

Template for a school accessibility plan

From this interactive version of the school template you can access different levels of information for each aspect of the plan:

- notes and suggestions at the first level;
- more detailed information at the second level;
- information about specific resources, accessed from the resources box at the third level.

Resources relevant to all aspects of plans and strategies can be accessed from the box below:

Resources relevant to all aspects of strategies and plans

Audit Commission (2002) *Special Educational Needs: A mainstream issue*

Audit Commission (2002) *Managing special educational needs: a self-review handbook for local education authorities*

Carlin J (2005) *Including Me: Managing complex health needs in schools and early years settings*. Council for Disabled Children

DfES (2001) *Access to education: for children and young people with medical needs*

DfES (2002) *Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils*

DfES/DoH (2005) *Managing medicines in schools and early years settings*

Meeting medical needs in mainstream education: a summary of survey findings

Suggested text for an introduction to a school plan is included in the Word version of the template on the CD-ROM.

1: Starting points

[Click here for more information on starting points](#)

1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values

Identify the school's priorities for the development of the vision and values that inform the plan:

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-

Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on vision and values](#)

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit

Identify the school's priorities for the development of information and data to support the school's accessibility plan:

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Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on information and data](#)

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

Identify the school's priorities in respect of consultation on the plan:

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Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on consultation and involvement](#)

2: The main priorities in the school's plan

[Click here for more information on the main priorities](#)

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

Identify the school's priorities for increasing curriculum access:

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Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on access to the curriculum](#)

2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

Identify the school's priorities for physical improvements to increase access:

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Work these into more detail in a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on improvements to the physical environment](#)

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:

Identify the school's priorities for providing information for disabled pupils:

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-

Work these into more detail in a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on information for disabled pupils](#)

3: Making it happen

[Click here for more information on making it happen](#)

3A: Management, coordination and implementation

Identify the school's priorities for the management, coordination and implementation of the accessibility plan:

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-

Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on management, co-ordination and implementation](#)

3B: Getting hold of the school's plan

Identify the school's priorities for making its plan available:

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-
-

Work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

[Click here for more information on making the school's plan available](#)



Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans

"How good is your school's accessibility plan?"

"Where's the best place to start when you review your plan?"

"Who do you need to consult about your plan?"

"How can your plan help you to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people under the DDA 2005?"

The materials in this section can help you to answer these questions. They provide a template to support you in developing an effective plan to improve access to education for disabled pupils.

The materials include:

- a summary of the requirements and principles of accessibility planning;
 - criteria to help you judge the quality of your current plan;
 - three versions of the template, with different levels of detail, to help you review and develop your plan;
 - materials that you can use in training and development work on the DDA planning duties.
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Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans

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On the accompanying CD-ROM:	
• Resources to support plans and strategies	
• Training materials	
• Accessibility Planning Project	
• <i>Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans</i> word processed file	



1. How to use the materials

Accessibility planning has an important part to play in improving outcomes for disabled pupils and raising standards in schools. *Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans* is designed to provide schools with practical tools and materials to support improvements in access for disabled pupils.

The materials in *Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans* were developed through the Accessibility Planning Project (APP). APP worked with six partner local authorities and their schools to develop the tools and materials in this section. The written guide and the materials on the accompanying CD-ROM, can be used in a number of different ways. They can be used:

- to steer the review and development of a school accessibility plan;
- as a toolbox to dip into where schools are looking for advice on particular aspects of their plan;
- to support training on accessibility planning.

Improving access for disabled pupils: school plans is organised in two linked parts:

- the written guide
- CD-ROM

The written guide

The *Template for a school accessibility plan*, page 9, is the main tool in the written guide. It is designed to help schools review and develop their accessibility plans. The template recommends a number of different sections for an effective plan. Different versions of the template provide different levels of detail on each section:

- Template 1: the template with notes
- Template 2: the template in detail.

On the CD-ROM there is:

- an 'empty' version which can be adapted for schools' own use;
- an interactive option that enables users to move between different levels of detail and to access the supporting case studies and other resources.

A section in the written guide, *Where are you now? Criteria for assessing your accessibility plan*, provides criteria to enable schools to assess the quality of their accessibility plan. Using the criteria can help a school to see:

- which areas of their plan work well; and
- which areas of their plan may need developing.

The CD-ROM includes:

Resources

The resources are designed to provide a toolbox of ideas and examples to support local authorities in developing different aspects of their accessibility strategy.

The resources include a variety of different materials:

- brief summaries of and extracts from official guidance;
- relevant information from a variety of other published sources; and
- useful tools and case studies from APP, including accounts of particular approaches taken in a school or local authority.

Training materials

Accessibility planning needs to proceed from an accurate and shared understanding of what the DDA requires and, in particular, a shared understanding of the definition of disability. Training has an important part to play in this.

The *Training materials* on the CD-ROM include:

- sample training sessions: these combine briefings and presentations with resources and activities;
- briefings on:
 - the disability discrimination duties;
 - the accessibility planning duties;
 - the definition of disability in the DDA;
- annotated PowerPoint presentations, including presentations on:
 - the disability discrimination duties;
 - the accessibility planning duties.

The Accessibility Planning Project

APP worked with six partner local authorities and their schools to produce the tools and resources in this guide and on the accompanying CD-ROM. This section on the CD-ROM includes:

- a description of APP and the work carried out with the partner authorities;
- an account of two analyses of strategies that were undertaken as part of the Project;
- an account of the analyses of a sample of school plans from two of the partner authorities.

These analyses of plans and strategies helped to set the priorities for the work with the local authorities and their schools. They also indicate where strengths and weaknesses may lie in plans and strategies in other local authorities.

The written guide

The text of this section of the written resource is also available on the CD-ROM, so that:

- materials can be copied and used in training and development activities; and
- text can be converted into other formats, for example large font, for increased accessibility.

The planning tools, *Duties and definitions* and some of the supporting materials are also available on the Teachernet website: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/schools/accessibility/accessibilityplanningproject/



2. Accessibility planning for schools

Requirements and principles

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) requires schools to have an accessibility plan to improve access to education for disabled pupils over time. A companion section to this one, *Duties and definitions*, provides more detail on the duties. This section summarises the requirements and sets out some principles that should inform how schools develop their plans.

Requirements

The school's plan meets the statutory requirements when:

- it is in writing;
- it covers the three strands of increasing access over time:
 - increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
 - improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services at the school;
 - improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled;
- it is:
 - adequately resourced;
 - implemented;
 - reviewed;
 - revised as necessary;
- it is renewed every three years;
- information about the accessibility plan is reported to parents annually.

Principles

An effective plan:

- is rooted in a culture of high expectations for all;
- is guided by the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement and the aims set out for the school curriculum;
- seeks out and responds to the views of key stakeholders;
- demonstrates a commitment to developing access to the school for all pupils;
- supports a problem solving approach;
- shows a commitment to the effective and sustainable use of resources;
- is clear about how it will be evaluated.

A plan draws on a sound information base when it:

- uses information from audit and other data collection;
- reflects the use of evidence gathering and approaches validated by research;
- uses outcome data to inform the development and evaluation of the plan;
- reflects an understanding of the relationship between the SEN and disability duties;
- reflects an understanding of other legislation that provides protection to children, such as that on race, human rights and health and safety.

A plan supports partnership when it:

- shows how the school plan is coordinated with the local authority's strategy and demonstrates the benefits of a collaborative approach;
- is accessible to all;
- is embedded in the school improvement process;
- reflects the wishes, aspirations and concerns of parents and pupils;
- dovetails with and permeates other school planning processes;
- sets out explicit links with the work of other agencies.

Key messages for schools

APP worked with six partner local authorities and their schools to develop the accessibility planning materials. On the basis of that work, some key issues emerged. They are provided here to inform the further development of schools' plans.

The best plan for your school starts with your school and your pupils

Plans need to start with the school's own information and data about their disabled pupils, the school's vision for their disabled pupils, and the views of disabled pupils and their parents. Every school is different. Another school's plan is unlikely to be relevant to disabled pupils at your school.

There are more disabled pupils than you think

Crucial to effective planning is a clear understanding of: which pupils count as disabled; and which pupils who might be coming to the school count as disabled. Most people are surprised to find out how many are included in the DDA definition.

Consultation is crucial

Consult and schools will get help in identifying their priorities. Consult pupils and parents and schools will get good practical solutions to increasing access for them. Consult early and schools are more likely to get help in identifying low cost or no cost solutions.

Knowing where to go for support

Schools may need to supplement and complement their own expertise. A range of different forms of support is available to most schools: supportive colleague networks, specialist advisory support, different sections of the local authority, other agencies, local and national voluntary organisations.

Nobody can do this on their own: these duties need a school wide response

It needs everyone to take the lead in respect of accessibility within their area of responsibility: access to the curriculum in the hands of those with curriculum responsibilities; access to the pastoral life of the school in the hands of those with pastoral responsibilities; and responsibility for overseeing the plan rests with the senior management team reporting to the governing body.

Key messages for schools – continued

Differentiation takes time

If differentiation is to include those pupils who are working at significantly lower levels of the National Curriculum than their peers, a significant investment of time is needed to adapt schemes of work. This work needs to be built into the school's curriculum development and its accessibility plan over time.

'Invest to save'

There is a strong case for investing in curriculum and professional development. This can improve access for disabled pupils and may make more effective use of learning support.

The physical environment is not just about ramps and doorways

Improvements to the physical environment are about getting into and around the school, but they are about more than that: they are about all disabled pupils being able to use all the facilities of the school. It is as much about pupils with autistic spectrum disorders being able to use recreational spaces, or improvements to the acoustic environment, as it is about getting wheelchairs up a step and through the door.

