



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## SCHOOLS' ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY 2014 - 2017

### CONTENTS

1.	OVERVIEW .....	2
1.1	Purpose .....	2
1.2	Scope .....	2
1.3	Strategy Overview .....	2
1.4	Progress Review .....	3
1.5	Definitions .....	3
1.6	Roles .....	4
2.	A VISION FOR SCHOOLS 2014 to 2017 .....	4
3.	ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES 2014 to 2017.....	6
3.1	Increasing access for pupils with disabilities to the school curriculum.....	6
3.2	Improving access to the physical environment of schools.....	7
3.3	Improving the delivery of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.....	7
4.	MAKING IT HAPPEN .....	8
4.1	Management, Co-ordination and Implementation .....	8
4.2	Joint Working with Partner Agencies and Groups .....	10
4.3	The Accessibility of this Strategy .....	10
	APPENDIX 1 - SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLANS .....	11
	APPENDIX 2 - TEMPLATE FOR SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN.....	12
	APPENDIX 3 - EXTERNAL & HILLINGDON REFERENCE.....	13

## 1. OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this Strategy is to set out Hillingdon Council's priorities and proposals to increase access to school education for pupils with disabilities in all schools in Hillingdon for which the Local Authority has responsibility.
- 1.1.2 This Accessibility Strategy is for the period 2014 to 2017 and states Hillingdon's vision and values for its pupils with disabilities.

### 1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 Hillingdon Council's All-Age Disability Service is working with its partners to support greater levels of inclusion for **all** children and young people in **all** local schools and is striving to focus upon the minimisation of actual and potential barriers which pupils with disabilities experience and where possible remove them.
- 1.2.2 The Local Authority (LA) is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, all the educational programmes, activities and experiences available in Hillingdon. This Accessibility Strategy therefore forms an important part of the Borough's commitment to reduce discrimination, improve opportunities and achieve equality of opportunity and success for all.
- 1.2.3 This Accessibility Strategy is intended to provide a framework for maintained primary, secondary and special schools in the Borough to improve the educational opportunities for all pupils. It will also assist the Council in meeting its general duty to promote the equality of pupils with disabilities in Hillingdon.

### 1.3 Strategy Overview

- 1.3.1 This Strategy outlines the vision for Hillingdon schools; and covers the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010:
- **CURRICULUM** - increasing the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the curriculum;
  - **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** - improving the physical environment of schools to enable pupils with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
  - **INFORMATION** - improving the availability of accessible information to pupils with disabilities.
- 1.3.2 It also offers an overview of the support that will be required by the LA, schools and partner agencies if implementation is to be successful in increasing access to opportunities.

## 1.4 Progress Review

Developments have included the following:

- The Council has the largest capital investment programme in schools in London. The programme has resulted in the provision of two new primary schools (two for 2014 and a further school for 2015). Three existing primary schools have been rebuilt and new and remodelled accommodation provided at many other primary schools across the Borough. New accommodation has been designed with accessibility in mind. Hence, the programme has increased the number of accessible school buildings significantly.
- New accommodation has been designed to Department for Education (DfE) design criteria and therefore includes teaching and other spaces to support pupils with SEN. In addition, two of the new schools will have specialist resource provision (SRPs).
- As part of the transformation of the design of Council services, a new all-age disability service has been created. This places all services for disability in a single structure and will facilitate multi-disciplinary working, effective use of resources, and transition from child to adult services.
- An initial 'Local Offer' has been published on the Council web site and can be found at the following website: [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send) This is an early draft and remains under development.
- A contract is in place to develop personal budgets for children and young people.
- Additional places have been created in special schools.
- Briefings/workshops on the SEND Reforms have been held for school staff including governors, early year's settings and other partners. Awareness raising sessions have been held for internal staff.
- A new SRP has been opened at Abbotsfield School (secondary).

