment (HI); Visual Impairment (VI); Severe Learning Difficulties/Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (SLD/PMLD); Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD); Early Years; and Pupil Participation. In addition:

- Resourced provision in mainstream schools has been further developed with additional provision for MLD and VI. A pilot provision for pupils with high functioning autism and complex additional needs has opened in 2007 in the south west area. Plans are in hand to develop a further comparable provision in the north by 2010 and to open a third resourced provision for secondary ASD in the south east by 2010
- In accordance with the County Council's Communication Policy all resourced provision for deaf and HI will be providing a range of communication modes including auditory/oral and signed communication
- Training is identified in the position statements but is also developing according to school and pupil needs. Portsmouth University and the University of Winchester are involved in providing and validating local authority courses
- Early Years provision for disabled pupils continues to develop and is a priority for growth in the 2008-2011 financial cycle. Locality teams and behaviour support teams are in place across the authority and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) support has improved since 2005, through joint funding initiatives and feedback from local implementation groups
- National Strategies initiatives including the waves of interventions, the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative, have been introduced and are well embedded in the best practice schools
- School wide local developments have included a focus on Dyslexia Friendly Schools and Good Autism Practice materials to assist schools with self evaluation
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Information Communication Technology (ICT) support for disabled pupils is now available within the STA Service and through outreach from the primary school for pupils with physical disabilities

- The local authority's "Well-being in Education Policy" (2007) highlights the key function of a creative curriculum accessible to all, to support progress, attainment and well being
- All schools have increased awareness of the need to consult pupils, parents and the wider community in evaluating their curriculum provision. The summary of these findings are commonly recorded in the school's self evaluation document (SEF), providing the authority with feedback from stakeholders on the effectiveness of different aspects of provision in schools, including access to the curriculum
- Schools now have a duty to promote Disability Equality. Training has been arranged by the Local Authority to assist schools in planning to meet this requirement and to produce appropriate action plans
- As part of the roll-out of the development programme for Children's Centres across the county, consideration has been given to the access needs of disabled children and their families
- National expectations in relation to curriculum development, for example 14-19 diversity, extended schools initiatives and education improvement partnerships, are being implemented within the authority and will have a marked impact in the next three years on access to the curriculum for all pupils. During this process ongoing consideration will be given to the needs of disabled children and their families through appropriate impact assessments.

### **Future priorities for increasing access to the curriculum**

Key priorities for action include:

- the ongoing development of resourced provision
- further development of outreach services from special schools, across the county. These schools have been base funded from April 2008 to provide support to mainstream schools to improve access to the curriculum for disabled pupils
- the development of consultation techniques with pupils, parents and the wider community
- multi-agency liaison and joint initiatives
- increasing the awareness of, and provision for, children and young people with severe learning disabilities through the Every Disabled Child Matters Local Authority Charter and the Aiming High for Disabled Children initiative
- the list of priority developments produced by the SEN County Advisory groups and by the SEN Service.

## 3.2 Improvements to the physical environment of schools

### What has been done so far?

#### Resourced provision for pupils with physical disabilities (PD) and sensory impairments

- The strategy for access for disabled pupils in resourced PD provision commenced in the early 1990's with four secondary schools strategically located across the County. They have received considerable investment over the years to enable the inclusion of pupils with more complex physical disabilities. The guiding principle at these schools is that the entire school premises should become accessible to disabled pupils
- As accessibility standards are continually improving, a main focus over the past two years has been to identify and complete a range of planned access improvements to bring the four resourced secondary schools up to current Building Regulations standards. The local authority has installed evacuation lifts, improved hygiene rooms and therapy suites and provided a range of powered doors across school campuses as well as improving external routes
- Since the last Local Authority Accessibility Strategy, a second tier of 'accessible' secondary schools has also been established, to improve accessibility to a number of existing mainstream secondary schools located in areas of the County, thus reducing travel distances and giving greater choice for disabled pupils and their parents. These schools accommodate smaller numbers of disabled pupils and the pupils are more likely to have less complex physical disabilities/health needs. To date two schools have been adapted, enabling access to all curriculum areas with improvements including: evacuation standard lifts, accessible toilets, hygiene rooms and therapy suites. The process of identifying future 'accessible' secondary schools is ongoing
- Listening and learning environments for deaf and hearing impaired pupils in HI resourced provision have been improved through Schools Access Initiative (SAI) funding and there are currently 10 resourced provisions across the county. Acoustic audits have been carried out to inform improvement works which have been implemented in some of the resource bases and in some mainstream classrooms. Soundfield systems have been fitted, where appropriate, and improvements have been made to lighting to enhance lip-reading opportunities
- There are three resource bases (two primary and one secondary) for children with VI. Modifications have been made to school buildings to make them accessible to VI children, including the provision of

rooms for tutorials and preparation of materials as well as adaptations such as the provision of blinds and the highlighting of hazards such as steps and pillars.