Share where possible

Sharing good practice through clusters and networks can spread creative solutions. Sharing development work through clusters and networks can reduce the workload.

Piggy-back where possible

Where curriculum development is planned, include access considerations; where building works are planned, include access considerations; when ordering books, equipment and materials, include access considerations; when increasing access for disabled staff or members of the public under other parts of the DDA, include access considerations for pupils.

School improvement

Improved access should lead directly to improved outcomes for disabled pupils. The school's accessibility plan should therefore not just be linked to the school improvement process, it should be located firmly within it.



3. Template for a school accessibility plan

The *Template for a school accessibility plan* proposes a number of sections for a school accessibility plan. In each section a number of key issues is discussed. By addressing these issues, and undertaking the related development work, schools can have reasonable confidence that they will be able to develop an effective accessibility plan.

There are two versions of the template, each providing different levels of detail and support in this section of the resource:

- Template 1: the template with notes; and
- Template 2: the template in detail.

Template 1 provides brief notes and ideas on each section of the plan. *Template 2* is more discursive and provides:

- more detailed guidance;
- examples of how other schools have approached particular aspects of accessibility planning;
- reference on to guidance and other tools in the Resources section.

A third empty version of the template is available on the CD-ROM.

Don't know where to start?

Schools who are not sure where to start can assess their current plan using the criteria in *Section 5: Where are you now? Assessing your accessibility plan*. These can help schools to judge:

- which aspects of their plan work well; and
- which aspects of their plan may need developing.

Resources

The *Resources* are on the CD-ROM and include:

- brief summaries of official guidance;
- summaries and extracts from national reports;
- relevant information from a variety of other sources, such as research studies;
- useful tools, case studies and guidance developed by APP partners.

The resources can be accessed from the electronic version of the *Template in detail*, or from the full list of resources on the CD-ROM.

Before using this template it is important to be clear about:

Who is disabled

The definition in the DDA is broad. It includes more pupils than many people think. There is a significant overlap with pupils with special educational needs, though

the definition of special educational needs does not cover all disabled children, for example: pupils with medical conditions, disfigurements and other impairments may count as disabled but may not have special educational needs. For guidance on the DDA definition, the following resources may help:

- slide 7 of the PowerPoint presentation on The Disability Discrimination Act and Schools, see *Training materials*;
- Is Tom disabled? See *Duties and definitions*;
- A bit more about definitions, see *Duties and definitions*.

Other duties that are owed to disabled pupils

In addition to the planning duties, schools have duties towards disabled pupils, both individually and collectively, 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. This is an anticipatory duty, so requires schools to think ahead.

It is important that planning builds on these duties. For guidance on the reasonable adjustments duty, the following resources may help:

- the PowerPoint presentation on The Disability Discrimination Act and Schools, see *Training materials*;
- The duties, see *Duties and definitions*;
- *Making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils*;
- the Disability Rights Commission's *Code of Practice for schools*: website: www.drc-gb.org/education/knowyourduties/schools.asp

Who the plan is for

The plan is for:

- disabled pupils who are in the school now: improving access for them is a matter of planned improvements in addition to reasonable adjustments;
- disabled pupils who are in the school system, but at an earlier key stage: good advance information about disabled pupils coming to the school will be important to making reasonable adjustments and to making planned improvements over time;
- disabled pupils who are not yet in the school system, but about whom the local authority and other agencies may have information.

Over time, the focus should shift significantly from planned improvements for individual pupils to embedding accessibility considerations into everything the school does: in school improvement, in curriculum development, in maintaining and improving the physical environment, in professional development, in all planning processes.

Other duties under the DDA

Schools also have duties towards disabled staff under Part 2 of the DDA, towards the general public under Part 3 of the DDA and to disabled people under the DDA 2005. Plans should take these duties into account.

These considerations need to be taken into account in each section of the plan.



Template 1: the template with notes

An empty copy of the template is included in the *School plans* section on the CD-ROM.

School name:

3-year period covered by the plan:

Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) to cover education. Since September 2002, the Governing Body 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 plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Governing Body of the school to increase access to education for disabled pupils in the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- improving the environment of the school 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.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the plan.

The text above can be incorporated into the introduction of a school's plan.

1. Starting points

1A: The purpose and direction of the school's plan: vision and values

A statement of vision and values sets purpose and direction for the plan and provides a framework for evaluation. The statement might set out:

- the school's ambitions for its disabled pupils;
- reference to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement;
- the school's focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school;
- the school's wider commitment to equal opportunities.

Where the school's mission statement already sets out its vision for disabled pupils, the appropriate text could be cut and pasted into the school's accessibility plan.

A discussion of the vision and values underpinning the school's plans for disabled pupils:

- can help to involve all staff in the development of the plan;
- can help to create a sense of ownership of the plan;
- is an opportunity to remind staff of the three key duties towards disabled pupils, in the DDA;
- underlines the responsibility of every member of staff to remove barriers to learning for disabled pupils.

In Section 1A of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for the development of the vision and values. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit

Key starting points for the school's plan need to be assessments of:

- the nature of the school population for whom the school is planning;
- the nature of the school, including a consideration of the impact of the school's existing plans and priorities.

This section needs to reflect a proper understanding of which pupils may be included in the DDA definition of disability. The definition is broader than most people think.

Pupil information might include a range of data:

- pupils already in the school and moving through it, including pupils at an earlier key stage;
- the nature of the school's intake in the future, for example:
 - advance information about pupils with a statement who may also be disabled;
 - other information, such as local/national information on trends in school population.

There needs to be some sort of audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses in working with disabled pupils. This might include information on:

- the level of staff awareness of what the DDA requires of them;

- the presence of disabled pupils in the school and the pattern of their participation in the life of the school, for example:
 - the profile of disabled pupils coming into the school and of those who may not have been admitted to the school up until now;
 - patterns of attendance and exclusion;
 - areas of the curriculum to which disabled pupils may have limited or no access at the moment;
 - the participation of disabled pupils in off-site activities;
 - parts of the school to which disabled pupils may have limited or no access at the moment.

The impact on disabled pupils of the way the school is organised, for example:

- school's policies, practices and procedures relating to: anti-bullying, school trips, the way risk assessments are carried out, learning and teaching, time-tabling, the administration of medicines;
- the physical environment of the school;
- the curriculum;
- the ways in which information is currently provided for disabled pupils;
- the priorities currently set in other plans, particularly the School Improvement Plan.

Outcomes for disabled pupils, including:

- a detailed analysis of outcome data: exams, accredited learning and end of key stage outcomes;
- detailed information showing how well disabled pupils are accessing the curriculum, for example: lesson observations in different curriculum areas;
- achievements in extra-curricular activities;
- the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

In Section 1B of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for the development of information and data. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

The plan should be informed by:

- the views and aspirations of disabled children and young people themselves;
- the views and aspirations of the parents of disabled pupils;
- the views and aspirations of other disabled people or voluntary organisations;
- the priorities of the local authority.

Consultation needs to be organised in a way that is accessible to the particular groups who are being consulted.

It is helpful to show how the views of different groups have influenced the plan.

In Section 1C of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for consultation and involvement. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

2. The main priorities in the school's plan

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

The priorities set in this section need to relate back to the starting points: vision and values; information and data; consultations with pupils, parents and others.

Planned curriculum development work is time intensive, so, to be sustainable, needs to:

- focus on chosen areas of the curriculum over time;
- be planned over the life of the school's accessibility plan;
- be coordinated with the priorities in the school improvement plan;
- be led by those with curriculum expertise within the school;
- be carried out in conjunction with partner schools wherever possible, ideally through cluster or network arrangements facilitated by the local authority;
- draw on the expertise of external partners, for example: speech and language specialists, educational psychologists;
- use ICT.

Key elements in a successful planned approach are likely to be:

- a focus on medium term planning, at the level of schemes of work;
- a clear assessment of the current National Curriculum levels of the full range of pupils, particularly in relation to speaking and listening levels;
- high expectations;
- appropriate deployment of learning support;
- pupil grouping and use of peer support.

Working in this way may raise challenges for existing policies and generate issues for wider school review, for example:

- use of SENCO time;
- the responsibilities of subject leaders;
- the way that learning support assistants are deployed;
- time-tabling;
- how the school plans to develop awareness of disability through the curriculum;
- how successful developments in one area of school life are shared across the whole school;
- access to specialist advice and support.

Disabled pupils need access to the 'formal' 'taught' curriculum of the school, but also to activities in the interstices of the school day and beyond the school day, for example:

- recreation;
- movement around the school;
- special events: sports days, visiting theatre groups or story-tellers;
- extra-curricular activities: breakfast clubs, after-school clubs;
- school trips.

In Section 2A of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for increasing access to the curriculum. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

2B: Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services:

The priorities set in this section need to relate back to the starting points: vision and values; information and data; consultations with pupils, parents and others.

Changes to the physical environment might include:

- improvements to lighting, signage, colour contrast, the acoustic environment, floor coverings;
- improvements to toilets, washing and changing facilities;
- changes to the layout of the playground and other common areas;
- the provision of ramps and lifts and improvements to doorways;
- the provision of particular furniture and equipment to improve access.

The physical environment of the school has a differential impact on access for different groups of disabled pupils. Different aspects of the physical environment need to be considered in relation to different groups of pupils.

Funding for improvements to the physical environment of the school may come from a variety of different sources:

- School Access Initiative funding may be needed for major capital works. This has to be coordinated with the local authority's priorities;
- devolved formula capital funding can meet the costs of some of the priorities;
- delegated funding can be used to meet the costs of particular equipment that may need to be provided for disabled pupils;
- where alterations need to be made to improve access for a disabled teacher, funding may be available through the 'Access to work' programme.

