



BYRCHALL HIGH SCHOOL

Access Initiative & Strategy

Introduction

Wigan Local Authority (LA) is committed to improving access to education and educational achievement for disabled students over the coming years so that all students can benefit from equality of opportunity and look forward to full participation in society.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) has introduced new duties for all LAs and schools in relation to disabled students and prospective students. The main duties are not to treat disabled students less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage (information about SENDA can be found at Appendix A).

LAs and schools also have a planning duty, under which they are required to prepare accessibility strategies and accessibility plans in order to increase the accessibility for disabled students over time. This planning duty requires both the LA and schools to improve access for disabled students in a planned and strategic way. With LA support, many schools across Wigan already provide for the additional needs of disabled students with Special Educational Needs and additional needs; the planning duties incorporated in SENDA legislation will ensure that equality of access and opportunity can be offered to all students.

The LA's strategy to increase accessibility is not an isolated approach; it has direct links to the LA's Curriculum Policy (Appendix B) for SEN, to Asset Management Plans and it complements and will enhance to work undertaken during the review of specialist provision (Appendix C) SEN training programmes and the overall work of the EDP.

The Legal Position: Statutory Responsibilities for the LA and Schools

From April 2003, all LAs have a legal duty to prepare an accessibility strategy for the schools for which they are responsible.

From April 2003, all maintained schools must produce their own accessibility plans. This responsibility lies with the governing body in the case of maintained schools. Wigan LA will produce guidance and model access policies for all schools to adapt and adopt as the governors and senior managers of the school see fit. (Model policies can be found in Appendix F). Training will be provided for governors, headteachers and other staff in schools. (outline of training opportunities can be found in Appendix G).

An accessibility strategy and plan should aim to:

- a) Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;

- b) Improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- c) Improve the delivery to disabled students of written information which is provided to students who are not disabled.

Accessibility plans must be in writing and must be publicly available as follows:

- a) Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their annual report to parents;
- b) LAs are required to make their strategies available to interested parties.

OFSTED inspections after April 2003 will include judgements of how well the LA and schools have discharged their responsibilities with regard to the preparation, publication, consultation, implementation and review of accessibility strategy and plans.

LAs and schools are required to start formulating strategies and plans from September 2002 and have written strategies and plans in place by April 2003. These initial strategies and plans should run for an initial period of 3 years until April 2006. Plans may well be incorporated into existing plans such as the LA's Educational Development Plans and School's Improvement Plans.

The Inclusion Context

In November 2002, the Department for Education and Science published guidance for schools and LAs on inclusion ('Inclusive Schooling – Children with Special Educational Needs'). The guidance contains practical advice on the operation of the new inclusion framework and suggests the following principles for an inclusive education service:

- Inclusion is a process by which schools, local authorities and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include pupils.
- With the right training, strategies and support nearly all children with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.
- An inclusive education service offers excellence and choice and incorporates the views of parents and children.
- The interests of all students must be safeguarded.
- Schools, LAs and others should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.
- All children should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.
- Mainstream education will not always be right for every child all of the time. Equally, just because mainstream education may not be right at a particular stage, it does not prevent the child from being included successfully at a later stage.

The guidance goes on to suggest that schools and local authorities which are successful in including students who have special educational needs, demonstrate an approach to inclusion which is part of an overall improvement strategy based on the development of:

- a) An inclusive ethos;
- b) A broad and balanced curriculum for all students;
- c) Systems for early identification of barriers to learning and participation; and
- d) High expectations and suitable targets for all children.

The Planning Duty

The LA will plan to improve accessibility under each of the three strands of accessibility:

- a) Improved access to the physical environment;
- b) Improved access to the curriculum;
- c) Improved access to written communication.

a) improvement of the physical environment of schools with the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and associated services.

Overall aim:

The LA will develop a system of assessing and improving the accessibility of the physical environments of all schools across the Borough. Access Initiative funding will be used to support an increasing proportion of students with disabilities being educated in their local mainstream schools.