## 1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 The Equality Act defines a **disabled person** as someone who has:

“...a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’. This broad description covers physical disabilities, sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, and learning disabilities and also some specific medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

1.5.2 The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. **Long term** is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

1.5.3 Schools: all maintained schools and settings for which Hillingdon Council is responsible.

1.5.4 Discrimination: a public body, including schools, must not disadvantage a pupil with a disability because of something that is a consequence of their disability. The interpretation of 'discrimination' in relation to disability within this Accessibility Strategy reflects the Equality Act 2010. There can no longer be justification for *direct discrimination* in any circumstances. This Accessibility Strategy also seeks to protect pupils against *indirect discrimination* – a school must not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only.

## 1.6 Roles

It is the duty of all those working within maintained schools and the LA on areas associated with accessibility to ensure that this Strategy is implemented and adhered to.

## 2. A VISION FOR SCHOOLS 2014 to 2017

2.1 The Local Authority believes that the following principles should guide educational provision for all learners in all educational settings across the Borough:

- a curriculum that is broad, rich and innovative and is responsive to the different learning needs and styles of every child and young person so that it delivers their entitlement to appropriate education and training;
- timely and appropriate information is shared and used between and within schools and other appropriate agencies to inform effective learning;
- all children and young people are supported to overcome barriers to learning and that their learning moves at a challenging but realistic pace;
- our schools work in close partnership with parents/carers, partners and the local community to ensure entitlement for all; and
- our schools support children and young people to develop skills for independence leading to paid employment and inclusion in their local community.

2.2 From the earliest years, we want every learner in Hillingdon to have the opportunity to develop high self-esteem, respect for others and positive and socially responsible behaviour, enabling them to play a full, happy and active role in society. For children and young people with disabilities this means that:

- education providers have a responsibility to ensure that everyone in Hillingdon can participate fully in any learning opportunity;
- there should be a continuum of provision to meet ongoing needs;
- there should be a continuum of provision to meet temporary/short term needs;  
and
- there is access to high quality education that meets their needs in their local communities through varied and flexible provision.

### **3. ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES 2014 to 2017**

#### **3.1 Increasing access for pupils with disabilities to the school curriculum**

3.1.1 This is concerned with enabling the fullest possible participation of all pupils with disabilities in the curriculum. The definition of the curriculum is a broad one and includes all of the activities available in the school including teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits including residential trips.

3.1.2 This Strategy's curriculum targets are therefore designed to address the holistic needs of children and young people with a range of special educational needs and disabilities. The Local Authority will:

- provide specialist support and training to school staff to enable schools to increase their capacity to successfully include pupils with disabilities and ensure that they make at least the expected levels of progress. A particular focus will be developing the ability of the local workforce to meet pupils' speech, language and communication needs;
- review our approach to arranging short breaks for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities;
- continue to facilitate workshops for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs);
- continue to provide parents/carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities with the opportunity to help shape and influence the development or redesign of services through the Parents Forum;
- establish a mechanism for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to help shape and influence the development or redesign of services;
- work with the new Academies to establish the new SRPs, including the potential for outreach work and establish a new SRP at Cherry Lane Primary (all for autism and complex needs);
- in partnership with schools, formulate a plan for additional places in special schools and additional SRP places to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (in line with the rising population in Hillingdon). This may result in building further provision but also needs to consider the support services including health and care provision;
- within our planning, to aim to provide specialist provision locally.

### **3.2 Improving access to the physical environment of schools**

3.2.1 Physical environment targets are aimed at improving and making the best use of existing school buildings and outdoor facilities as well as making sound decisions in respect of new building projects for all school users. They are concerned with the removal of barriers to the physical environment of the school including physical access to the school buildings and the provision of physical aids to improve the sensory environment for pupils with visual and hearing difficulties who may require a relatively distraction free environment. The offer of a sensory impairment environmental audit of school premises is also available to all schools and a report of cost effective solutions to barriers for those with a sensory loss can be produced.