There are some principles that can help to keep down the costs of separate work to improve access:

- access considerations can often be piggy-backed onto other work to be done, for example: there is a small marginal cost for installing visual alarms when the school is being re-wired, there is an even smaller cost in improving colour contrast when the school is being re-decorated;
- purchasing policies can take account of access requirements, for example: the purchase of an adjustable height science bench when benches are purchased, or a number of calculators with large keys when calculators are being purchased;
- seeking advice can be a good investment but advice needs to be broadly based and take account of different groups of pupils;
- creative ideas may come at low cost or no cost.

In Section 2B of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for improvements to the physical environment. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

2C: Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled:

Information for disabled pupils – provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled – might include:

- handouts, timetables, worksheets, notices, information about school events.
- Improving the delivery of information might include making information available in Braille, in large print, in simplified language, on audio-tape, on video-tape, through sign language, using a symbol system.

Identifying the appropriate format must take account of:

- pupils' impairments: access to information may be improved for particular groups of pupils by particular approaches, for example: pupils with learning difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in simplified language; pupils with language and communication difficulties may be able to access information more easily where it is provided in picture/symbol systems;
- preferences expressed by pupils or their parents.

It reduces repeated efforts at a later stage if a consideration of different formats is built into the design of information produced for pupils.

In respect of more specialised formats, for example Braille, help is available from support services.

Schools should ensure that they know how to access the relevant support services.

In Section 2C of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for improvements to information for disabled pupils. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

3. Making it happen

3A: Management, coordination and implementation

The planning process: the school's plan should show:

- how the governing body takes responsibility for the school accessibility plan, sets a clear direction for it and reports on it annually;
- how and when the plan will be reviewed and revised, including how anyone might contribute to that process;
- a mechanism for the evaluation of the plan;
- the variety of evidence that will be used in the evaluation of the plan.

Coordination: the school may want to show how the accessibility plan fits in with other responsibilities:

- Under other legislation:
 - SEN legislation (most disabled pupils will also have SEN and the effectiveness of the school's provision to meet SEN will therefore have an impact on the progress of disabled pupils);
 - other parts of the DDA (duties towards the general public, in Part 3, to staff in Part 2, the wider duties to disabled people under the DDA 2005).

Other policies and plans (Where these already reflect priorities for developing access for disabled pupils it makes sense to cut and paste relevant sections into the school's accessibility plan):

- school improvement plan;
- professional development plan;
- SEN policy;
- asset management plan;
- health and safety policies.

Schools will also want to make sure that their plan is coordinated with other services and agencies, for example:

- with the local authority's accessibility strategy;
- social services;
- health agencies, particularly in respect of meeting the health needs of disabled pupils in school.

Implementation: it is important that the plan:

- allocates lead responsibilities;
- sets out clear timescales;
- identifies the necessary resources, human and financial. To ensure that the school meets the requirement to resource the plan, it should identify the source of funding, for example: school development grant; Schools Access Initiative; devolved capital budget; delegated budget;
- makes clear what the anticipated outcomes are, with performance criteria where necessary;
- builds in review mechanisms and dates.

A standard planning sheet provides for this sort of information.

In Section 3A of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for the management, coordination and implementation of the plan. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.

3B: Getting hold of the school's plan

The school makes its accessibility plan available in the following ways:

The school might consider:

- how it makes the plan available;
- whether the plan is available on the school website;
- making the plan available in different formats;
- ensuring the plan is readable. The school may need to consider: jargon/acronyms; typeface/font size; how easy it is to find your way around.

In Section 3B of the empty template on the CD-ROM identify the priorities for making its plan available. Then work these into more detail as a set of action plans.



Template 2: the template in detail

1. Starting points

- 1A Vision and values
- 1B Information from pupil data and school audit
- 1C Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

2. The main priorities in the school's plan

- 2A Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- 2B Improving the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- 2C Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled

3. Making it happen

- 3A Management, coordination and implementation
- 3B Making the plan available

References

References in the text are detailed in the footnotes. All references are also listed in *Section 4: References*.

Resources

At the end of each section of the *Template in detail* there is a list of resources that are relevant to that aspect of the plan. The resources include:

- summaries and extracts from official guidance and national reports;
- relevant information from and about a variety of other published resources; and
- useful tools and case studies developed by APP partners, including accounts of particular approaches taken in a school or local authority.

These resources are on the CD-ROM and can be accessed either:

- from the electronic version of the *Template in detail*, through the 'resources box' at the end of each part of the plan or strategy; or
- from the *Resources* section on the CD-ROM. This section includes resources that are relevant to accessibility planning, to making reasonable adjustments and to the early years work.

Listed below are some resources that are relevant to all aspects of plans and strategies:

Resources relevant to all aspects of plans and strategies

Audit Commission (2002) *Special Educational Needs: A mainstream issue*

Audit Commission (2002) *Managing special educational needs: a self-review handbook for local education authorities*

Carlin J (2005) *Including Me: Managing complex health needs in schools and early years settings*. Council for Disabled Children

DfES (2001) *Access to education: for children and young people with medical needs*

DfES (2002) *Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils*

DfES/DoH (2005) *Managing medicines in schools and early years settings*

Meeting medical needs in mainstream education: a summary of survey findings

1. Starting points

To meet the statutory requirements a school accessibility plan needs to cover the three main strands of increasing access over time:

- increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
- improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access to education and associated services at the school;
- improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

Knowing where to start the development of an accessibility plan and how to identify the main priorities for a particular school is more difficult. The experience of the Accessibility Planning Project (APP) was that getting the starting points right made the setting of the main priorities in the plan relatively straightforward.

The template includes three main starting points for an accessibility plan:

- a vision and a set of values;
- information about disabled pupils and about the school;
- the views of disabled pupils and their parents.

These are not statutory requirements, but help to make the statutory parts of the plan:

- easier to identify and prioritise;
- more relevant to a particular school;
- more clearly owned by the school community;
- more responsive to disabled pupils;
- easier to monitor and evaluate.

DDA 2005: the duty to promote disability equality

The DDA 2005 and the regulations made under it place both general and specific duties on schools, *see Section 1: Duties and definitions*. The specific duties include the requirement to publish a Disability Equality Scheme. The Scheme *'may be set out within another published document or a number of other published documents... Nevertheless, to ensure transparency it will generally be appropriate to publish the Scheme as a whole so that stakeholders can view its different elements together.'*¹

If schools adopt the approach recommended in the sections on *Information from pupil data and school audit* and *Views of those consulted during the development of the plan*, this will help them to meet the requirements of these parts of a Disability Equality Scheme. Other aspects of Disability Equality Schemes are discussed in the sections of the plan that are most relevant.

The Disability Rights Commission is providing guidance for schools on the duties in the 2005 Act.

¹ Disability Rights Commission (2005) *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales)*

1A: Vision and values

A vision and a set of values should express the broad purposes of an activity and the principles that inform the way in which that activity will be conducted. It does not need to be a long treatise, rather it should be a distillation of the essence of that activity. It summarises the intentions and the focus of that activity both to those who are involved in the process and to those who are outside it.

The vision and values should be a whole school expression of purpose and should therefore outline a view that is, as far as possible, a shared view.

WATCHPOINT:

Can the school's statement of vision and values be translated into action?
Does the school's statement of vision and values communicate clearly enough to others what the school's approach is?

Why have vision and values?

Direction for implementation

An expression of vision and values gives direction to the planning process. The vision is an expression of a state to which the school aspires and the values inform the means of getting there.

A framework for evaluation

The vision and values also provide a framework for the evaluation of the plan. If the vision of the plan is to achieve good outcomes for disabled pupils, then an important part of the evaluation will be an examination of those outcomes. In effect it provides the framework for judging whether intentions are realised.

Links to quality

Challenged to justify the expectation that a plan would include some expression of vision and values, APP considered the effectiveness of local authority accessibility strategies. There was a strong association between those strategies that were judged to be more effective and those that had a set of values informing the strategy.

A whole school view

In as much as the vision and values are intended to express whole school intentions there will need to be discussion with staff about them. This discussion can, in itself, be an important and helpful part of the process of developing a school accessibility plan. The discussion:

- can help to involve all staff in the development of the plan;
- can help to create a sense of ownership of the plan;
- may be an opportunity to remind staff of the key duties towards disabled pupils under the DDA;
- is rarely divorced from the practicalities and so often helps by engaging staff in the implementation of the plan.

Communicating a view

An expression of vision and values can communicate the essence of a school accessibility plan to those outside the process of its development. As such it can be an important part of the process of consulting on the plan. It supports and enables a discussion of the likely effectiveness of different ways of realising the intentions of the plan.

What should the vision and values look like?

An expression of vision and values might:

Set out the school's ambitions for its disabled pupils, for example:

- *St Mary's School has high ambitions for its disabled pupils and expects them to participate and achieve in every aspect of school life.*

Refer to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement, for example:

- *Highmore School's commitment to equal opportunities is driven by the National Curriculum Inclusion statement. The school:*
 - *sets suitable learning challenges;*
 - *responds to pupils' diverse needs;*
 - *overcomes potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.*

Describe the school's focus on removing barriers in every area of the life of the school, for example:

- *Caldicott School aims to identify and remove barriers to disabled pupils in every area of school life.*

Outline the school's wider commitment to equal opportunities, for example:

- *Bradshaw St Primary school makes all children feel welcome irrespective of race, colour, creed or impairment.*

Where the school's mission statement already sets out its vision for disabled pupils, the appropriate text could be cut and pasted into the school's accessibility plan.

Where schools have done this, they have sometimes found that the statement that they thought could fulfil the function of vision and values for the accessibility plan, has in fact been wanting in some respects. Such a statement could nonetheless form a first draft and become the basis for a discussion.