In order to achieve this aim, the LA will:

- Initiate an access/disability survey of the physical environment of all schools, which will be completed within a three year rolling programme.
- Develop criteria which will be consulted upon for determining how access initiative funding can be distributed to schools in a fair way.
- Ensure that the distribution of funding to improve school's accessibility supports the LA's plan for an area-based model of provision for additional needs.
- Develop current joint planning with other agencies to provide more effective services for children and young people. Joint planning with Health and Social Services will maximise education/health links when planning and refurbishing school premises. This will include the development of a multi-agency identification and referral tracking system.
- Ensure that decisions arising from the ongoing review of school provision benefits from the access strategy, particularly when new build of major adaptations are involved.
- Ensure the LA's Statement of Priorities for all LA buildings under the School Organisation Plan is informed by the LA's Access and Inclusion Strategies.

The planning duty under this heading includes improvements to the physical environment of the school, and the provision of physical aids to education. These might include fitting ramps and handrails, widening doorways, creating toilets with disabled access and changing facilities. Physical aids to education might include ICT equipment, specialist desks, chairs or keyboards. Improved access might also be achieved by changing the layout and organisation of rooms or the reallocation of specialist rooms.

b) Improvement of access to the curriculum

Overall aim:

The LA will provide ongoing support to all schools in order to raise awareness of access issues and to develop curriculum policies on disability equality within the framework of the Foundation Stage, National Curriculum and Wigan LA's Curriculum Statement.

In order to achieve this aim, the LA will:

- Develop and promote a model for self-evaluation for schools to consider their own levels of inclusion and accessibility.
- Develop LA models of teaching and learning that ensure all pupils have access to the curriculum.
- Use an area-based model of provision to deliver ongoing disability awareness training.
- Use the expertise of national voluntary organisations to improve understanding and responses to access issues in all schools.
- Ensure that good practice is shared between all providers.

The planning duty under this heading includes all aspects of the curriculum and the wider curriculum and activities in the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities and school visits.

c) Improved access to written communication

Overall aim:

The LA will provide ongoing support in order to improve the range and quality of written materials available to disabled pupils.

In order to achieve this the LA will:

- Provide information to all governing bodies and schools about the full range of services the LA can provide together with available systems for converting information into alternative formats.
- Make information available in a variety of ways – through written communication to all schools on the LA and Council website.
- Implement a plan to ensure it can fulfil the requirements of the British Sign Language Charter.
- Ensure that good practice is shared between all providers.

The planning duty under this heading includes school prospectuses, information about school events, timetables, textbooks. Information required should be made available within a reasonable time and should take account of students' disabilities and students' and their parents' preferred formats.

Proposed Criteria for Determining Allocation of Schools Access Initiative Funding

The LA will undertake a rolling programme of access/disability surveys across all schools over a three-year period. It is expected that the surveys will give a comprehensive report of each school's level of access, the cost of making the school fully accessible and a list of prioritised actions for the school and LA to consider. These survey reports will be very useful in helping the LA come to decisions about spending Access Initiative funding with best value principles in mind.

Buildings issues will not be the only factor in allocating funding for access work, however. The criteria that will be considered in determining which schools are made more accessible is included as Appendix E. This is based on local need, supplemented by suggested DfE criteria. Schools will be given regular updates on information used by the LA. Decisions about specific allocations of funding will be made by a group drawn from the LA Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (ISSG), and will include officers and Headteachers. The LA will link the access strategy closely to the area model of inclusion, and will seek to provide equity of choice for parents and students across the Borough wherever possible.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Access Strategy

Nationally, the role of OfSTED in the monitoring and evaluating the appropriateness of the LA strategy and the impact it has on schools will be most significant. In addition, at local level, the impact of the access strategy will be monitored and evaluated in relation to the targets and goals agreed in the strategy. There will be an annual review of progress against targets, which will be monitored by the Inclusion Strategy Steering Group (ISSG), a working group of the LA's Educational Development Plan. A summary of this evaluation will be shared with all providers and other interested parties.

Resources

The LA has several different sources of funding which can be used in the implementation of the access strategy. The DfE has used a formula allocation to provide each LA with specific Schools Access Initiative funding. The LA may receive formula capital funding for school building projects, including those addressing barriers to access. Both the LA and schools have money available for SEN, Inclusion and Disability. Most of this money is delegated to schools and is the major source of funding for training governors, teachers, teaching assistants and other staff. In addition, schools can use their delegated budget, including devolved capital funding for disability access.