### **Using the Schools Access Initiative (SAI) funding to make a difference**

- The SAI fund is an annual grant from the DCSF given to local authorities to improve accessibility in mainstream schools for disabled pupils. Although this is not the only funding stream used to include access improvements within schools, it is the route through which most planned improvements are made to the accessibility of school premises
- Over the financial years 2006/7 and 2007/8, £4.2 million of SAI funding has been invested on improving the accessibility of some 15% of Hampshire schools. The funds are mainly spent strategically to ensure a good geographical spread of accessible schools across the county, although about 5% of the budget is earmarked to fund small pupil-specific projects
- Pupil-specific projects are generally smaller adaptations, e.g. ramped access to a classroom. Specialist Teacher Advisors (STAs) help to identify the need for both strategic and pupil-specific projects in conjunction with the SAI Strategic Working Group. Wherever possible disabled pupils who are directly affected by access improvements schemes, and their families, are involved in the design process with advice also coming from other professionals such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

### **What standards of accessibility do we work to?**

- The standards that Hampshire schools are improved to are set out in the Schools Inclusion Design Brief (see Appendix J). In the absence of detailed national guidance, the brief was published in 2003 in partnership with the Inclusion Branch of the DCSF, Gloucestershire County Council and Swindon Borough Council. It is regarded as a best practice document on access to the built environment in mainstream schools
- British Standard 8300:2001 is also used as this generally sets a higher standard of accessibility than the minimum standard set out in Approved Document Part M (Building Regulation).

### **How do we identify where access improvements are needed?**

- Specialist Teacher Advisors work closely with architects and surveyors from Property Services to help identify necessary physical access improvements

- The SAI Strategic Working Group ensures, on an annual cycle, that all proposed access improvements are consistent with the county wide strategy for mainstream schools. These schemes are forwarded, for discussion and approval, to elected members of Hampshire County Council.

### **Priorities for improvements to the physical environment**

- Over the last ten years many pupil-specific access improvements have been incorporated into schools (e.g. the installation of accessible toilets). Since 2003/04, pupil-specific access improvements have continued alongside a more strategic approach to adaptations to schools. This supports the County Council's strategy to create a spread of accessible schools across the county
- To assist with this process, the Local Authority is in the process of undertaking a comprehensive data gathering exercise on the current levels of accessibility across all schools. Data was first assessed in 2001/2 based on self audit forms completed by schools. A more comprehensive Asset Management process is now in place which includes, for 2008/09, Schools Accessibility Mapping (SAM). SAM identifies where schools are located, which schools they link with and what accessible facilities each school contains. This data will be combined with data and knowledge from the STAs and the SEN Service to draw together a detailed analysis of the demographics of pupils with disabilities. This will provide a strategic picture, area by area, to inform future access improvement schemes
- Once the SAM data gathering process is complete, an on-line tool highlighting where accessible facilities exist across Hampshire's mainstream schools will be available. Although still in the development stage, it is envisaged this will assist the parents of disabled children in making informed preferences about a suitable local mainstream school for their child.
- A new service has been developed to assist schools with the planning of physical access improvements over time. Schools now complete a self-audit form backed up by supporting information on accessibility issues ([www.hants.gov.uk/pbr/access/advisoryservice.html](http://www.hants.gov.uk/pbr/access/advisoryservice.html)). All schools will receive a DDA Advisory Session which focuses on physical access improvements in their Accessibility Plan, timescales and priorities leading to more robust Accessibility Plans and greater consistency of approach towards improving physical and sensory access in schools.
- Involving disabled people in improving the physical and sensory access to school premises remains an important priority area. This strategy intends to build on existing good practice by supporting ongoing partnership arrangements with local Access Groups (which consist of volunteers with a personal experience of an impairment who often bring knowledge about a range of impairments). Local

Access Groups campaign for better access in their local areas and, given the extended schools agenda, this provides a unique opportunity for both the local authority and schools to better understand the access needs of disabled community users. In addition, disabled pupils (as well as their parents, carers and other relevant professional staff) will, wherever possible, be involved in the detailed design of planned access improvements. The intention is to build in more formal review processes of access improvement schemes so that this can feed into internal design guidance documents such as the School Inclusion Design Brief.