Developing the vision and values

A school wanting to adopt a vision and a set of values needs to create an opportunity for discussion with staff. It is important that all staff are involved in the discussion not just teaching staff: it is likely that the implementation of the plan will rely on everyone, so everyone needs to be involved.

A relatively small amount of time in a staff meeting can be put to good use if there are some draft ideas to kick start discussion. It may be helpful to have a draft statement prepared by a working party before a full staff discussion.

It is a crucial characteristic of the vision and values section that it should be capable of communicating the purposes of a school's plan. To that extent it should be clearly expressed. However, this is not an exercise in developing perfectly honed prose; rather, the key purpose is to convey a genuine expression of shared purpose.

The governing body has a key role to play. Some governors may be able to join the discussions with staff. The whole governing body should have the opportunity to consider and adopt the final statement.

Vision and values: resources:

DfES (2001) *Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs*

DfES (2002) *Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils*

QCA (1999) *General statement of inclusion: Providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils*

UNESCO (1994) *The Salamanca Statement*

1B: Information from pupil data and school audit

One of the key starting points for an effective school accessibility plan is sound information and data. For most schools, an examination of the information and data they already hold will identify the priorities that will do most to increase access for disabled pupils. For all schools, it is essential to reflect on the overall picture created by the information and data and what this tells them about the part that disabled pupils play in the life of the school.

WATCHPOINT:

Does the school know who its disabled pupils are? Estimates vary, but about 7% of children under sixteen may count as disabled.

Where should the planning start?

Planning should start with information that is already held by the school in respect of two broad areas:

- information about the nature of the pupil population and the disabled pupils for whom the school is planning;
- information about the nature of the school, its strengths and weaknesses in ensuring access for disabled pupils.

Putting the two sets of information alongside each other will enable the school to identify where improvements need to be made.

Pupil information

Who is in the school?

The Ofsted (2004) report, *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools*² encourages schools to review the nature of their intake:

The school reviews its policy and practice on inclusion and acts on the findings to increase the range and diversity of the pupils admitted and retained and to promote good achievement by them.

Ofsted (2004)

² Ofsted (2004) *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools*

Ofsted provides supporting criteria for this statement. Schools can use the Ofsted schedule as a framework for checking evidence of the impact of their policies on the pupils who are and are not admitted to the school.

Who is not in the school?

In their study, *Special Educational Needs: a mainstream issue (2002)*³ the Audit Commission also considers pupils who have difficulty getting into schools, are absent or excluded from school. Schools might supplement information about pupils already in the school with a consideration of:

- disabled pupils who have not been admitted to the school;
- levels of absence among disabled pupils;
- pupils who have been excluded from the school and whether they include any disabled pupils.

Where there are higher levels of absence among disabled pupils, the school might ask itself if there are appropriate policies in place, for example: on the prevention of bullying and the administration of medicines? On meeting the wider health needs of disabled pupils it could ask, 'How comfortable is it here for a disabled pupil?'

Who might we expect in the future?

To provide a sound basis for planning, pupil information should include:

- disabled pupils already in the school and moving through it, including pupils at an earlier key stage;
- the anticipated pupil population in the future, including advance information about pupils who may be coming to the school, who have SEN and who may also be disabled.

School information

Information on the school's strengths and weaknesses in working with disabled pupils will help to identify priorities for action. Schools should take into account information on:

- the participation of disabled pupils in different aspects of school life;
- outcomes for disabled pupils.

'Asking the right questions and establishing some basic information about the local situation is the first step to finding solutions and taking action.'

Eleni Burgess, *Are we nearly there yet?*⁴

The participation of disabled pupils in different aspects of the life of the school

Are disabled pupils represented in everything the school does? Can they join in every activity?

WATCHPOINT:

What is the minute by minute experience of disabled pupils in the school? When are they included and how? When are they left out and why?

³ Audit Commission (2002) *Special Educational Needs: A mainstream issue*

⁴ Burgess, E (2003) *Are we nearly there yet?*

The school might consider whether:

- there are areas of the curriculum to which disabled pupils have limited or no access. Some areas of the curriculum present particular challenges, for example: PE for pupils with a physical impairment, science and technology for pupils with a visual impairment, humanities for pupils with learning difficulties;
- disability issues are reflected in the curriculum;
- disabled pupils participate in extra-curricular activities. Some aspects of extra-curricular activities present particular challenges, for example: lunch and break times for pupils with social/interaction impairments, after-school clubs for pupils with physical impairments, school trips for pupils with medical needs;
- there are parts of the school to which disabled pupils have limited or no access at the moment, or whether physical features of the school environment hamper access to the whole life of the school;
- access to information is planned, with a range of different formats available for disabled pupils;
- other issues affect the participation of disabled pupils, for example: bullying, peer relationships, policies on the administration of medicines and provision of personal care, or a lack of role models or images of disabled people within the school, in effect, all the school's policies and procedures, written and unwritten.

Careful consideration of these issues may indicate some clear priorities for the school's accessibility plan. Other issues may need to be addressed more immediately by making 'reasonable adjustments'.

Outcomes for disabled pupils

If disabled pupils are there in the school and participating in every aspect of the life of the school: how well are they achieving? Schools need to undertake a detailed analysis of outcome data for disabled pupils, including:

- exams;
- accredited learning;
- end of key stage outcomes;
- comparative progress measured by the optional SATs;
- achievements in extra-curricular activities;
- broader outcomes such as those set out in Every Child Matters.

The Ofsted criteria encourage schools to consider whether:

- trends over time in National Curriculum and other assessments are analysed in the context of available data about comparative performance.

Bringing information together

Information on the school's strengths and weaknesses in working with disabled pupils needs to be brought together and reviewed at the highest level within the school.

WATCHPOINT:

The information and data that informs the school's plan should illustrate the:

- presence;
- participation; and
- achievements of disabled pupils.

An audit may be used, though this is not the only approach. Other approaches, such as provision-mapping, can provide information about what the school is already doing and can provide pointers for future development. Provision-mapping is particularly effective in informing planning where it is set against information on pupil outcomes.

Because of the impact for disabled pupils, it is important that at all stages the schools' plans are informed by the views of disabled pupils (see Section 1C).

Working with the local authority

Schools collect their own data, but local authorities play an important part in providing comparative information for schools. A number of local authorities now analyse pupil level data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) alongside pupils' key stage outcomes and examination results and compile information files to inform the school improvement process. This information can highlight differences in outcomes in different areas of the curriculum and for different groups of pupils.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets collects more detailed information on outcomes in order to be able to reflect the progress of pupils who may be making slower progress. The information includes:

- sub-levels of the National Curriculum levels;
- outcomes at the P levels.

This enables the local authority to have detailed discussions with schools about the progress of different groups of pupils. This enabled one school to identify the fact that, whilst pupils with a statement and those at *School Action Plus* were making good progress, pupils at *School Action* were not. The school went on to identify possible reasons for this and addressed them through their accessibility plan.

The national picture

Benchmark data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)⁵ collated nationally can also provide comparative information for schools. This may help the school to see whether their current pupil population reflects the national picture. Over time the data will be able to show trends in the school population that will be able to inform national, local and school planning.

It should be remembered that the PLASC data does not necessarily include all disabled pupils. There are some pupils who are disabled who are not counted within the PLASC data, for example a diabetic pupil who does not have SEN. The guidance states the position:

A pupil with a medical diagnosis or disability does not have a special educational need, unless special educational provision is needed to access the curriculum.⁶

The Department for Education and Skills is working to identify a disability data set that can be used by local authorities and schools to inform access planning.

⁵ Information Management in Schools Data Collection and Dissemination
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections/> for the statistics provided through the PLASC data collection see: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/index.shtml>

⁶ DfES (2005) Data Collection by type of SEN: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/datatypes/>

DDA 2005: the duty to promote disability equality

The Disability Equality Scheme, required under the DDA 2005, see *Section 1: Duties and definitions*, has to include a statement of the school's 'arrangements for gathering information on the effects of its policies and practices on disabled persons,' and, in particular, the effect of its policies and practices 'on the educational opportunities available to, and on the achievements of, disabled pupils.'

A Disability Equality Scheme also requires schools to gather information on the effects of their policies and practices on the 'recruitment, development and retention of their disabled employees.'

If schools collect the information that has been discussed in this section, and if they extend this to include staff, this will help them to meet the requirements of this part of a Disability Equality Scheme. Other aspects of Disability Equality Schemes are discussed in the sections of the plan that are most relevant.

Information and data: resources:

Burgess E (2003) *Are we nearly there yet?* Checklist for action

DfES (2004) *Data Collection by type of Special Educational Needs*

Ofsted (2004) *Special educational needs and disability: towards inclusive schools:* Criteria for self-evaluation

Information and data: Tower Hamlets

Information collection in Norfolk

1C: Views of those consulted during the development of the plan

In addition to the requirement to consult, there are also moral and pragmatic arguments for consulting pupils on the school's accessibility plan:

- *the moral case: that we should consult with people on things that are going to affect them;*
- *the pragmatic case: that provision is more effective if it is informed by pupils' views.*

Why consult?

Consulting with others on the development of the school's plan can help to:

- identify problems in access for disabled pupils;
- identify the most effective ways of removing barriers for disabled pupils;
- involve those who are most directly affected by the plan;
- widen understanding and promote a solutions-based approach.

There are wider benefits, too. Consultation can help to:

- set priorities within the plan;
- canvass support for the school's plan;
- improve working relationships between schools, disabled pupils and their parents;
- ensure that the plan is coordinated with the local authority's strategy.