A summary of funding currently available to the LA is contained in Appendix H.

Consultation Process

In order to consult as widely as possible on the LA's Access Strategy, copies of the draft Access Strategy have been distributed to:

- All schools within the LA;
- Trustees of all schools within the LA (dioceses and faith organisations).

In addition, the LA has consulted with:

- Health and Social Services colleagues;
- Early Years Development and Childcare Committee;
- Local voluntary organisations, including parents and carers groups;
- Representatives of LA Education Plan Working Groups;
- Inclusion Strategy Steering Group;
- Improving School Premises Working Group;
- All centrally employed staff, including Link and Support Teachers, Educational Psychologists and School Improvement Officers.

In order to publicise the strategy, copies of the draft strategy are available to members of the public through council offices and local libraries. It is posted on the Wigan Council Website, at www.wiganmbc.gov.uk

If you have any comments, suggestions or concerns about this strategy, please share them with the LA via the Director of Education, Gateway House, Standishgate, Wigan. WN1 1AE.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Introduction

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 amends the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and introduces new legal duties for schools relating to all students or prospective students with disabilities.

The legislation, combined with the SEN framework and new planning duties for schools and Local Education Authorities (LAs) aims to improve educational choice and opportunity for disabled children and children with special educational needs and their parents.

From September 2002, it will be unlawful for bodies responsible for the provision of school education to discriminate against disabled students and prospective students in the provision of education and associated services in schools, and in admissions and exclusions.

In English maintained schools, the governing body is ultimately responsible for the duty not to discriminate.

Who has rights under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)?

People who are defined as having rights under the DDA, have a wide range of potential needs and requirements. For example, they include children with mobility impairments, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, AIDS, asthma and progressive conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

How is this different from ‘Special Education Needs’?

The Education Act 1996 says, ‘a child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision’. This definition includes disabled children needing any special education provision. However, not all children who are defined as having a disability under the DDA will have special educational needs. For example, a child with severe asthma may not be identified as having special educational needs, but may well be defined as having a disability under the DDA.

How does the Act define ‘discrimination’?

The DDA makes it unlawful to:

- Treat disabled students less favourably for a reason relating to disability.
- Fail to take ‘reasonable steps’ to ensure that disabled students or prospective students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The duty to take reasonable steps is a duty owed to all disabled children, not simply to individual students or prospective students, and is therefore ‘anticipatory’. Schools should consider the broad range of needs and requirements of their students, current and future, and make changes accordingly. They should not wait until a particular disabled child seeks admission to the school.

This duty does not, however, require schools to make adjustments to physical features, or require schools to provide ‘auxiliary aids and services’ such as sign language interpreters or information in formats such as Braille or audiotape. These are addressed by the new Planning Duties and the special educational needs framework respectively.

The duty to take reasonable steps refers primarily to the policies, procedures and practices of the school.

What steps do reasonable bodies need to take to meet the disability discrimination duties?

Responsible bodies are liable for acts of discrimination in schools. If a claim of discrimination is made against a school, responsible bodies, in their defence, will need to demonstrate that they had taken all reasonable steps to avoid that discrimination occurring. They should check that schools are continually reviewing their policies, practices and procedures on a continuing basis to ensure that disabled children will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

In considering what reasonable steps the school might take, it can take account of:

- The need to maintain academic and other standards
- The financial resources available
- The practicality of taking particular steps
- The health and safety of the disabled student or others in the school
- The interests of other students who may be admitted to the school, including issues of disruption.

There is only one justification for failing to take reasonable steps. It must be a reason which is material to the circumstances of the case and substantial. In other words, it is more than minor or trivial.

Responsible bodies will want to ensure that employees and those working within the school's authority:

- Do not act in such a way as to render the responsible body liable to a claim for discrimination
- Do receive appropriate guidance and support the responsible body in meeting their duties to students.

It would be advisable for all school handbooks to contain the above as statements.

Governing bodies, in carrying out their strategic role, should ensure that someone is delegated by the head to manage these responsibilities on a day-to-day basis.