### **3.3 Improving the provision to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled**

The Local Authority provides access to information reformatting services including Braille, audio tapes, ICT and pictorial, large print and plain text for all Hampshire schools. Mainly through the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service the LA works in partnership with the voluntary, independent and non-maintained sectors, as appropriate, to provide support to young people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments.

Where appropriate, texts are modified and/or interpreted orally for deaf and HI pupils. British Sign Language or Sign Supported English are used for pupils for whom these are the main or preferred mode of communication.

Hampshire has three resource bases (two primary and one secondary) which modify printed materials for blind or partially sighted pupils into either Braille, large print or auditory formats. This service is also available to staff working with children with a visual impairment who do not attend these schools.

Schools which have a child with a visual impairment receive training in modifying printed materials into a format to meet the needs of individual children and for parents who might also have a visual impairment. ICT resources for this purpose are provided.

Children and young people with a visual impairment are trained in the use of specialist ICT and other equipment, such as low vision aids, so that they can access printed material independently.

The provision of accessible and responsive information is essential in order to secure and enhance partnership by involving children, young people and their families in the planning, development and evaluation of services.

## **4. Making it happen**

### **4.1 Management, co-ordination and implementation**

The Accessibility Strategy will be co-ordinated and implemented through the existing SEN and Disability infrastructure, within the framework described earlier in this strategy. Support and advice on implementation will be provided by groups such as the County Advisory Groups for SEN, the Strategic Access Initiative Project Planning Group and the Access and Equalities team within the Property, Business and Regulatory Service.

### **4.2 Accessibility of the strategy itself**

The Accessibility Strategy will be published to schools via the Schools Communication process. It will also be published on the Hampshire County Council website from where it will be able to be downloaded at no cost. Hard copies of the strategy document will be sent to all Hampshire maintained schools and other interested stakeholders. It will also be available on request from Hampshire's SEN Service (see page 42 for contact details).

## Glossary of Terms

AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Education
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (formerly DfES)
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfES	Department for Education and Schools
FE	Further Education
HEPS	Hampshire Education Psychology Service
HI	Hearing Impairment
HIAS	Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
JIL	Joint Information Link
LA	Local Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PD	Physical Disability
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SAI	Schools Access Initiative
SAM	Schools Accessibility Mapping
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEF	School Evaluation Form
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLCN	Speech and Language Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
STA	Specialist Teacher Advisor
VI	Visual Impairment

## Text of letter and questionnaire sent to Headteachers

26 March 2008

Dear

### **Local Authority Accessibility Strategy**

As you are aware, local authorities are required, by law, to produce an Accessibility Strategy for the schools for which they are responsible. The 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.

We are, currently, working on a new, 3-year accessibility strategy and, as part of that process, we are very keen to gain the views and comments of children and young people 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 and, on that basis, have approached 19 schools (either special schools or mainstream schools with resourced provision and one mainstream school without resourced provision), including yours, to ask whether you would be prepared to participate in the process.

I have attached the following papers:

- i) A parental letter and consent form with regard to those children taking part in the project.
- ii) A questionnaire: this consists of a short briefing which provides the context and then broad questions referring to each of the 3 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. Alongside each broad question are a number of 'prompts' which might be used to stimulate or aid discussion and debate.

Our proposal is that a small but representative group of pupils (6-10 children, which may include both children with disabilities and/or SEN and those without) from your school meet with a facilitator (realistically this will almost certainly need to be a member of your staff. Regrettably, there is no additional funding available to support this activity and we are, therefore, yet again relying on your good will) who would use the questions and prompts, as necessary, and record the responses from the group. I have also included some papers from West Sussex, who have recently undergone a similar exercise, as examples of how responses might be recorded. The responses would then be forwarded to the Local Authority for collation and analysis.

It is important for me to stress that this exercise will be totally confidential in that neither the young people taking part nor their schools will be named or identified in any way and all responses would, therefore, be non-attributable. Once the responses from schools have been collated and analysed, all paperwork will be destroyed. It is likely however, that the final outcomes of the research will be used as the basis for further focus group discussion but by this time they will consist of a totally anonymous list of bullet points or statements.