Principles of successful consultation

The Disability Rights Commission⁷ proposes some important principles for the involvement of disabled people. They suggest that involvement should:

- include relevant stakeholders;
- be focused;
- be proportionate;
- be accessible;
- be influential.

Relevant stakeholders

Relevant stakeholders include those most directly affected by the accessibility plan:

- disabled pupils themselves;
- parents of disabled pupils.

The requirement to consult with pupils is set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in statute, in Section 176 of the 2002 Education Act. Guidance is provided in the SEN Code of Practice (2001)⁸ and in the Listen to Learn DfES (2002)⁹ response to a report from the Children and Young People's Unit.

Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them.

The views of the child should be given due weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child.

Articles 12 & 13, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

A number of studies illustrate how capable pupils are of identifying both barriers and solutions to access problems:

'...children are very clear about what they regard as "good practice".'

'Our data further suggests that where children encounter disabling practices in schools, they should be encouraged to put forward their own solutions...'

Barnes C, Corker M & others (2000) *Lives of Disabled Children*¹⁰

In 2003 Eleni Burgess, then a sixteen-year-old at school, carried out a survey of other young people who use a wheelchair, *Are we nearly there yet?*¹¹ The insights that Eleni provides are illuminating and some are unexpected. Eleni used her survey to compile an audit tool for schools to use to test out their accessibility.

Parents

Both the moral and pragmatic arguments also apply to consultation with parents of disabled children and young people. Parents have helpful insights into the barriers that prevent access for their child. Parents will have been working with some of these barriers for some time and will have explored and may have found solutions.

⁷ Disability Rights Commission (2005) *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales)*

⁸ Department for Education and Skills (2001) *SEN Code of Practice*

⁹ Department for Education and Skills (2002) *Listening to Learn*

¹⁰ Barnes C, Corker M & others (2000) *Lives of Disabled Children*

¹¹ Burgess, E (2003) *Are we nearly there yet?*

The local authority

It is important to consult with the local authority. Sharing the school's plan with the local authority can help to inform the local authority's accessibility strategy, for example: training needs can be identified across a number of plans and appropriate training arranged in the light of this information. Where school priorities require significant capital works, the local authority will need to be consulted about the availability of funding through the Schools Access Initiative. Some local authorities may be able to inform schools' plans through their own consultations with disabled children or with their parents.

Other organisations

Other local organisations may have a view that they could usefully contribute, for example: organisations of disabled people. Other disabled people are particularly well placed to provide insights into the attitudinal barriers that limit access for disabled pupils.

Focused consultation

The main purpose of the consultation should be clear and the consultation should focus on the key issues. At the same time, questions should be open-ended so as to allow for the unexpected response and so as not to narrow down the range of answers that might be elicited.

Proportionate consultation

The school should ensure that the length and detail of the consultation is proportionate to the issues on which people are being consulted and that it reflects the size and composition of the disabled pupil population.

Accessible consultation

Consultation should be carried out in a manner that enables all the stakeholders to participate. The following aspects of accessibility should be carefully considered:

- form: whether the consultation should be written or face-to-face; and, if face-to-face, whether it should be individual or group;
- format: if it is designed as a written consultation whether different formats are available: large print, easy words versions or taped versions, as necessary;
- time: if the consultation is face-to-face, whether it is at a time when the relevant stakeholders can attend; if it is written, whether enough time is allowed for everyone to respond;
- place: if the consultation is face-to-face, whether the venue is accessible and welcoming to all; if it is written, whether the return point is in a convenient and accessible place.

Influential consultation

Those being consulted need to feel that their views will make a difference to what will happen next, otherwise there is little point in expressing their views. Consultation should be clear about what the 'givens' are and what can be influenced by the consultation. It should be apparent during the consultation how views expressed may influence the outcomes. It should be clear how action taken following the consultation has been influenced by the views expressed during the consultation.

DDA 2005: the duty to promote disability equality

As part of their duties under the DDA 2005 schools are required to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, see *Section 1: Duties and definitions*. Schools are required to 'involve in the development of the Scheme disabled people who appear to [the school] to have an interest in the way it carries out its functions.'¹² The Scheme itself must also show how disabled people have been involved in its development.

If schools consult with and involve disabled pupils, their parents and other disabled people in the sorts of ways discussed in this section, and if they set out in their Scheme how they have done this, this will help them to meet the requirements of a Disability Equality Scheme. The Disability Rights Commission is providing guidance for schools on the duties in the 2005 Act.

Views of those consulted during the development of the plan: resources:

Barnes C, Corker M and others (2000) *Lives of Disabled Children* ESRC Research Project, part of *Children 5-16 Research Programme*

Burgess E (2003) *Are we nearly there yet?*

How to consult ... and how not to

Consultation with parents in Norfolk

Consultation with pupils in Doncaster

Powerful Voices: Ealing conference for children

¹² Disability Rights Commission (2005) *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales)*

2. The main priorities in the school's plan

This part of the school's plan is required by statute, see *Section 1: Duties and definitions*. The plan must include proposals in each these of three strands:

- increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
- improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access to education and associated services at the school;
- improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

DDA 2005: the duty to promote disability equality

As part of their duties under the DDA 2005, schools are required to publish and implement a Disability Equality Scheme, see *Section 1: Duties and definitions*. This has to include a statement of *'the steps that [the school] proposes to take towards the fulfilment of its [general duty to promote disability equality]*'.¹³

The priorities identified in this section of the school's accessibility plan are likely to constitute a significant part of their proposals within their Disability Equality Scheme. If the priorities identified in the school's accessibility plan are extended to include 'a statement of steps to be taken' in respect of disabled staff, this will help the school's plan to meet the requirements of this part of a Disability Equality Scheme. The Disability Rights Commission is providing guidance for schools on the duties in the 2005 Act.

Other aspects of Disability Equality Schemes are discussed in the sections of the plan that are most relevant.

2A: Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum

The aim of the accessibility plan should be to go beyond the basic principles of three-level differentiation and respond to the fact that, for pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels at a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary (QCA, 1999)¹⁴. The National Curriculum Statement on Inclusion outlines how teachers can modify programmes of study to provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage.

The school needs to be aware of how the reasonable adjustments duty and the planning duties work together to improve access to the curriculum for disabled pupils. The distinctive requirement of the planning duties is to show how, over time, the curriculum will become more accessible. While curriculum development may start with a consideration of access for individual pupils, plans can build on this by:

- adding individual adjustments into future planning, so that there is a gradual incorporation of adjustments into the curriculum;

¹³ Disability Rights Commission (2005) *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice (England & Wales)*

¹⁴ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority/DfEE (1999) *Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils known as The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement*

- building accessibility considerations into all new curriculum development work;
- developing a planned approach to increasing access to different areas of the curriculum over the three year life of the plan.

Identifying barriers

The identification of barriers needs to take place at different levels: school, subject and class levels. It is important to proceed from an understanding of patterns in the participation and achievement of disabled pupils across different areas of the curriculum. The school can then give priority to developing access in areas where disabled pupils are under-represented and/or under-achieving.

The school also needs to take into account access to particular areas of the curriculum for particular groups of disabled pupils, for example: PE for pupils with a physical impairment, sex education for pupils with inherited conditions, music for pupils with a hearing impairment. Seeking advice and support on these issues, from pupils, parents, support services and other agencies will be an important part of informing the development of the school's plan in sensitive or specialised areas.

The plan should also address wider issues relating to the availability of disabled role models, the representation of disabled people in books and teaching materials and the inclusion of disability issues in the curriculum. Addressing these issues can be important in developing access to the life of the school and can have a significant impact on the self-esteem of disabled pupils.

Curriculum development: the nature of the investment

Curriculum development is resource intensive and particularly demanding of human resources. The investment of resources has to be manageable if it is to be sustainable. Some key elements in this are likely to be:

- a focus on medium term planning, at the level of schemes of work;
- a clear assessment of the current National Curriculum levels of the full range of pupils, particularly in relation to speaking and listening levels;
- working collaboratively within the school and sharing work with other schools;
- the appropriate deployment of learning support;
- scheduling planning sessions over time.

Other ways of conserving human resources include:

- using ICT;
- ensuring that staff know about evidence-based practice studies of curriculum work for disabled pupils, through professional development, information available in the staffroom or on the intranet;
- pupil grouping and peer support.

Curriculum development: roles and responsibilities

School leaders

It is important for the headteacher and governors to show their commitment by ensuring that the priorities outlined in the plan are part of the school improvement plan and that they are effectively monitored and reviewed as part of that process.

School managers

The curriculum section of the accessibility plan should be led by staff with curriculum expertise and responsibilities: heads of department in secondary schools and leaders of curriculum areas in primary schools.

WATCHPOINT:

Improving disabled pupils' access to the curriculum is an element of ensuring high quality teaching and learning for all: all managers with a role in curriculum improvement must be part of that process.

The role of the SENCO

Where the SENCO is part of the senior management team of the school, the SENCO will be an important partner in leading effective curriculum and professional development.

WATCHPOINT:

It may help to include a review of the SENCO's role in curriculum development as an early priority in the school's plan.

Learning support assistants

Much support for disabled pupils relies on learning support assistants. However, a number of studies now suggest that, unless they are carefully deployed, learning support assistants do not always enable, and can sometimes frustrate, access for disabled pupils (Barnes, Corker and others, 2000)¹⁵.

WATCHPOINT:

Learning support should connect disabled pupils to the curriculum, support the development of independence and promote social interaction.

A number of approaches can help to overcome this: the involvement of support assistants in curriculum development; their deployment to dedicated areas of the curriculum; the withdrawal of assistance at times when it is not needed; and the use of teaching approaches that promote positive pupil interaction.