Responsible bodies are also encouraged to secure training concerning the duties and disability equality training in general for all staff.

The DRC has published good practice guidance in spring/summer 2002.

Knowing that a student has a disability

Information shared between parents, students and teachers may help the responsible body to avoid less favourable treatment. All reasonable steps should be taken to find out whether prospective or existing students have a disability. All students, or their parents, may be asked upon admission of the student, whether they have a disability and how the school can ensure that they are not discriminated against. Some parents may wish to keep the information confidential. In such cases, a governing body may be less well placed to meet its duties. Where a school could not have known that a child had a disability, and the child is discriminated against, the school can assert this 'lack of knowledge' in its defence.

Making school buildings and the curriculum more accessible

SENDA introduces new planning duties, requiring LA's to draw up accessibility strategies and schools to draw up accessibility plans to improve access over time. Their plans must state:

- Improvements in access to the curriculum
- Physical improvements to increase access
- Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students

The Schools Access Initiative (SAI) is investing £70million in 2002-3 and a further £100million the following year. Schools should consider how they might improve physical access to school buildings during general modernisation and refurbishment work and ensure that new buildings are accessible – this will frequently be cheaper and more effective than adapting buildings at a later stage. Additionally, schools should consider how they use buildings available to them. For example, could all class-specific classrooms such as those for sciences, ICT and art, be on the ground floor? Schools also have duties under Part III of the DDA where they offer any service to the public, including adjustments to improve physical access from 2004, and they have duties to employees under Part 2 of the DDA.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) will be issuing separate guidance on these duties by Spring 2002.

Redress and Conciliation

Parents can claim that their child has been discriminated against on the grounds of their disability. Most claims of disability discrimination concerning admissions, exclusions and in education and associated services will be heard by Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals (SENDIST). Exclusion Appeal Claims Panels will hear cases relating to permanent exclusions. Admission appeal panels will hear claims relating to admittance refusals to maintained schools and City Academies.

The DRC will provide an independent conciliation service for disputes arising from schools' duties under the Act. The time limit for applying to the SENDIST is extended by two months if the claim is first brought to conciliation.

For further information and advice contact:

DRC Helpline
Freepost MID 02164
Stratford upon Avon
CV37 9BR

Telephone: 08457 622 633
Fax: 08457 778 878
Textphone: 08457 622 644

E-mail: ddahlep@stra.sitel.co.uk
Website: www.drc-gb.org

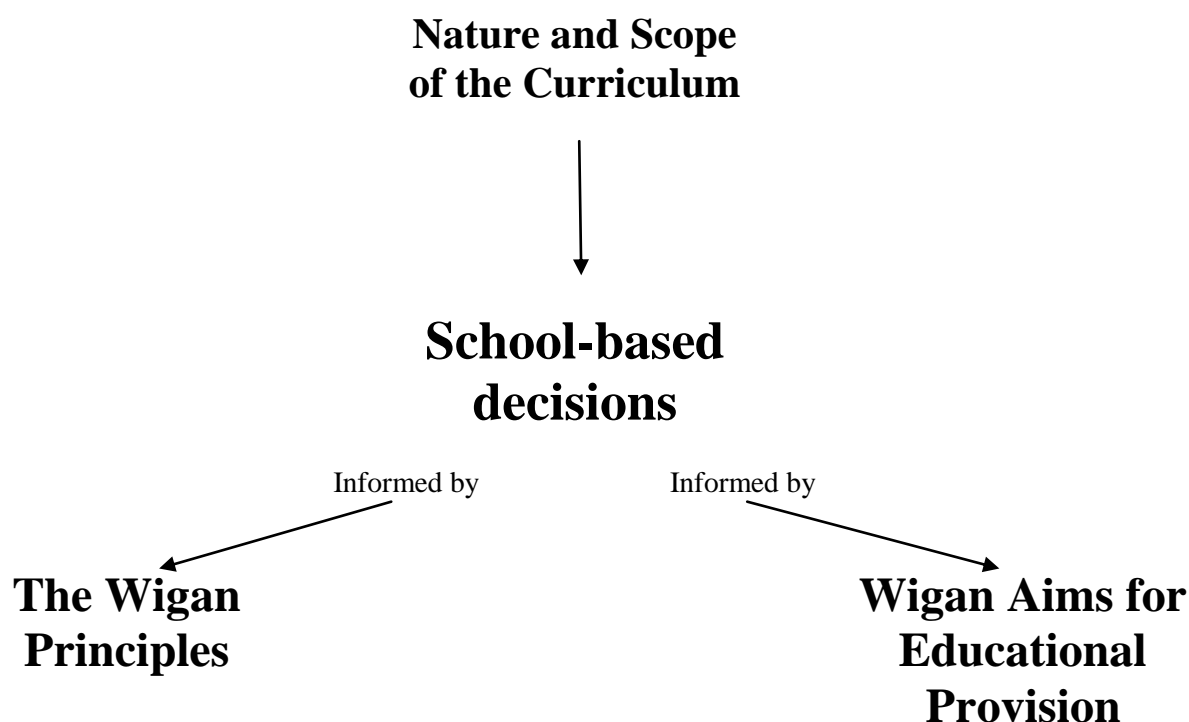
Wigan LA Curriculum Statement

Nature and Scope of the Curriculum

A school's curriculum consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within its organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, spiritual, moral, cultural, social and physical development of its students. It includes not only the formal programme of lessons, but also the 'informal' programme of extra-curricular activities as well as those features which produce the school's 'ethos', such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way the school sets about its task and the way in which it is organised and managed. Teaching and learning styles strongly influence the curriculum and in practice they cannot be separated from it. Since students learn from all these things, it needs to be ensured that all are consistent in supporting the school's intentions.

The curriculum should aim to be broad by bringing all students into contact with an agreed range of areas of learning and experiences. It should also be balanced in that it allows the adequate development of each area. In addition, each major component should have breadth, balance and relevance and should incorporate a progression in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. The various curricular areas should reinforce and complement one another so that the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes developed in one area may be put to use and provide insight in another, thus increasing the students' understanding, competence and confidence. The curriculum should also prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

In developing the curriculum, each school must take into account the general statutory requirements for the curriculum, specific statutory requirements, as well as other requirements related to key stages. It is the school's responsibility to construct, review and be accountable for their own curriculum. However, when considering the nature and scope of their curriculum, schools should take into account the Wigan principles and aims for educational provision, which should underpin their decisions as shown in the diagram below.



The Wigan Principles

The values and principles that should inform curriculum planning and design are as follows:

- Education must raise people's self-esteem, open their minds and widen horizons;
- People are entitled to an education which makes them aware of their potential and enables them to achieve at their highest possible level;
- Education must respond to the needs of all individuals;
- Education must look forward and prepare people for a constantly changing future;
- Education must develop a shared understanding of local, national and international contexts;
- Education must free the individual to enable the expression of human uniqueness;
- Education must respect the rights of the individual and develop knowledge and understanding between individuals, ethnic and cultural groups;
- Education should equip people with the desire and skills to participate in a democratic society; and
- Education must encourage awareness of the different but valued contributions that individuals make to society.

Wigan Aims for Educational Provision

The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all students to learn and to achieve. It should:

- Develop students' enjoyment of and commitment to learning and achieving;
- Encourage and stimulate the best possible progress and highest attainment for all students;
- Build on students' strengths and interest and develop their confidence and their capacity to learn and work independently and collaboratively;
- Enable students too think creatively, critically and to solve problems;
- Provide rich and varied contexts for learning;
- Allow students to give a personal response to a range of experiences and ideas;
- Enable students to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities; and
- Enable students to appreciate the relevance of their achievements to life and society outside school.

Appendix C

Wigan LA Review of Specialist Provision

Following an informal consultation process, running in 2003, attention will be focused on students with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and complex medical needs. The outcomes of this consultation may be very pertinent to the future allocation of access initiative funding, particularly if future provision involves more students with a wider range of special educational needs being educated in their local mainstream schools.

Appendix D

Wigan LA Area Inclusion Model for Service Delivery

The delivery of support services to schools is organised on an area-based system, based on the Borough's township model.