As ever, the timescale for this piece of work is extremely tight and responses from schools will need to be returned to the Local Authority no later than Thursday 20 March 2008 (earlier if possible). If, as I hope, you feel able to help us in this project, I would be grateful if you would:

- select a group of pupils from your school to take part in the research
- obtain parental consent to their participation through the attached letter/consent form to parents (NB: a copy of the questionnaire should also be attached to the parental letter/consent form so that they are aware of the questions being asked)
- arrange a facilitated meeting where the group can discuss the questions in the questionnaire and where their responses can be recorded
- forward responses to the Local Authority no later than Thursday 20 March 2008.

I do recognise that I am asking you and your staff to undertake yet another piece of work, within a restricted timescale, but we do consider it crucial that children's voices are heard and we can think of no other way to obtain this important information. If, however, you would like to discuss any aspects of this request in more detail, please feel free to contact me

Yours sincerely

## Letter and consent form sent to parents/carers

14 February 2008

Dear

### **Local Authority Accessibility Strategy**

All local authorities are required, by law, to produce an Accessibility Strategy for the schools for which they are responsible. These strategies focus 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 3-year accessibility strategy and, as part of that process, we are very keen to gain the views and comments of children and young people 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 and, on that basis, have approached 19 schools (either special schools or mainstream schools with resourced provision as well as one mainstream school without a resourced provision), including the one your son/daughter attends, to see whether they would be interested in helping us with this piece of research. The reason I am writing to you, therefore, is to ask whether you would be prepared to consent to your son/daughter participating.

We are proposing that a small (probably 6 – 12 children) group of pupils in each school meet with a facilitator (almost certainly a member of the school staff but, if not, then someone approved by the school) to discuss the questions on the enclosed questionnaire. These refer to the 3 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

## Appendix A

area, access to participation in the life of the school, which we feel is equally important. The facilitator will record the group's responses which will then be returned to the Local Authority for collation and analysis.

It is important, at this point, for me to stress that this exercise will be totally confidential in that neither the young people taking part, nor their schools, will be named or identified in any way and all responses will, therefore, be non-attributable. Once the responses have been collated and analysed, all the paperwork will be destroyed. It is likely, however, that the final outcomes of the research will be used as the basis for further focus group discussion but by this time they will consist of a totally anonymous list of bullet points or statements.

If you are prepared for your son/daughter to take part in this piece of research I would be most grateful if you would complete the attached consent form and return it to the school.

Yours sincerely

**Consent Form**

**Hampshire County Council – Accessibility Strategy**

I give my consent for my son/daughter name).....

who attends (name of school) .....

to take part in the facilitated discussion about the Hampshire County Council Accessibility Strategy on the basis that he/she will not be named or identified in any way.

Signed: ..... (parent/carer)

Date: .....

Please return to.....at.....School

### Accessibility Strategy – questionnaire for use with pupil groups

**Briefing/context:** (the facilitator should share this with the group of pupils, before moving on to the four main questions, so that they are very clear about why they are being asked those questions)

Hampshire County Council is working on a new, 3-year Accessibility Strategy for all schools in Hampshire. The Accessibility Strategy is a plan which tries to help pupils 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.

In our meeting today, I am going to ask you some questions. They will be about things that already help you, so that we know that we need to keep those, but also about things which don't or aren't happening at the moment, which would make things easier for you so that we can see whether we can provide them. Please don't be afraid to speak up and put forward your ideas.

### Questions

#### 1. Curriculum

- i) What things have made it easy for you learn in school?
- ii) What would make it easier?  
(prompts which might be used to stimulate or aid discussion might include):
  - how are support staff used
  - is everyone aware of their disability/needs
  - what classes work well, and why
  - what classes don't work well, and why
  - how do your teachers help you/ how could they help you more.

#### 2. Physical Access

- i) What is it about the school buildings and grounds that make it easy for you to get around?
- ii) What would make it easier? (prompts might include):
  - are there any places you can't go and, if so, why

- can you reach everything you need
- is furniture/equipment suitably adapted for your use
- are you able to use the toilets easily.