Time-tabling

To provide a coherent overall programme for disabled pupils, curriculum development and time-tabling will need to take into account:

- pupils working at different levels in different strands of the curriculum;
- carefully monitored withdrawal sessions where these are needed to meet specified learning outcomes;
- the provision of therapies.

¹⁵ Barnes C, Corker M & others (2000) *Lives of Disabled Children*

Linking the accessibility plan with school curriculum development

The plan should show how, over time, improving access to learning for disabled pupils will become a part of the development of its teaching-offer for all pupils, through:

- high expectations;
- target-setting, monitoring progress and acting on the results of such monitoring;
- developing schemes of work and plans, checking for accessibility at each curriculum review within the school improvement plan;
- professional development and support for all staff on inclusive classroom practice in general and on specific disability issues.

Networks and collaboration

Collaboration across a group of schools: a cluster, a geographical grouping, or a network is one way of sharing curriculum development work and spreading the impact. It reduces the load for staff, generates more creative ideas and benefits more pupils. Schools may look to the local authority to facilitate this approach.

It is important for the plan to show how collaboration with other agencies will be used to save time, avoid 're-inventing the wheel' and ensure quality of provision. Schools may want to draw on a range of expertise, for example: a specialist teacher for speech and language, the behaviour support service, physiotherapists.

The wider curriculum

The curriculum is not just the 'taught' time of the school day: it is all the learning, planned and unplanned. Activities such as after school clubs and school trips are also part of the life of the school. The participation of disabled pupils in these activities needs to be monitored as much as their participation in class learning. For disabled pupils it is important that the interstices of the school day are also accessible.

Bullying, the use of hurtful language, minor incidents in school corridors can also create barriers as can complex use of language, small print or a flight of steps.

Barriers need to be identified and addressed by making reasonable adjustments or through longer-term plans.

Increasing access to the curriculum: resources:

DfES (1998) *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits*

QCA/DfEE (1999) *Inclusion: providing effective learning opportunities for all pupils* (the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement)

QCA/DfEE (2001) *Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties*

Target-Setting in curriculum accessibility

Planning access at KS3: Globetown Action Zone and Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets and Hall Mead School in Havering

Planning access: Stoke Newington Media Arts College

Havering: video-conferencing for transition

Transition from KS2 to KS3 in Sutton

Collaborative planning: Harrow

2B: Improving the physical environment

The duties require schools to make planned improvements to the physical environment to increase access for disabled pupils to 'education and associated services.' This means: within the classroom or around the school, within and beyond the school day, on or off the school site.

General considerations

An environment that welcomes diversity and difference and a school that learns how to improve access for disabled pupils will be good for everyone, for example: a high quality acoustic environment, essential for pupils with a hearing impairment, benefits the whole school community, including teachers who may have fewer sore throats!

Different aspects of school life

The planning duties apply to every aspect of school life: as much to assembly halls as to corridors, as much to playgrounds as to classrooms, as much to space for personal care as to the provision of appropriate storage space.

The duties also apply to equipment, so plans might for instance include: the provision of enlarged computer screens and keyboards, photocopy enlarging facilities, specialist chairs and portable aids, small equipment designed to assist those with fine motor difficulties.

WATCHPOINT:

Think 'beyond the ramp.' Think of:

- physical alterations to improve access for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, for example the provision of quiet areas;
- specialist curriculum areas, for example, workshops and laboratories;
- the whole school site, including the playground, driveways etc;
- facilities used beyond the school day;
- off-site provision that the school uses, such as activity centres;
- a diversity of equipment, materials and consumables.

Identifying barriers

The key questions are: which aspects of the physical environment are preventing or hindering the participation of disabled pupils in the life of the school and how, over time, can the physical environment be improved to increase access?

Starting with current pupils, schools should consider groups of pupils with different impairments against different aspects of the physical environment. Does the environment enable, hinder or prevent participation in any aspect of school life?

The Building Bulletins published by the School Building and Design Unit at the Department for Education and Skills provide checklists that consider different aspects of the physical environment for different groups of pupils, see *References*¹⁶.

¹⁶ A range of guidance published by the School Building and Design Unit at the Department for Education and Skills is available at: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/>

The identification of barriers in the physical environment can be undertaken in a variety of ways:

- by undertaking an audit of the school environment, systematically considering aspects of the physical environment for pupils with different impairments;
- by consulting pupils about their experiences and seeking their views on the priorities that should be set out in the school's accessibility plan;
- with the support of an external consultant who can carry out an audit for the school, or the local authority may commission an audit. Particularly where the school commissions an audit, some care should be taken over the choice of auditor: it is helpful if the qualifications and experience of the auditor are generic rather than specific to one impairment. A specialist audit should be complemented by discussion with disabled pupils and their parents.

Pupils: current and prospective

The identification of barriers in the physical environment should start with a consideration of pupils currently in the school and their needs throughout their time at the school.

It is important to take account of information about pupils who may want to come to the school in the future as well. For pupils with a statement planning to transfer in September, information should be available in the February of the same calendar year. However, it is possible to seek out information much further in advance. Local authorities and schools should make good use of early years settings, support services and their parent partnership service to inform longer-term planning. The local authority should be working actively on providing advance information about disabled pupils who may want to go to a particular school.

Further into the future

As schools look further into the future towards the end of the three-year life of their accessibility plan and into the next three years, their plans are likely to start looking beyond the particular pupils in the school now and consider more general accessibility arrangements. Some local authorities provide advice on how schools can improve accessibility for pupils with different impairments.

WATCHPOINT:

Schools will increase their success in removing barriers if they proactively seek information at an early stage.

Maintenance, redecoration and routine repairs

Some works will be linked directly to the particular pupils coming to the school. Other works may also be planned: general building development work, refurbishment and redecoration. In all of these works there are accessibility considerations and it is important that such considerations are built in, at an early stage, to each of the different pieces of work undertaken at the school:

- re-wiring is an opportunity to install visual alarm systems relatively cheaply;
- re-decoration is an opportunity to increase colour contrast around doorways;

- re-surfacing the playground is an opportunity to reconsider the design. With improved layout, would more pupils be able to make better use of the recreational space? Can quiet, rest areas be included or defined?

WATCHPOINT:

In the longer term piggy-backing accessibility developments onto other works, or building access considerations into all future plans is the most efficient way of improving access for disabled pupils through the physical environment.

Devolved capital expenditure

Significant, and increasing, amounts of money are available to schools for capital works through the Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) allocated through a local formula.

A typical primary school of 250 pupils will receive £34,000 in 2007–08, compared to £12,000 in 2000–01. A typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £113,000 in 2007–08, compared to £35,000 in 2000–01.

DfES guidance¹⁷

Part of the increase reflects the incorporation of funding for ICT infrastructure that was previously allocated through Standards Fund Grant 31a.

There are conditions on the use of DFC, but also some flexibilities in that funding can be carried forward for up to three years if a school is proposing to fund a larger project. Some local authorities have devised imaginative partnership schemes that draw on schools' DFC but match the funds from their minor capital works budget, enabling more extensive projects to be undertaken.

Other duties

In addition to their duties towards pupils, schools also have duties under Part 3 of the DDA towards non-educational users. This has particular implications for parent teacher association meetings, letting policies, school socials and governors' events.

Under Part 2 of the DDA schools also have duties towards disabled staff. Additional funds may be available through the Department of Work and Pensions' *Access to Work* scheme. This scheme allocates resources to support disabled people in maintaining or returning to a successful working life.

Coordination with the local authority

The improvement of the physical environment of the school requires co-ordination with the local authority's accessibility strategy, particularly where the school envisages a major project for which they require Schools Access Initiative funding. Schools will then have to fit in with a combination of the local authority's priorities and expressions of parental preference. Schools can influence both of these by their track record in working with disabled pupils and in developing staff expertise.

¹⁷ Department for Education and Skills *Devolved Formula Capital Guidance 2005-06*

Experience suggests that local authorities should have some form of 'sign-off' for any substantial piece of work on access completed by a school, whether or not the work is funded through the local authority. This can help to establish high standards of accessibility in schools in the area.

The physical environment: resources

Schools Building and Design Unit, Department for Education and Employment (2001) *Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design – Accommodating pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools* (extract) – Planning activity

Schools Building and Design Unit, Department for Education and Skills (2005 consultative draft) *The Update of Building Bulletin 77: Designing for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Schools*

Bath and North East Somerset

Improving access in Norfolk schools

A study of three primary schools

Blackburn with Darwen: physical accessibility

Joinedupdesignforschools

Hampshire County Council Outline Design Brief: School Inclusion

Working with occupational therapists

2C: Information for disabled pupils

Schools are required to set out their plans for improving delivery to disabled pupils of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled. This has to be done:

- *within a reasonable time, and*
- *in ways which are determined after taking account of their disability and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.*

Surveys of school plans and strategies, carried out for the Accessibility Planning Project, suggested that most schools and local authorities thought that this section was focused on information for parents. Many plans referred to putting school prospectuses, letters home and other information, designed primarily for parents, into accessible forms. Whilst this is very much in the interests of disabled parents and helps to meet schools' responsibilities to the wider public under the DDA, this is not the focus of this part of the planning duty.

Identifying barriers

As with the other elements in schools' plans, the identification of barriers starts with a consideration of both the pupils and the school. In this case, the school considerations relate to the information the school provides for pupils and how it does this. Standard information for pupils might include:

- homework;
- time-tables;
- worksheets;
- teacher feedback and marking of work;
- notices;
- tests and examinations.

These types of information are normally provided in writing. The duty requires schools to plan to make information available in different formats. Different formats will enable pupils with different impairments to access the information. Schools may need to consider a variety of different formats including:

- audio-taping information;
- enlarging print;
- simplifying language;
- using picture/symbol language.