Multi-disciplinary teams of link teachers, sensory support teachers, behaviour support staff and educational psychologists will serve a defined geographical area of schools. Links with Social Services and Health Authority staff will also be on an area model wherever possible.

This change in service delivery will give LA staff the chance to provide support more closely tailored to the needs of individual schools and students.

Their knowledge of good inclusive practice within schools will help inform how Schools Access Initiative is allocated.

Criteria to Determine Allocation of Schools' Access Initiative

In determining allocation of access initiative funding, the LA will also take into account the criteria suggested by the DfE received in February 2003.

Criteria for support

Projects should improve access to mainstream education in one or more of the following ways:

- a) Enhanced continuation of access across nursery, primary and secondary phases in the local area.
- b) Reduced home to school travel time for students by making a local school accessible.
- c) Improved physical access to school. This may include setting down and picking up points, ramps, handrails and lifts, and improvements to escape provisions.
- d) Improved physical movement around the building, including adaptations for sensory disability such as improved colour schemes, and access to social areas, dining rooms etc.
- e) Improved access to the national curriculum, including specialist furniture such as desks, rise and fall tables, sinks and ovens; and information and communication technology equipment (both hardware and software).
- f) Improved accommodation within the building including toilets for disable students, medical rooms, and sound proofing for students with hearing disabilities.
- g) Projects should contribute to the Local Education Authority's overall strategy for increasing access and inclusion for students with special educational needs.

In considering which school or schools to select, the LA is asked to take into account the capacity of each school to take advantage of the access improvements, including the school's current SEN policy, teaching practices and ethos. It may also wish to consider the degree to which facilities may be used by the Wider community.

Monitoring

The LA will be asked to provide a short report on the use and benefits of Schools Access Initiative 2003-2004 allocations at the end of the financial year.

Guidance and Model Plan for Schools

Introduction

From September 2002, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) will outlaw discrimination by schools and LAs against either current or prospective disabled students in their access to education. New duties for schools and LAs are intended to build on and complement existing good practice. One of the new duties is to plan how schools and LAs can increase over time the accessibility of schools for disabled students.

Schools do not need to undertake a separate planning process to fulfil the requirements of DfES guidance. Planning to increase access should become part of the overall school planning process, and is best dovetailed into the school improvement plan. When reporting to parents in their Annual Report, governors might include a new section on access planning within their SEN reports.

Schools that are already inclusive, and are ensuring equality of access should find these new duties very manageable.

Statutory Responsibilities

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) places a duty on all schools and LAs to plan to increase the accessibility of schools over time to ensure that disabled students have increased access to the curriculum.

Accessibility plans have to be in writing, and must be available to any interested parties.

Schools and the LA should have their first plans in place from April 2003; these will run from 2003 until March 2006. Schools and the LA to implement, review and if necessary, revise their plans over this three year period.

Monitoring

OFTED inspections from April 2003 will consider each schools' Accessibility Plans as part of the schools overall response to the inclusion agenda.

The Secretary of State can intervene where an LA or school is not complying with the planning duty and can direct an LA or school to do so.

The LA will extend its local complaints procedure to cover its access strategy; it would be helpful if schools extend their own complaints procedures to cover their own school access plan.

Creating an Access Plan

Each of the three strands of access – improving physical access, extending access to the curriculum and providing differentiated information needs to be addressed in the school plan. As the access plan is initially set to run over three years, schools need to consider which targets and goals to prioritise as short term and which should rightly be considered long term.

If the school is large enough to warrant a planning group to lead the access plan, the group should have the capacity to reflect all aspects of school life. In most primary schools, the senior management team access issues may become the responsibility of the senior management team. The SENCO and governor with responsibility for SEN might be part of the planning group, but it needs to be recognised that access is not solely an SEN issue. It may be useful for schools initially to use their existing governor committees to consider the three separate strands. Planning for access should over time, become part of the school's general approach to planning, and be included in plans related to capital works and premises management, the curriculum, staff training and links with parents and the community.

The school should make best use of available expertise. Disabled students and their parents, specialist teachers, local voluntary and disability organisations might be able to help identify barriers, which prevent disabled students from pursuing their education in mainstream schools. The LA will provide basic training to support schools in the development of their access plans (see Appendix G), and will provide a series of training opportunities beginning in Summer term 2003.

