

***Derbyshire County Council,
Children and Younger Adults
Department***

***Accessibility Strategy
2012-2015***

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The Strategy 2012-15

Introduction

This strategy sets out for the period April 2012 - March 2015 the proposals of Derbyshire County Council to increase access to school education for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, in the schools for which it is responsible. The strategy covers the three areas required by the planning duties in the Equality Act 2010:

- increasing the extent to which pupils with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs of information which is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

The Strategy is made up of three sections:

- A) The Starting Points
- B) Priorities
- C) Making it Happen

A) THE STARTING POINTS

1. The purpose and direction of the local authority's strategy: vision and values

Derbyshire has identified the following strategic goals for its accessibility strategy:

- To maximise access for disabled children and young people to its schools so that they can achieve good progress.
- To ensure a place for every disabled child at his/her local mainstream school. It is anticipated that this will not be possible only in rare cases.
- To minimise the need for disabled children and young people to be placed at schools outside the County.
- To pursue improved access as a shared goal in partnership with all schools, support services, other agencies, e.g. Health, and voluntary organisations.
- To use the information gained from the 2009 audit of Derbyshire school premises, together with information obtained from Health and Social Services about children with disabilities, to target capital funding so that it can better meet the needs of children coming up to school entry into schools for which the Local Authority is responsible.

- To facilitate the sharing of good practice between schools, and between schools and services, other agencies and voluntary organisations.
- To support the achievement of the Council's aims and targets as contained in its Children and Younger Adults Department Service Delivery Plan, "Journey to Excellence" and "Meeting the Needs of Children in Derbyshire".

2. Information which can be obtained from pupil data and school audits

Outcomes for Disabled Pupils

Existing practice:

- An annual curriculum bulletin is produced entitled "Standards of Attainment and Progress for pupils with Special Educational Needs in Derbyshire." This is made available on the schools' extranet to support schools in evaluating relative achievement and making judgements as to the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
- The County Data Project on pupils working below age related expectations collects the attainment data. This is then analysed and used to review the relative achievement of pupils based on principal need and with reference to different subject strands.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEN as judged by OfSTED is monitored. Overall, the quality for schools in Derbyshire has been evaluated as good.

Future Action - Development

Liase with the information unit and continue to develop the working below age related expectations Data Project.

Future Action - Maintenance

Continue to produce the annual curriculum bulletin to support School self-evaluation.

Increasing Access to the Curriculum for Disabled Pupils and Pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Existing Provision:

- A group designated as the SEN training group, including representatives from Schools and Learning, advisory teachers, Educational Psychologists other relevant partners meet to decide on the county response to training needs in the field of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs. This group is responsible for the course and conference programme providing a range of courses supporting and increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils.

- The revision of the Quality Development Dialogue (QDD) process which has school self-evaluation as the central theme gives the opportunity for reflection and comment about the way in which schools are meeting the needs of pupils with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- The Authority provides accredited courses for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and these are linked to the University College of Northampton.
- The full Education Improvement Service Team (EIS) are updated through the briefings to link advisers about the focus on pupils with disabilities and pupils with SEN.

Future Action - Development

- Align the QDD process to the new OfSTED inspection process, including the key focus on the group of pupils with a disability and SEN and ensure schools, advisers and colleagues are fully briefed.
- Through the development of Derbyshire's "Journey to Excellence – *Improving Teaching and Learning*" initiative the Authority will:-
 - review practice through wide consultation.
 - prepare for the implementation of the Green Paper reforms.
 - support schools and settings in the development of differentiated intervention strategies.
 - support schools in accessing appropriate provision for pupils with complex needs.

Future Action - Maintenance

Track and monitor course uptake delivered by all services in order to ensure maximum take up and assist in the evaluation of the impact of training on increasing access for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

3. Early Years Providers

Existing Provision:

- There are currently a number of children with Statements of Special Needs receiving their Early Year's education in non-maintained settings, supported by a range of specialist centrally employed specialist early years staff.
- Children in the early years may or may not already have a diagnosis of disability.
- There are 54 Children's Centres in Derbyshire which are developing a range of opportunities for children with disabilities. They have all completed access plans.
- The Accessibility Strategy has regard to the childcare element of the Equality Act 2010 as schools move into the extended schools agenda.