WATCHPOINT:

Schools could usefully review their marking and assessment policies for accessibility.

Identifying the appropriate format

Different approaches may help different groups of disabled pupils, for example:

- easy language or taped information for pupils with learning difficulties;
- pictures or symbols for pupils with communication difficulties;
- a pre-printed slip of paper or sticker (that can be put directly into the pupil's planner) can help dyslexic pupils who find it hard to take down homework from a blackboard or whiteboard at the end of a lesson.

However, schools should keep an open mind about a range of formats and discuss preferences with pupils and their parents.

Preferences expressed by pupils or their parents

The duty requires schools to consider pupils' impairments and 'preferences expressed by them or their parents'

Section 28D Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Schools do well to consider access to information along with access to the curriculum and the physical environment in their earliest discussions with pupils and parents.

Different formats from the start

While this part of the planning duty is driven significantly by individual considerations, schools will find it easier to meet the requirements as information is increasingly, and as a matter of course, made available in a range of different formats.

WATCHPOINT:

Building different formats into new information as it is developed will reduce the need for repeated individual adjustments at a later stage.

Working with support services

Schools working with pupils who use more specialised formats, for example Braille, need to ensure that materials are provided in time to be translated before any lesson. Time also needs to be allowed for thermoform diagrams to be made. This time needs to be built in to plans for the development of new materials.

Where schools are not currently working with pupils who need specialised formats, they should make themselves aware of what services are available and how to access these. Should a pupil requiring a specialised format come to the school there would then be no delay in contacting the appropriate service.

Information for parents

The analyses of schools' plans and local authorities' strategies suggested that many schools and local authorities thought that the requirements on information related to information for parents. Whilst this is not required under the planning duties, making information available for parents in a range of different formats can potentially improve access to information for parents and help to meet schools' duties under other parts of the DDA. Clearly this is of benefit to parents, but needs to be in addition to what schools do for pupils.

Information for pupils: resources

Norfolk guidelines

Havering guidance

Nottinghamshire Sign and Symbol Project

3. Making it happen

Schools are required to put their accessibility plans in writing, to resource them and implement them. The first plans ran for three years, from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006. Plans are renewable every three years. During the three-year period, plans must be kept under review and, if necessary, revised.

Schools are required to report annually on their accessibility plans, and on other aspects of their DDA and SEN duties. With the removal of the requirement on the governing body to publish an annual report to parents, the school is required to include this report in the school prospectus.

The sections in this part of the template are designed to support schools in meeting these requirements.

DDA 2005: the duty to promote disability equality

As part of their duties under the DDA 2005, schools are required to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, see *Section 1: Duties and definitions*. The key aspects of the Scheme must be implemented, and progress on its implementation has to be reported annually. The Scheme has to be reviewed and a revised Scheme published within three years of the first one and every three years thereafter.

For greater efficiency, the cycle of review, revision and implementation of a school's Disability Equality Scheme can be linked to the school's cycle of work on its accessibility plan.

The Disability Rights Commission is providing guidance for schools on the duties in the 2005 Act.

Other aspects of Disability Equality Schemes are discussed in the sections of the plan that are most relevant.

3A: Management, coordination and implementation

Overall responsibility for the school's accessibility plan lies with the governing body, but improving access for disabled pupils requires everyone at the school to understand the duties in the DDA and apply this knowledge in their own area of responsibility: the headteacher, learning support assistants, class and subject teachers, dinner staff, the SENCO, the premises manager, curriculum coordinators and heads of department, administrative staff and governors themselves.

Awareness of the DDA

Ofsted (2004)¹⁸ identified a significant percentage of schools that were unaware of some of their duties under the DDA. It is important to:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the disability discrimination duties as they apply to schools;
- secure the commitment of all staff to removing barriers and increasing access;
- draw on support from within and beyond the school;
- target training for particular groups of pupils/staff/aspects of school life;
- share good practice between staff and with other schools.

¹⁸ Ofsted (2004) *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards inclusive schools*

- share good practice between staff and with other schools.

WATCHPOINT:

Staff development planning is a crucial mechanism in increasing accessibility.

The governing body and oversight of the school accessibility plan

Key responsibilities for the school's accessibility plan rest with the governing body of the school. The governing body should set priorities relating to their responsibilities for the plan. They might consider:

- the school's vision and values for disabled pupils;
- how the governing body oversees the school accessibility plan and sets a clear direction for it;
- how the governing body assures itself that the plan is being implemented and that it is making a difference;
- how and when the school will review and revise its plan, including how anyone might contribute to that process;
- a mechanism for the evaluation of the plan and built-in outcomes that can inform the evaluation;
- a variety of evidence that can be used in the evaluation of the plan;
- how they report to parents on the success of the plan.

WATCHPOINT:

How does the governing body know that the school is increasingly accessible and that their vision and values for disabled pupils are becoming a reality?

Coordination

The school governors and senior managers have responsibilities covering every area of the school's activities. The School Improvement Plan is the school's over-arching plan. The accessibility plan can cross-refer to appropriate sections of the School Improvement Plan, be dovetailed into it with action plans for the different sections included in the relevant parts of the School Improvement Plan, or it can be included in its entirety.

Schools might want to develop their accessibility plan separately before embedding it in other planning processes in order to:

- provide a clear focus on disabled pupils;
- be able to hand a copy of the plan to parents, to Ofsted, to the local authority.

The experience of schools in the Accessibility Planning Project partner local authorities was that a separate plan tended to sit on a shelf and not get implemented.

Incorporating the accessibility plan into the school improvement plan can address the problem and subjects the plan to the scrutiny of the senior management team and the governing body. There is a balance to be struck between the focus of a separate plan and the push towards implementation that comes with an embedded plan. With time accessibility plans are likely to become more embedded.

Priorities in the school's accessibility plan also need to be coordinated with plans across the school, for SEN, curriculum review and development and professional

development. Work on the accessibility plan may require some modification to these plans and vice versa.

WATCHPOINT:

The successful integration of the school accessibility planning into other planning processes can itself improve those processes and is part of making it all manageable and achievable.

Schools also have duties towards disabled staff under Part 2 of the DDA and towards the general public under Part 3 of the DDA. The school's accessibility plan needs to be coordinated with its responsibilities in these areas and with its duties in such areas as race, health and safety and human rights. Specific linkages can sensibly be made between schools' accessibility plans and their Disability Equality Schemes (required by December 2006 for secondary schools and by December 2007 for primary and special schools). It is suggested on page 42 that bringing plans and schemes together in one cycle of implementation, review and revision will be an efficient way of managing both processes.

Implementation

Plans are more likely to be implemented where they are accompanied by an action plan with:

- clear allocation of lead responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources;
- an indication of expected outcomes or performance criteria;
- clear timescales;
- a specified date and process for review.

The school should set out its priorities for its plan. It may be helpful to identify the general priorities in the front end of the plan and then work these into more detail in a set of action plans attached to the plan. A standard planning sheet provides for this sort of information.

Resources

Schools are required to resource their plans. It is important to identify clearly the resources, human and financial, that are necessary to support the plan. It may be helpful to identify where the funding is going to come from, for example:

- school development grant,
- Schools Access Initiative,
- devolved formula capital,
- delegated budget.

Bath and North East Somerset one of the partner authorities involved in the Accessibility Planning Project, provide guidance for their schools on different funding streams that are available.

Evaluation of the plan

The evaluation of the school's plan needs to address two main questions:

- have we done what we said we would do?
- has it had any effect?

Have we done what we said we would do?

Information to inform an answer to this question will come largely from the monitoring of the implementation of the plan.

Has it had any effect?

Schools will need to consider a range of evidence in order to reach a judgement on this. It might include evidence of:

- increased confidence of staff in teaching disabled pupils;
- greater pupil and parental satisfaction with the arrangements made;
- improved outcomes for disabled pupils;
- improvements in the physical environment of the school;
- protocols for multi-agency working to support children with medical needs;
- teachers sharing good practice within the school, the school sharing good practice with others;
- disabled pupils being more involved in whole life of the school.

It may be helpful if the school agrees what evidence will be used to evaluate its plan.

Some of the evidence will already be available within the school. Some will have been brought together to inform the starting point of the plan and can be reviewed to see if there have been changes over the period of the plan. Some will be a matter of record within the school. Some may be a matter of informed judgement.

Collecting views of parents, pupils, staff and others through a short survey can help to inform that judgement.

Reporting requirements

The governing body is required to report to parents on the school's accessibility plan. This needs to be linked to other reporting requirements in respect of disabled pupils:

- the arrangements for the admission of disabled pupils;
- the steps taken to prevent disabled pupils from being treated less favourably than other pupils;
- the facilities provided to assist access to the school; and
- in respect of pupils with SEN, the requirement to report on the school's SEN policy.

The reporting requirements in respect of the school's Disability Equality Scheme, required under the DDA 2005, can be met more efficiently if they are also linked to the annual reporting on the school's accessibility plan, the wider disability reporting requirements and the report on the SEN policy.

Since the removal, in 2005, of the requirement on the governing body to report annually to parents, annual reporting is required in the school prospectus instead.

Management, co-ordination and implementation: resources

School improvement and the DDA

Bath and North East Somerset guidance on resources

Governor check list

Planning sheet

Co-ordination: Bath and North-East Somerset

3B: Making the plan available

Making the school's accessibility plan widely available is a good way of provoking feedback. Feedback is an important element in the review and development of the plan.

The DDA requires schools to report to parents on their accessibility plan along with other aspects of the school's provision for disabled pupils, see *Section 3A: Co-ordination with other plans and duties*.