Auditing Current Provision

Each school in the LA will be subject to a disability access survey over the first three years of the LA's Access Strategy. The information generated by this survey will be extremely useful to schools in determining the exact level of accessibility and the barriers posed by their own school building. Schools should undertake an audit of their own current provision and identify barriers to inclusion. This should include consideration of the physical environment, the provision of auxiliary services and aids, teaching and learning strategies, staff training and the provision of written information for students. Accessibility should be considered within the context of the culture and ethos of the whole school.

The DfE suggests using the following checklist in conducting the school audit: (Accessible Schools. Guidance 2002)

Identifying Barriers to Access: A Checklist

This list should help you identify barriers to access that exist in schools. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to encourage a flexible approach to the further questioning of the accessibility of your school.

Section 1: How does your school deliver the curriculum?

Question	Yes	No
Do you ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training to teach and support disabled students?		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled students?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all students to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to student diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are students encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled students, for example lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled students to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled students who cannot engage in particular activities, for example, some forms of exercise in physical education?		
Do you provide access to computer technology appropriate for students with disabilities?		
Are school visits, including overseas visits, made accessible to all students irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all students?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		

Section 2: Is your school designed to meet the needs of all students?

Question	Yes	No
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities, classrooms, the assembly hall, canteen, library, gymnasium and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms – allow access for all students?		
Can students who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities and showers?		
Are pathways of travel around the school site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?		
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform ALL students, including students with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		
Are non-visual guides used, to assist people to use buildings including lifts with tactile buttons?		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled students with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which students should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired students such as considering a room’s acoustics and noisy equipment?		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?		

Section 3: How does your school deliver materials in other formats?

Question	Yes	No
Do you provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, on audiotape or in Braille for students and prospective students who may have difficulty with standard forms of printed information?		
Do you ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities, e.g. by reading aloud overhead projections and describing diagrams?		
Do you have the facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?		
Do you ensure that staff are familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?		

Identifying Actions

After undertaking the audit, schools should decide which actions to prioritise. All the necessary adaptations to the physical environment and to current practice should be listed, together with realistic cost estimates. Adaptations might include staff training, refurbishment and maintenance, minor and major capital expenditure.

Schools are required to show how they will resource their access plan. Expenditure should be incorporated into current and future budget commitments. Schools should consider how their delegated budgets could be used to fund their access plan. For more expensive adaptations and improvements, schools need to liaise with the LA to be considered for Schools Access Initiative funding.

Goals and Targets

As with all aspects of the school improvement plan, the school's goals and targets to improve accessibility should be specific enough to be measured. Time scales and evaluation strategies should also be included to enable the school to judge how effective the plans have been and to review and alter its plan accordingly.

Publicising the school plan

Maintained schools have a duty to publish information about their accessibility plans in their governors' report to parents, and the DfE recommends that schools reproduce the full accessibility plan in the governors' report. It is good practice for schools to have their plan available on request, and they may be asked to provide the plan in alternative formats. Prospective parents may request a copy of the plan.

Monitoring and evaluation of the plan

Schools are required to keep their access plan under review, and as with all aspects of the school improvement plan, to revise it as necessary. The success of an effective plan to improve access might be measured by a number of different changes and improvements within the school. The DfE suggests the following:

- Greater satisfaction of disabled students and their parents with the provision made for them;
- Evidence of the greater involvement of disabled students in the full life of the school (for example, participation in after-school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities and on school visits);
- Observable changes in staff confidence in teaching and supporting disabled students with a range of needs;
- Audits carried out on the main curriculum areas;
- Progressive planned improvements to the physical environment of the school;

As planning to increase the accessibility develops across the LA, the effectiveness of school's access plans will help the LA determine how best to allocate Schools Access Initiative.

From April 2003, OfSTED inspection teams will consider school access plans in reaching judgements about the school.

Model School Access Plan: April 2003 – April 2006

Each school will have its own priorities depending upon the known needs of its students, the inclusivity of its curriculum and the current and potential accessibility of the school site.