4. Information from Services

- As of January 2012 there were 245 Derbyshire children and young people in placements outside the Local Authority. This includes pupils placed in Independent, Non-maintained and Other Local Authority placements.
- The Authority is planning further key stage 3 – 4 enhanced resource provision for young people with autism in a new build at Tibshelf, opening early in 2014, to provide a continuum for provision at Pilsley Community Primary School ER provision. It is the intention to use the range of ER autism provision across Derbyshire to support as many Derbyshire pupils with autism within the county as possible.

Future Action - Development

- To monitor and respond to Derbyshire Local Authority's review of special educational needs the first stage of which was completed in March 2012.
- To develop further key stage 3 – 4 enhanced resource provision for autism in a new build at Tibshelf.
- To monitor Local Authority policies with relation to disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

5. Policies on School Transport

Work on reviewing Derbyshire's Special Educational Needs and Disability Transport Policy was completed in August 2011. This was consulted on, reviewed and agreed by Cabinet as the CAYA Transport Policy in January 2012. Reference should be made to the transport policy, which can be viewed on the www.derbyshire.gov.uk website, when considering transport issues for pupils with disabilities and pupils with special educational needs.

Future Maintenance Action

To raise awareness of the issues facing disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs when accessing transport in order to prevent less favourable treatment.

Policies on Placement

- Under the 1996 Education Act, parents have a legal right to express a preference for which school their child should attend. Derbyshire strives to meet this preference, as long as the placement is suitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs; is not incompatible with the efficient education of other children with whom the child would be educated; and is an efficient use of resources.

- Most pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs can have their needs met in their nearest LA school. Schools are extensively supported to meet the needs of children with SEN by a range of specialist centrally employed staff.
- Most students who attend a special school in Derbyshire tend to have very high levels of need.

Future Action - Development

To further reduce dependence on out of county placements, including the development of an “Early Alert” system to notify heads of all special schools of the possibility of a child being placed out of county and ask for advice including suggestions about in-county alternatives.

6. Support for Schools

Derbyshire LA currently provides support for children with the full range of substantial and long-term learning needs and / or disabilities, including support for children with autism, physical impairment, visual impairment, deaf or hearing impaired or with significant learning or social-emotional needs.

Future Action - Development

- To develop strategies to use the SEN progression guidance to support schools in having challenging expectations for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- To implement outcomes of Derbyshire’s SEN review.
- To implement outcomes stemming from the Green paper reforms.

Future Action - Maintenance

- To offer training for schools and governing bodies on the disability element of the Equality Act 2010 and accessibility planning.
- To raise awareness of the contents of the Inclusive Schooling document about reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.

7. Views of those consulted during the development of the strategy

Consultation Process

The consultation will be through an online DCC website based consultation and a consultation meeting held at County Hall Matlock. Partners consulted will include:

- Parents
- Children and young people (this will be through voluntary organisations and the Youth Council)
- Disabled people
- Nursery, infant, junior, primary, secondary and special schools

- Diocesan Authorities
- Children’s Centres
- Learning and Skills Councils
- Voluntary Organisations
- Health Partners

The responses to the consultation will be reviewed and reported to the Cabinet Member for Education so that a final version of the strategy can be approved for publication as soon as possible thereafter.

8. Implementing the Duty

- The Equality Act 2010 includes a legal duty that requires all maintained primary and secondary schools to take proactive steps to ensure their disabled pupils, staff and governors, parents/carers and other people using the school are treated equally.
- The duty is about ensuring that equality for disabled children and adults is part of the culture of schools in practical and demonstrated ways. Disability equality will need to be at the forefront of policy development.
- Prime responsibility for making sure the duty is met lies with school governing bodies. However, in practice the Head teacher and senior staff with support from staff, pupils, parents and carers, and members of the wider school community all need to play a role to ensure the duty is met.
- Further guidance on this and all other areas of disability in schools is available in the “Implementing Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years Settings” pack, which although it refers to the repealed DDA, contains helpful advice for schools in the area of disability and is still currently available on the Department for Education (DfE) website.

9. Accessibility Planning

Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

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

Schools may wish to publish a single document that contains both their access plan and scheme, or a separate plan and scheme according to what will work best for them on an individual basis. However the school may choose to present this information, the scheme and the main elements need to be distinct, easily identifiable and in one place.

B) THE MAIN PRIORITIES IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY'S STRATEGY

10. Increasing access to the curriculum for disabled pupils

The LA has a number of strategies used to support schools in increasing access for disabled pupils.

Local Authority Publications and Support.

Curriculum Access.

