
Appendix IV

Developing an access plan

The Equality Act 2010 and related Equality Duty 2011 reiterate the duty upon schools as laid out in the previous Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which makes it clear that schools continue to have a duty to produce an accessibility plan.

Schools must implement accessibility plans, which are aimed at:

- 1) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- 2) improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;

and

- 3) improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Schools will need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them.

Specific processes undertaken to develop and monitor the accessibility plan could consist of:

- Selecting and completing an access audit to review present level of accessibility of the setting using an audit such as Index for Inclusion (CSIE)¹.
- Identifying actions to reduce obstacles to access for the school community.
- Consulting all stakeholders upon the suggested plan and modify it according to their views.
- Financing the plan by identifying costs and incorporating them into current and future budget commitments.
- Setting measurable goals and time scales.
- Publicising the plan.
- Implementing and evaluating the plan.

Publicising, in the context of the Equality Duty, can be interpreted as making the school's accessibility plan widely and easily available, perhaps on the school's website. Hard copies should be available on request and, also on request, the school should be prepared to make available versions of the plan which would be accessible to parents with different communication needs (including English as a Foreign Language). Written information for disabled pupils needs to be given

¹ <http://www.csie.org.uk/>

in formats that take account of their specific disabilities and the views expressed by the pupils and their parents about their preferred means of communication.

Accessibility plans are often an added section to the School Development Plan and are intended to identify the action to be undertaken in the next three years. Modifications/revisions to the plan, information on action completed so far, action still to be undertaken and that planned for the future, should be detailed and the time frame clarified each year.

1. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum:

This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

Points for Consideration:

- How threats to participation have been analysed using risk assessment proforma and action taken to reduce those identified risks.
- Identifying how classroom support arrangements, such as deployment of teaching assistants and provision of ICT, contribute to, and enhance, learning opportunities.
- Deciding how the implementation of specific strategies such as flexible or shared time-tabling, nurture groups, counselling provision, access to therapy and first day absence response have enhanced attendance and participation
- Consideration of how classroom/group organisation has been targeted to ensure that all pupils achieved increased levels of school success.
- Description of how action to increase curriculum choice and/or flexibility has enhanced the access to appropriate qualifications/attainments.
- Consideration of how the school response to pupils through the application of the SEND Code of Practice has improved pupil attainment and how effective communication regarding specific pupil needs has been achieved and is monitored.
- Consideration of how liaison, increased communication and relationships with external agencies have supported and enhanced pupils' access to the curriculum and how this is monitored and improvements targeted.
- Identifying how staff training needs in order to effectively meet the diverse abilities and disabilities of all pupils, including prospective pupils who may require manual handling, signing, personal hygiene support etc, have been identified and supported.
- Identifying pupil peer support mechanisms and the ways that the school has ensured pupils have a voice in decisions that affect them.
- Taking action to ensure that disabled members of the school community are seen in a positive light through publications promoting disability and providing positive role models of adults with disabilities to encourage success and achievement.
- Ensuring that action has been undertaken to ensure that parents and carers see themselves as partners in their children's education and are increasingly willing to actively support their children's education.
- Enhancing the positive culture and ethos of the school by undertaking quality marks or other additional intervention to improve the school's ability to include those with disabilities.

2. Improving the physical environment of the school to increase accessibility for members of the school community with disabilities.

This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education e.g. enhanced fire alarm systems for pupils with sensory impairment, disabled or allocated parking spaces etc.

Points for Consideration:

- Changes to improve access to doors, stairs, toilet and changing facilities, and consideration of the impact of signs, colour schemes, lighting, heating etc.
- Changes outside of the school building e.g. provision of disabled parking etc.
- Management and organisation issues such as maintenance of lights, fire alarms appropriate to those with hearing impairments etc.
- Increased access to and maintenance of, auxiliary aids and ICT apparatus such as computer hardware/software.
- Improvement to the acoustic environment that might include installation of soundfields/hearing loop systems.
- Storage requirements for wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- Application and funding of capital funding for major access works will vary from LA to LA, as will arrangements for schools funds delegation to support targets such as provision of suitable floor coverings, furniture and layout of the playgrounds.

3. Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

This could include: handouts, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe.

Points for Consideration:

- Informing readers that school published material is available in a selection of formats e.g. modified large print, Braille, Makaton and audio tapes and identifying how they can access this provision if requested.
- Considering how to increase information accessibility for those who have English as an additional language or other communication needs such as British Sign Language, at school meetings etc.
- Identifying how they have considered the readability of information including that provided by the school website, and how it is monitored to ensure accessibility to a wide range of diverse needs and abilities.
- Identifying how textbooks and other information for pupils are selected and provided to meet a diversity of pupil need.
- Ensuring the monitoring of effectiveness of adult support to enhance the opportunities for pupils/parents who have difficulties in accessing information.

4. Monitoring and Review.

The Accessibility Plan should be monitored through the governing body committee responsible and may be monitored by Ofsted during inspection processes. The terms of reference for all governors' committees will include the need to consider Equality & Diversity issues as required by the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent updates 2012 and 2014.

The Accessibility Plan should be reported on annually in respect of progress and outcomes and provide a projected plan for the three year period ahead of the next review date.

Points for Consideration:

- Changes in physical accessibility of school buildings.
- Questionnaires and responses from stakeholders e.g. parents, pupils and staff, indicate increased confidence in the school's ability to promote access to educational opportunities for pupils with disabilities.
- Improved levels of confidence in staff in reducing the obstacles to success for pupils with additional needs.
- Recorded evidence that increased numbers of pupils with disabilities are actively participating in all areas of the school
- Recorded evidence that fewer pupils are being excluded from school opportunities as their needs are being more effectively addressed through the application of strategies and procedures.
- Increased levels of achievement for pupils with disabilities.
- Pupil responses, verbally, pictorially and written, that indicate that they feel themselves to be included.
- Ofsted inspections identify higher levels of educational inclusion.

5. Evaluation.

Points for Consideration:

Evidence of achieved outcomes could be illustrated as follows:

- Success in meeting identified targets.
- Provision of training and awareness opportunities on issues regarding inclusion to staff, governors and parents and how this has been used to promote inclusion.
- Promoted collaboration through the provision of information aimed at sharing good practice.
- Liaison between special and mainstream schools to share expertise and pupil placement.
- Awareness of and support from LA support services that provide advice to schools and staff.
- Provision of specialist help to identify ways forward in increasing the inclusion of all pupils.
- Linking building adaptations to refurbishment and capital building works.
- How information is provided in a number of different formats.

F: Other areas for consideration.

The Accessibility Plan should dovetail with other school policies, strategies and documents, such as:

- School vision statement.
- Equality Duty evidence including Equality Objectives.
- Special educational needs policy.
- Curriculum policy.
- School evaluation and development plans.
- Behaviour Management policy.
- Asset Management plan.
- Health & Safety policy.
- Administration of Medicines .

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