3.2.2 The Local Authority in collaboration with schools will:

- continue to work with schools to use capital funding strategically to improve access across all schools in ways that ensure:
  - the broadest possible choice of accessible schools across the Borough;
  - the availability of good, early information about pupils coming into the school system;
  - that work to improve accessibility is considered and improvements are built in to all new capital projects;
  - that the specifications used in the design of new school buildings take account of the best possible standards of accessibility.

### **3.3 Improving the delivery of accessible information to pupils with disabilities**

3.3.1 The Local Authority (LA) aims to provide information to pupils with disabilities and their parents/carers in accessible formats wherever it is needed or requested.

3.3.2 The LA role is to ensure that schools are supported to understand their responsibilities to provide accessible information and ways to develop accessible information. Schools must ensure that they are proactive in ensuring that the fullest range of innovative communication methods are used including the use of technology, Braille, large print, British Sign Language, Signalong, picture exchange communication systems, translation services and/or the use of visual timetables. This should include communication between school and home and reflect the requirement to provide information to disabled learners and their parents/carers:

- in a range of different formats
- concerning different areas of the curriculum
- in respect of the services provided by schools or provided by the LA and partners in support of schools
- concerning extracurricular activities including possible short break opportunities
- using interpreters where necessary, particularly related to British Sign Language.

3.3.3 This may involve the school making individual arrangements to meet individual needs. The provision of accessible information in a variety of responsive formats is key to ensuring the active participation of the widest range of school users in the design and dissemination of effective school services. Schools should be encouraged to:

- review their existing systems for providing equipment and technical aids to ensure that the most effective provision and use of the equipment, ICT and technical devices are provided;
- monitor and regularly review the skills and expertise of the whole school workforce and their role in supporting pupils with disabilities;
- train staff to create and design communications that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the widest range of school users as possible;
- ensure that pupils with disabilities and their parents/carers are fully involved in the decision making processes with regard to individual learning and whole school provision where applicable;
- ensure that pupils with disabilities and their parents/carers are fully involved in the development of and are better informed about the availability of literature produced to support the schools accessibility agenda.

## **4. MAKING IT HAPPEN**

### **4.1 Management, Coordination and Implementation**

- 4.1.1 Continue, through a Programme Board/Disability Strategy Group and working groups, to implement the SEND Reforms, including parents/carers, until the new ways of working are embedded in usual practice.
- 4.1.2 Continue to develop, with parents/carers and other partners, the Local Offer which is transparent, comprehensive, accessible and kept up to date.
- 4.1.3 The review of CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) is ongoing. There is some new funding for an LD (Learning Disability) CAMHS and work is in progress to deliver and evaluate this.
- 4.1.4 Make available personal budgets and direct payments for children and young people e.g. respite, transport.
- 4.1.5 Enable schools to have access to high quality support to develop their skills to successfully include children and young people with SEND.
- 4.1.6 Continue the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group with Headteachers to understand the need for further educational provision and services for pupils with SEND and to develop an Additional Needs Strategy. The child population in Hillingdon is rising and local provision is required to meet the growing demands.

4.1.7 The following strategic priorities are necessary to support and ensure the implementation and success of the Accessibility Strategy as a whole:

- Schools have a responsibility to collect, collate and routinely share data on all pupils with a disability with the Local Authority. This data will be examined to determine trends in impact, inclusion, achievement and attainment and identify and address any areas of unmet need. Plans will be developed over time to address any areas of unmet need.
- Schools have a responsibility to collect, collate and routinely share outcome data with the Local Authority which focuses on the extent to which their Accessibility Plans improve access for disabled pupils. This data will be examined and plans will be developed over time to address any areas of need.
- Continuing professional development opportunities will be offered to school staff on specific disabilities, disability legislation and wider accessibility issues to continue to improve schools' capacity to respond to diverse needs.
- Schools should continue to work with colleagues in the Local Authority to ensure effective consultation with pupils with disabilities, their parents/carers, other school users, service providers and partner agencies to ensure that all services offered as part of this Accessibility Strategy are fit for purpose. Consultees' views will be used to measure how well this Strategy is working and will be used to drive forward future service improvements. The use of equality impact assessments should also be an important feature of this work.
- Each school's governing body and senior leadership team must take responsibility for developing an Accessibility Plan which meets statutory requirements, which embraces all aspects of school life and pupil development. Guidance on how to prepare this documentation is provided at Appendices 1 and 2 of this Strategy. Schools must involve pupils with disabilities, their parents/carers, other school users, service providers and partner agencies
- Schools will continue to offer Governors, senior managers, teaching and support staff relevant continuing professional development opportunities to help them support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in accordance with the requirements of this Strategy.
- The Local Authority has a legal duty to keep this Accessibility Strategy under review. An evaluation of the progress made against the aims and objectives in this Strategy will be undertaken in the summer of 2016. The outcome of this review will inform the shape and content of the new strategy covering 2018 - 2020.

## **4.2 Joint Working with Partner Agencies and Groups**

- 4.2.1 Hillingdon Council is committed to working in partnership as an approach to improving its delivery of services to adults and children and young people. Strong partnerships have been established with a range of services and agencies including a new partnership with Cambridge Education to deliver school improvement services on behalf of the Local Authority.
- 4.2.2 Develop joint commissioning between the LA and the Clinical Commissioning Group. An initial focus is likely to be speech and language therapy and occupational therapy.
- 4.2.3 Good working relationships will not only ensure that the priorities identified by this Strategy are implemented successfully but that further developments to improve accessibility for children and young people with disabilities are identified and acted upon.

### **4.3 The Accessibility of this Strategy**

- 4.3.1 The Strategy will be published to schools via the schools communication process. Each school and its governing body and all agencies, services and partnerships who contributed to its development will receive a copy.
- 4.3.2 The Strategy will be placed on the Council website for public accessibility.
- 4.3.3 If you need further copies of this document or would like the document in another format, such as enlarged print, Braille, audio tape or another language, please contact Gina Kennedy on 01895 250722.

## **APPENDIX 1 - SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLANS**

Schools are required to develop an Accessibility Plan that covers:

- disabled pupils who are in schools 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 going to schools is important when 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 have some information.

In order to meet the planning duties the Plan must describe work aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by schools; and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils within a reasonable time and in ways which are determined after taking account of their disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents/carers, of information that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

These Plans are required to be in writing and have to be resourced and implemented for three years and renewed every three years thereafter. During their three year coverage, the Plans must be kept under review and if necessary revised.

Schools are required to report annually on their Accessibility Plan and on other aspects of the DDA and SEND duties as part of the schools prospectus.

## **APPENDIX 2 - TEMPLATE FOR A SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### ***Introduction***

The Equality Act 2010 provides three main duties towards disabled pupils:

- 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 Equality Act:

- 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 and reviewed and revised as necessary. Attached is a set of action plans showing how the school will address the priorities identified in the strategy.

### ***1: Starting points***

*1A: The purpose and direction of the school's strategy: 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 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 that is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled*

### ***3: Making it happen***

*3A: Management, coordination and implementation*

*3B: Getting hold of the school's Plan*

## APPENDIX 3: EXTERNAL & HILLINGDON REFERENCES

### External

- School Access planning (legal requirements)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10/crossheading/accessibility-plans>
- SEND Guide for Schools & Alternative Provision Settings  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- DfE School Design Guide <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-bulletin-102-disabled-children-and-children-with-sen>
- Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils 2012  
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/reasonable-adjustments-disabled-pupils>
- Equality Act 2010 guidance for schools  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>

### Hillingdon

- Special Education Needs Local Offer  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send)
- Family Information Service  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/families](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/families)
- Children and Young Peoples Plan  
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/25636/Health-and-social-care>
- Additional Needs Strategy (being prepared)
- Special Educational Needs Policy 2012 (being updated in 2014)