Descriptors:

- Derbyshire LA makes available to all via its public web site the 'Descriptors of Special Educational Need's and the "Early Years Special Educational Needs Descriptors" which give in detail the provision which all mainstream schools and early years settings are expected to make for disabled children and young people and children and young people with special educational needs at Early Years Action/ School Action or Early Years Action Plus/School Action Plus. This includes pupils with disabilities as defined by the Act.

Friendly schools files:

- Derbyshire schools have access to three curriculum support files which support the inclusion of pupils with Dyslexia, Speech and Language Difficulties and Autism in maintained schools. These files were initially distributed free to all Derbyshire schools and contain good advice and strategies for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and class teachers.

Support Groups:

There is a range of support Groups available across the LA for personnel working with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs such as:

- SENCO groups
- Autism Support Groups
- Teaching Assistant (TA) Support Groups
- Parent Support Groups and Forums
- Pupil Forums
- SEN networks for SENCOs in Early Years non-maintained settings

Derbyshire support services are involved in supporting and maintaining these groups.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Derbyshire provides CPD on issues appertaining to accessibility.

Through the course and conference planning mechanism the Special Educational Needs Training Group oversees on the quality of CPD offered in all areas of Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Multi Element Plans (MEPs)

Derbyshire has a commitment to hold Multi-Element Plans for all pupils with a Statement who are at risk of permanent exclusion from school. All agencies involved with the child are engaged to ensure that the plan is implemented and regularly reviewed.

Personal Education Plan (PEPs)

Personal Education Plans are used where a child or young person is Looked After by the local authority. In Derbyshire this pertains to children from the age of 2 if they are in a setting. These are done on a six monthly basis and all agencies involved with the young person are invited to the meeting.

Team Around the Child (TAC)

In some instances Multi Agency working arrangements will be designated a Team Around the Child Meeting.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

CAF and pre CAF are tools which may be used if a number of agencies are involved with a young person and the issues are such that a co-ordinated approach across those agencies would be beneficial.

Multi Agency Teams (MAT)

Each of the multi-agency teams will discuss issues affecting the locality. Information on MAT teams can be obtained on line at www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Autism Training Group

This training group meets three times per year to co-ordinate autism training delivered through the course and conference programme and increasingly more widely.

SEN Training Group

The co-ordination of training is led by a Senior Adviser from Schools and Learning. This group comprises representatives of all services involved in the delivery of training to schools at a county level and maintains an overview of the provision made, the requirements of schools and the quality of provision. There is a similar early years training steering group.

Moving and Handling Management Group

The Children and Younger Adults moving and handling management group consists of managers who have some involvement with children and young people who have moving and handling needs in order to offer some cohesion across services and settings.

CAYA Equalities Group

The strategic leadership of the Equalities work of Derbyshire County Council (DCC) is provided by the Corporate Equalities Leadership Group. The practitioner group is supported by a series of Departmental Equalities Steering Groups. The role of the departmental groups is to support the implementation of Equalities Improvement Planning within the departments.

Local Authority Strategic Monitoring and reporting

The Local Authority has a number of strategic routes through which it monitors the effectiveness of its provision.

Schools Monitoring and Reporting

- The progress of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Derbyshire is tracked and monitored by schools themselves through their own monitoring and review processes. This should be recorded and reported on in the school Self Evaluation (SES) if schools choose to use this format.
- Link advisers are required to ask questions relating to the progress of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils who are receiving Elective Home Education (EHE) including disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are monitored to ensure that they are receiving "suitable education".

Future Action - Development

- To further develop the role of SENCOs in line with the statutory instrument issued in September 2008 on the role of SENCOs.
- To ensure continued close monitoring of Elective Home Education.
- To develop the use of the SEN progression guidance in both the LA and in schools.
- To ensure that schools and LA officers are updated on the new OfSTED framework.
- To respond to the outcomes of Derbyshire's SEN review.

Future Action - Maintenance

To maintain the use of provision mapping to include meeting the needs of disabled children

11. Developing aspects of school improvement work:

The role of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIS) in improving access for pupils with disabilities:

- Through the Quality Development Dialogue and SES schools are required to reflect on what parents and pupils say. Schools are encouraged to have active school councils and this is reported on in the School Improvement Review Record.
- Self-Evaluation is central to all discussion Education Improvement staff have with their schools and all link advisers have had training with reference to the Quality Development Dialogue process focus on vulnerable pupils. All training on vulnerable groups has been delivered by current OfSTED inspectors. Education Improvement staff have a number of tools they can use to inform discussions and support schools. The SEN progression Guidance will contribute towards these discussions.