### 3. Access to information

- When instructions or information is given out or used in the classroom, is it in a form you can understand?
- What could be done to make things easier?  
(prompts might include):
  - do you get the right level of information
  - is there information you feel that you miss out on
  - do you always understand written information
  - who do you go to if you need extra information
  - who do you go to if you need extra help.

### 4. Access to participation

- What activities have you been able to join in with at school?
- What would have made it easier or helped you to do extra activities?  
(prompts might include):
  - what activities/clubs/teams have you joined
  - are there things you can't join in with at school and, if so, why
  - would you like more help to make friends at school and, if so, what.

#### To the facilitator:

When you have finished the session with the children from your school I would be grateful if you could summarise them and forward them (no later than 20 March 2008) to:

Assistant Education Officer, SEN Policy and Resources  
Children's Services Department  
Ashburton Court East  
The Castle  
Winchester  
SO23 8UG



### Summary of responses from schools

Schools held facilitated discussions with groups of pupils in order to find out what is, or would be, helpful in supporting them to access the curriculum, the buildings and site, information and participation in the life of the school. A summary of responses is set out below.

#### I. Access to the Curriculum

- Having a specific supply teacher attached to each year group (or not using supply teachers at all)
- Only specialist teachers being used to cover lessons
- more adults (LSAs) in the classroom so that more children can be helped at the same time or more small groups can go out
- The same LSAs attached to each class so that children feel confident in talking to and working with them
- All staff to be aware of pupils' disabilities and needs so that they can all help, not just those staff working in the classroom
- Have whole school assemblies focussed on 'awareness of others'
- Educate jokers and bullies (including teachers) on certain disabilities
- Teachers to set work at different levels so that all children can succeed or are challenged
- Teachers asking children whether they understand the work/what they are to do or need additional help
- Teachers setting targets to help pupils learn
- Adjusting the pace of the lesson to individual needs
- Allow more time for completion of work in lessons
- Worksheets adapted in **all** lessons (enlarged, reduced, etc)
- Arrange more flexible transport arrangements for pupils who want to take part in after schools clubs and activities
- Less noisy classrooms
- Not putting pupils with behaviour issues in classes with pupils who have learning difficulties
- Senior staff dropping into lessons to 'give a presence'
- More control from teachers in disruptive lessons

- Doors on all classrooms – they cut down noise and unnecessary movement (by pupils and teachers)
- More and better computers (one for each pupil)
- Tables that rise and fall so that children in wheelchairs can sit with their friends.

### **2. Access to buildings and sites**

- Wider corridors or more open plan circulation
- One way routes
- Wider doors and more automated doors
- Doors with delayed opening and closing
- The whole school to be on one level (or ramps installed)
- Additional signs and mapping of the site: named buildings and numbered rooms
- Furniture (chairs, tables, etc) and classroom equipment (storage, shelving, whiteboards etc) matched to individual needs
- Accessible toilets in the right locations
- Staff and pupil training on assisting wheelchair users
- Clear classroom spaces to allow circulation and access to resources
- Dedicated spaces in classrooms for ‘quiet time’ and to manage behaviour
- More flexible transport arrangements to allow access to after school activities
- Designated safe, appropriate play areas
- Level paths with suitable surfaces and clear, safe routes
- Lifts in all relevant areas; wider stairways and flexible timetabling so that ground floor only is used
- Swipe card or key pad access to doors, for staff, to ensure pupils safety and security.

### 3. Access to information

- Provide information through trusted peer mentors or adults
- Ensuring that systems are in place to help bring pupils up to speed when they have missed lessons
- Providing more information about or a different explanation of tasks
- Teachers ensuring that the writing on the board is big enough for all members of the group to read
- Clear written and verbal instructions using pictures and appropriate, pupil-friendly language which is not too complex
- Appropriate pace of delivery and appropriate differentiation
- Information and notices in text, pictures and symbols
- Support from LSAs and teachers
- Forums on the school website so that pupils can ask teachers about work that has been missed
- Letters posted on the school website which could be read out when the speaker button is pushed
- Lighting arranged to ensure that whiteboards are appropriately lit and avoid glare
- Provision of a help table where pupils can ask for extra help and information to understand the lesson
- Letters which are sent home be modified so that they are accessible to visually impaired pupils
- The contents of letters sent home are explained to pupils in advance
- Being allowed to record information and instructions so that pupils can use earphones to access them during lessons
- When using diagrams on the board, also provide individual copies.