Wider requirements relating to the freedom of information mean that the school's accessibility plan, and information on its implementation, should be made readily available on request. In general it is expected that single copies of school policies will be made available free of charge. If a charge is to be made, this should be stated in the school's Publication Scheme under the Freedom of Information Act¹⁹.

Where

Hard copies of the school's accessibility plan can be made available through the school office, on a parents' noticeboard or in a parents' room.

A simple way to make the plan readily available to parents, staff and the wider school community is to put it on the school website. This allows the school community to see how the commitment to increasing access is being implemented.

Accessibility of the plan itself

It is highly desirable that the plan itself should be a model of accessibility.

Design and layout

The plan does not need to be expensively produced, but design and layout should be simple and clear with good quality photocopying, so that there is no deterioration of legibility.

Using a sans serif typeface, such as Ariel, and a large font size (never less than 12 point) improves access for readers with a visual impairment. Some readers may need a larger font. The Disability Rights Commission (DRC)²⁰ recommends no less than 14 point. Making the plan available electronically, either on the web or on a disk, enables the reader to put it into any size font that may be required.

Printing onto darker shades of paper or overlaying text on a picture reduces readability for visually impaired readers.

Language

The style needs to be clear and the writing as jargon-free as possible. Where jargon is used (this is likely to be in the action plans in particular) it should be explained, using a key.

Some versions of Microsoft Word provide a readability program (use Help menu then select Readability). This can provide an initial assessment of the language demands of

¹⁹ Model publication schemes for schools are published on the Information Commissioner's website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

²⁰ Disability Rights Commission <http://www.drc-gb.org/>

the plan. Aim for a 12 year-old reading level. If the reading demands are significantly higher it may be helpful to make an 'easy words' version available.

Consultation

Asking readers for a view about the accessibility of the plan, or involving disabled people in thinking about ways to make it more accessible, will provide the best advice for enabling the plan to reach the widest possible audience. It may also lead to helpful advice on other aspects of accessibility.

Royal National Institute for the Blind, MENCAP and the DRC provide guidance on making information accessible.

Other plans

Recognising the school's duties under other parts of the DDA, see *Section 3A: Co-ordination with other plans and duties*, the school may also wish to make other plans and policies available in a range of different formats, for disabled parents and the wider public.

Making the plan available: resources:

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Norfolk's parent friendly information on the website



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<http://www.hull.ac.uk/children5to16programme/briefings.htm>

The full research report is available from:

Nicholas Watson, Department of Nursing Studies, University of Edinburgh, Adam Ferguson Building, 40 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LL

Booth T and Ainscow M (2002) *The Index for Inclusion*. Centre for Studies on

Inclusive Education <http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/index-overview.htm>

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<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=4621>

Department for Education And Skills (2001) *Distribution of resources to support inclusion* <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=5964>

¹ The information content, design and layout of websites changes regularly. Where any document is not available at the address indicated, the most efficient way to find it is likely to be by searching for the document by its title, using an internet search engine.

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<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/sbschoolsforthefuture/>

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<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/listeningtolearn/>

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<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Removing Barriers to Achievement*

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/senstrategy/>

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings* DFES-1448-2005

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-1448-2005&>

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Maximising progress – ensuring the attainment of pupils with SEN*

Three booklets published as part of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy materials:

Part 1 Using data – target setting and target getting

DfES ref 1040/2004G

Part 2 Approaches to learning and teaching in the mainstream classroom

DfES ref 0105/2005G

Part 3 Managing the learning process for pupils with SEN

DfES ref 0106/2005G

The Standards website: http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3/respub/sen_inc

Department for Education and Skills *Devolved Formula Capital Guidance 2005-06*

www.teachernet.gov.uk/devolved

Department of Health (2004) *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, in particular Standard 8: Disabled Children and Young People and those with complex health needs;*

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Information Commissioner's website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

A leaflet for governors can be downloaded from the Teachernet website:

www.teachernet.gov.uk

Information Management in Schools Data Collection and Dissemination

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections/>

for the statistics provided through the PLASC data collection see:

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/index.shtml>

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The Nottingham Signs and Symbols Network

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Guidance for inspectors and schools

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QCA Assessment for Learning resources: <http://www.qca.org.uk/294.html>**QCA/DfEE (2001)** *Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with*

Learning Difficulties www.nc.uk.net/ld

Schools Access Initiative

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/schools/accessibility/sai/>

School Building and Design Unit at the Department for Education and Skills.**Guidance is available at:**

[http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/)

[schoolbuildings/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/)

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5. Where are you now? Criteria for assessing your school accessibility plan

This section provides a set of criteria for schools to use to review their accessibility plan. The criteria were developed as part of the Accessibility Planning Project and were used in the analysis of samples of school accessibility plans in two partner authorities, see *Accessibility Planning Project* on the CD-ROM. Schools can compare their plan with the information from the two analyses.

The criteria can help schools to make a judgement about the quality of their own plan. This in turn can:

- indicate starting points for the improvement of the school's plan;
- enable schools to see how they may want to develop their plan;
- help to inform the overall self-evaluation of the school that has to be maintained using the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form (SEF).

If a school is also seeking to meet some of the requirements of a Disability Equality Scheme through its accessibility plan, the criteria can be adapted to include that.

The criteria should not be used in a mechanistic way. It is possible, for example, that a particular aspect of a school plan is judged to be good, yet does not meet all the criteria for that aspect; equally a particular aspect might meet all the criteria but might not be judged to be good. The criteria should be used to inform a judgement about a plan, not to dictate it.

To sharpen the analysis, Ofsted grades can be used to judge each section (1: outstanding; 2: good; 3: satisfactory; 4: inadequate); colleagues can analyse a plan separately and then compare their judgements.

Criteria for assessing an accessibility plan

Name of school:

1. Summary (the statutory requirements are in bold)

Aspect of plan:	Score
1 Values	
2 Information/data	
3 Consultation/involvement	
4 Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils	
5 Improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services	
6 Improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils	
7 Coordination	
8 Accessibility of the strategy itself	
9 Duration, review and revision	
10 Evaluation	
11 Training and support	
12 How likely is it that the strategy will be implemented?	

Comments:

2. Criteria:

1. Values	Score
<p>Consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the plan is explicit about vision and values ● the plan focuses on the removal of barriers for disabled pupils ● the plan reflects a commitment to providing access to the life of the school for all pupils ● the values reflect the national curriculum inclusion statement ● there is a focus on outcomes for disabled pupils ● there is evidence of a commitment to equal opportunities 	

2. Information/data	Score
<p>Consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● there is reference to an audit or other data collection at the school level and/or at local authority level ● information accurately reflects the definition of disability in the DDA ● information on the participation of disabled pupils in the life of the school is analysed ● data on outcomes for disabled pupils is analysed ● such information informs the plan ● there is any calculation of future needs/numbers of pupils 	

3. Consultation/involvement	Score
<p>Consider whether there is evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● that the development of the plan involved coordination with the local authority ● of adjustments made in the light of the local authority's strategy/advice ● that the development of the plan involved parents ● of adjustments made because of what parents said ● that the development of the plan involved pupils ● of adjustments made because of what pupils said ● that the development of the plan involved other organisations/disabled people ● of adjustments made because of what they said 	

4. Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils	Score
<p>Consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● curriculum access is covered in the plan itself ● the plan addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – access to different areas of the National Curriculum – access to extra-curricular activities – access to the wider 'school curriculum' ● the plan addresses curriculum access for pupils with a range of different impairments 	

5. Improvements to the physical environment	Score
<p>Consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● physical improvements are covered in the plan itself ● the plan identifies physical improvements that will increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – access to different areas of the national curriculum – access to extra-curricular activities – access to the wider ‘school curriculum’ ● the plan sets out physical improvements affecting access for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – pupils with a range of different impairments – disabled pupils who do not have a physical impairment 	

6. Improvements in the provision of information	Score
<p>Consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● information for pupils is covered in the plan itself ● information for pupils is considered in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – different areas of the National Curriculum – extra-curricular activities – the wider ‘school curriculum’ ● the plan sets out to improve access to information for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – pupils with a range of different impairments – disabled pupils who do not have a sensory impairment 	

7. Coordination	Score
<p>Consider whether linkages are made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● between the different SEN and disability duties, with Part 2 of DDA (Employment), with Part 3 of DDA (Goods and services) and with the Disability Equality Duties ● with other statutory duties: on race...on human rights...on health and safety ● with school improvement and curriculum development work ● with other planning processes: school development plan, professional development plan, other policies ● with other agencies 	

8. Accessibility of the strategy itself	Score
<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● evidence that the plan is available on request? ● whether the plan is available on the school website? ● whether the plan is available in different formats? ● how readable the plan is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – jargon/acronyms – typeface/font size – how well set out (how easy to find your way around) 	

9. Duration, review and revision	Score
Consider whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the duration of the plan is clear ● there is a date for review ● it is clear how the plan will be revised ● it is clear how anyone might contribute to that process 	

10. Evaluation	Score
Consider whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● there are outcomes built into the plan that can inform the evaluation of the plan ● there is a variety of evidence that can be used in the evaluation of the plan (pupil attainment, staff confidence, parental satisfaction) ● there is a mechanism for the evaluation of the plan 	

11. Support from within and beyond the school	Score
Consider whether there is evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● awareness raising activities/general training on the DDA ● targeted training: for particular groups of pupils/staff/aspects of school life ● support/advice being sought from outside the school: from services, other agencies and organisations ● sharing good practice between staff/with other schools 	

12. How likely is it that the plan will be implemented?	Score			
	Curriculum	Physical environment	Information for pupils	Overall
Consider whether the plan identifies:				
– resources				
– responsibilities				
– timings				
– outcomes for pupils and for staff				
Overall judgement of how likely the plan is to be implemented				

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