The role of other LA personnel

Other LA personnel may be involved in School Improvement work through the Special Educational Needs process and Statutory Review of Statements of Special Educational Needs.

Future Action - Development:

- To ensure that internal links with other services with regard to the roles of the wider team from the Children and Younger Adults Department (CAYA) in support and challenge for vulnerable groups are secure and embedded.
- To develop monitoring mechanisms to assess impact of strategies already in place.

12. Support to curriculum development work:

Curriculum support models

The School Improvement Review record (SIRR) requires schools to reflect on the provision it makes for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and the impact of that provision.

General Advice from other LA teams to support inclusion:

- The LA maintains a policy on the administration of medicines to children and young people. The LA recommends that all schools and early years' settings follow the guidance as set out in the DfES publication Ref 1448-2005DCL-EN issued in March 2005 called Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings.
- Health Care plans for pupils who receive additional funding jointly from the LA and Health are monitored by the Local Inclusion Officers.

- For general advice on accessible toilets and other physical access issues, the Accessibility Checklist (available on Dnet) should be used.
- Information on access for children and young people with sensory or physical needs can be accessed through Call Derbyshire on 08456 058058.
- Information on access to Derbyshire County Council Offices for disabled students and students with special educational needs and their families available at www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Children's Centres

There are now 54 children's centres in Derbyshire. Their services are aimed particularly at children aged under five years and their families. Derbyshire children's centres are committed to working with and improving outcomes for disabled children and children with special educational needs. Our aim is for all DCC children's centres to be fully accessible. Venues of Derbyshire Children's Centres can be found at www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Impartial support for parents of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs is available via:

Derby & Derbyshire Parent Partnership Service
 c/o Chesterfield Register Office
 New Beetwell Street
 Chesterfield
 S40 1QJ
 Tel; 01629 533660
 Fax 01246 273155

Email Mail: parent.partnership@derbyshire.gov.uk

Website: www.derbyshireparentpartnership.co.uk

13. Improvements to the physical environment of schools

Development of an approach that uses capital funding strategically over time to improve access across all schools:

- It is recognised that there is a variation in the quality of school premises and the nature of "reasonable adjustment" will therefore differ from building to building. The Authority's aim is to continue to direct funding where it can make the most difference in the shortest time, whilst all schools for which the Authority is responsible fall within the Authority's longer-term strategy for improving access in schools.
- A pupil based approach to physical adaptations of buildings will continue in response to the needs of individual disabled/SEN pupils through identification by specialist advisory teachers and schools.
- All major capital projects funded through the Authority comply with Part M of the building regulations and incorporate additional facilities for disabled pupils in accordance with advice received from the specialist support services for disabled pupils.

- As part of the Authority's strategy, disability access audits were completed in 2009 for all schools and were incorporated into the Asset Management Plan (AMP) record for all schools. This information informs accessibility planning for both schools and the Authority; in particular it is intended that this data will assist the Authority, as funding becomes available, in identifying priorities as part of a continuing programme of improvements.

Provision of advice and guidance to schools:

- As part of the guidance notes on Devolved Formula Capital, schools have been reminded of the duty to prepare an Accessibility Plan for increasing, over time, accessibility for disabled pupils. Although the Authority takes a strategic approach to increase disabled access to schools through its Capital Programme, schools must also consider what can be done to improve the physical environment of the school within devolved resources available to them.
- An audit of accessibility has been completed for every school and capital improvements have been identified and funded in Enhanced Resource Schools.
- It is emphasised that any new build must comply with the latest building regulations and be physically accessible to disabled pupils. Schools are required to obtain the Authority's approval before undertaking any capital projects. They do this by submitting project approval forms to CAYA Development. Submission of project approval forms ensure that both Development Contact Officers and Local Area Surveyors are aware of all capital schemes and that they comply with all necessary regulations.

Future Action:

To support schools in making reasonable adjustments from their normally available resources.

15. Improving the provision to disabled pupils of information that is provided in writing to pupils who are not disabled

- Guidance for schools on providing information for disabled pupils in schools is posted on Derbyshire's Schools Extranet. *Advisory teachers* for pupils who are visually impaired, deaf and hearing impaired or who have autism are able to offer specialist advice and support to schools on how to modify written information by conversion to Braille, signing, use of texting or tape recording.
- Close collaboration with members of the Accessibility group by Derbyshire's Parent Partnership organisation to produce information and resources ensures that parents have a voice in developing information systems.