### 4. Access to participation

- Teachers adapting activities or games to make them really inclusive
- Extra adults available for school trips and/or sporting activities
- Schools that follow the Rights, Respect and Responsibility agenda
- Breakfast clubs
- Clubs and activities that are initiated by pupils themselves
- Clubs and activities that didn't 'fold' within a week or two of starting up
- Being given help on how to make friends
- Help and support with anger management
- More flexible transport arrangements for after school clubs and activities
- Teachers not having 'favourites'
- All teachers having an understanding of disabilities
- Being part of the school council
- A school counsellor being available to advise and support
- Specialist equipment available, particularly for pupils with physical disabilities and sensory impairments.

### **Text of letter and questionnaire sent to representatives of parent/carers groups**

26 March 2008

Dear Parents/Carers

#### **Local Authority Accessibility Strategy**

All local authorities 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 2009-2012. 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.

## Appendix C

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/department/leastrategy/accessibilitystrategy/index.php](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/department/leastrategy/accessibilitystrategy/index.php) and the framework for an Accessibility Strategy provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) at: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9171](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

## 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

#### I. Curriculum

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

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

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.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## 2. Physical Access

i) What is it about the buildings and grounds that make it easy to get around & to learn?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

ii) What would make it easier?

e.g. - are there any places your child cannot go and, if so, what could be improved

- is everything needed within reach; can he/she be fairly independent
- is furniture/equipment suitably adapted
- can the toilets be used easily
- are lighting and acoustics suitable.

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## 3. Access to information

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

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

i) What could be done to make things easier?

e.g. - does your child get the right level of information

- is there information he/she feels that they miss out on
- does he/she always understand written information
- does your child know who to go to if he/she needs extra information or help.

.....  
.....  
.....

#### 4. Access to participation

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

.....  
.....  
.....

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.

.....  
.....  
.....

Please return this questionnaire (no later than Friday, 11 April, 2008) to:

Education Officer (SEN)  
Children's Services Department  
Ashburton Court East  
The Castle  
Winchester  
SO23 8UG



### Summary of responses from parents/ carers

Following meetings between Local Authority Officers and parent/carer, 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
- Hydropool
- 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

## Appendix D

- 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.



### List of consultees

Comments on the Local Authority's Accessibility Strategy and SEN Policy have been invited from:

Hampshire headteachers', individually and through executive committees (primary, secondary and special)

Governing bodies of all Hampshire's maintained schools (via website)

Hampshire Governor Representative Group

Local dioceses

Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

NHS Primary Care and Healthcare Trusts (in Hampshire)

Neighbouring local authorities

SEN County Advisory groups

Hampshire Voluntary Sector

Hampshire Coalition of Disabled People

Parents' groups

Learning and Skills Council

Director of Recreation and Heritage Department

Director of Environment Department

Hampshire Educational Psychology Service

Area Directors

County Service Managers

County Managers

Strategic Manager Safeguarding

Teachers' Liaison Panel

Trades Unions

County Councillors

MPs serving Hampshire constituencies

District and Borough Councils

## Further appendices to be accessed via the web-links below

### Appendix F

List of mainstream schools with resourced provision. This information can be found in the 'Special Provision in Hampshire' booklet  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm)

### Appendix G

List of SEN publications  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm)

### Appendix H

Schools self-audit form  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/property-services/property-ourteams/accessteam/access-schools/access-selfauditform.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/property-services/property-ourteams/accessteam/access-schools/access-selfauditform.htm)

### Appendix I

Teachernet: Template for a school accessibility plan  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/schools/accessibility/accessibilityplanningproject/schools/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/schools/accessibility/accessibilityplanningproject/schools/)

### Appendix J

HCC School Inclusion Design Brief  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/property-project-procedures/property-project-procedures-practicenotes/pbr-propertyprocedures-access/pbr-propertyprocedures-pra040.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/property-project-procedures/property-project-procedures-practicenotes/pbr-propertyprocedures-access/pbr-propertyprocedures-pra040.htm)

### Appendix K

General Access Advice for schools  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/property-services/property-ourteams/accessteam/access-schools.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/property-services/property-ourteams/accessteam/access-schools.htm)

For further information on this publication, please phone the SEN Service on 01962 846252 or email: [enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk)

This publication is available to download at:  
[www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/sen-parentpublications.htm)

This leaflet is available in large print – please phone the SEN Service on 01962 846252.

You may also request Braille, audio cassette and other languages.

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