Future Action:

To ensure that disabled pupils are consulted about how and in what format they wish to receive information.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

16. The Planning Process

Involvement of Elected Members

The Elected Members will take responsibility by approving the draft strategy for consultation and considering the responses before it is issued in a final form.

Review and revision

The content of the strategy will be reviewed by the Accessibility working group, comprising representatives from a range of education professionals and planning officers.

The group will meet three times a year to monitor and review the progress in implementing the strategy and its action plan. This group will also make recommendations for revisions to the plan.

Evaluation

The Accessibility working group will evaluate the Strategy at the end of the three year cycle.

Data from schools

The Authority will collect data via school self-evaluation records and through monitoring visits from the Local Inclusion Officers.

Co-ordination:

- The accessibility strategy is co-ordinated with the Derbyshire Equality Scheme which states that the LA will improve the condition and accessibility of other educational buildings.
- The accessibility strategy has links with the Special Educational Needs strategy which states that the LA will monitor the percentage of schools:
 - with wheel chair accessibility to all school areas.
 - with audio sound systems
 - which have been adapted to meet the needs of pupils with visual impairment.

Through the Accessibility group the Authority will continue to support schools in:

- drawing up and maintaining Accessibility Plans.

- setting priorities to bring all schools up to the highest standard for accessibility.

Joint working with other agencies:

In creating the accessibility strategy the Authority has consulted its partners in health about the number of children who are known to them who have disabilities and will enter education during the life of the strategy.

The action plan:

The following action plan has been produced to accompany the 2012-15 Accessibility strategy. It aims to:

- set targets for meeting the priorities identified in this strategy
- show how resources are to be allocated (human resources or funding) for different elements of the work
- clarify responsibilities and timescales and have outcomes with performance criteria where relevant

Future Action - Maintenance

To develop, maintain, monitor and evaluate the action plan.

17. Accessibility of the strategy itself

- The strategy will be publicised through a variety of County based publications and newsletters. .
- It will be available on the County website www.derbyshire.gov.uk
- It will remain as web content for the duration of its life.
- The consultation will be conducted via email and the schools' extranet and through a consultation meeting held at County Hall Matlock.
- The strategy will be made available in other formats if the Authority is requested to do so.
- Particular attention has been paid to: readability; explanation of jargon, acronyms and layout. This will be tested during consultation.

Abstract from the Equality Act 2010

SCHEDULE 10

ACCESSIBILITY FOR DISABLED PUPILS

Accessibility strategies

1

A local authority in England and Wales must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare:

- (a) an accessibility strategy;
- (b) further such strategies at such times as may be prescribed.

2

An accessibility strategy is a strategy for, over a prescribed period:

- (a) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- (b) 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 benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools;
- (c) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The Action plans in this section are at Font 11 to reduce space – if they are required in a larger format please contact: lyn.short@derbyshire.gov.uk

LA ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN - APRIL 2012 – MARCH 2015

TARGET	LEAD OFFICER RESP.	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
To liaise with the Information Unit in relation to the analysis of outcomes for pupils with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and continue to develop the working below age related expectations Data Project.	ME	April 2013 April 2014 April 2015	
To develop strategies to use the SEN progression guidance to support schools in having challenging expectations for pupils with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs	ME	July 2014	
To utilise the school improvement toolkit, to reflect best practice in improving access to the curriculum for pupils with disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs	ME	September 2014	
To plan enhanced resource secondary provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Tibshelf, to follow on from primary enhanced provision for ASD at Pilsley Primary School.	LS	September 2014	
To further develop the role of subject leaders/SENCOs in line with			

TARGET	LEAD OFFICER RESP.	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	PROGRESS
the statutory instrument issued in September 2008 on the role of SENCOs.	ME	September 2013 September 2014	
To ensure that schools and LA officers are updated on the new OFSTED inspection framework and the place of pupils with disabilities and / or SEN within it.	ME	January 2013	
To promote consultation with disabled pupils to ensure that they are effectively involved in the planning for their learning and provision for their progress.	PT	January 2014	
To maintain and progress Parent Forums.	OP	On-going until April 2015	
To respond to the outcomes of the review of SEN in Derbyshire	Joint responsibility	September 2013	
To provide training to schools as required regarding accessibility planning as described in the Equalities Act 2010	PT and the LIO service	On-going until April 2015	
To be abreast of legal requirements in relation to accessibility in academies	LS. PT.	On-going until April 2015	