This model plan is for guidance only.

Targets included:

To improve physical access for disabled students

- Actions:
- Audit Key Stages/Departments for physical accessibility
 - Audit school site – entrances, shared spaces such as corridors, halls, toilets, outside grounds for physical access.
 - Agree date for Disability Access Survey with LA.
 - Review any proposed refurbishment, internal and external decoration with regard to access issues.

To improve access to the curriculum and related services: increasing participation of disabled students in school life

- Actions:
- Ensure students already in the school have appropriate access to the curriculum and other school services. Check extra-curricular activities, school visits, etc.
 - Look at needs of next intake into school wherever possible – use LA information systems, review needs of new intake.
 - Provide appropriate training for teaching, classroom support staff and other staff in the school re: disability awareness training.
 - Ensure disability awareness is incorporated into the curriculum for all students.

To improve written communication

- Actions:
- Audit needs of current school population
 - Become aware of the services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats
 - Ensure all students new to the school are given information in an appropriate form.

Termly summary over 3 years – schools should include brief report on Access in Annual Report to Parents
 (1) – Access to the Curriculum (2) – Physical Access (3) – Access to Information

	Summer Term 2003	Autumn Term 2003	Spring Term 2004
1	Ensure staff/governors attend LA Introduction Training for Access, and further Disability Training by voluntary agencies organised by the LA.	Draw up training plan for Access linked to Disability Training for all staff/governors – (resourced from Standards Fund (SEN)). Ensure access to curriculum becomes part of remit for governors' curriculum committee.	Ongoing training for staff: consideration of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Audit school's curriculum for disability awareness/disability issues.
2	Undertake DfE Audit with staff or working group. Prioritise issues from the Audit for each strand of the Access Plan.	Ensure priorities for physical access are included in remit for governors' premises/health and safety committee.	Continue to link all refurbishment and alterations within the school to access advice. (see 'Building Bulletin 94' – details in Appendix I)
3	Become informed of services available through the LA for converting written information into alternative formats.	School avails itself of information formats appropriate to new intake's needs.	Continued use of LA support and advice as appropriate.

	Summer Term 2004	Autumn Term 2004	Spring Term 2005
1	Analysis of end of year results; consideration given to access issues. Prioritise any areas for development of new teaching and learning styles. Link to on-going school developments such as Literacy/Numeracy Strategy, KS3 Strategy as applicable.	Induction training for all new staff includes access/disability training. New teaching/learning styles introduced depending upon a spring term audit. Introduction of disability awareness and disability issues into the curriculum (PSHE, RE, Drama, Literacy etc)	Continuation of analysis of teaching and learning styles and their impact on all students.
2	School contacts LA for SAI funding if students with identified disabilities are to join the school in Autumn term.	Appropriate modifications/adaptations are made to meet individual student needs.	Consideration of any further modifications as student changes year groups.
3	Audit of needs of prospective new students to the school.	New students receive school information in appropriate format.	Continued use of LA support and advice.

	Summer Term 2005	Autumn Term 2005	Spring Term 2006
1	Analyse end of year results; consideration given to access issues. Audit pupil attitudes towards disability, consider any further developments in curriculum planning.	Induction Training for all new staff includes Access/Disability Training. Ongoing curriculum developments address access issues.	Evaluation of strategies and developments.
2	Seek students' views about the effectiveness of adaptations for access. Continued evaluation by governors and SMT of impact of money spent on student access	Improvements and further modifications based on student views and ongoing audit.	Report to governors on effectiveness of Access planning.
3	Audit of needs of prospective new students to the school.	Continue to share in good practice across the LA	Ongoing development of appropriate materials.

Appendix G

Training Opportunities

Initial training sessions to raise awareness about Access issues have been held during the Spring and Summer Terms 2003. From Autumn Term 2003, the following training opportunities will be available:

Audience	Purpose
Headteachers, Senior Managers and/or Chairs of Governors	Half day – to consider school implementation of Access Plans facilitated by JMU Access Partnership: 7 th October – PDC 9 th October – PDC 5 th November – Howe Bridge Sports Centre 19 th November – PDC 14 th January – Howe Bridge Sports Centre 28 th January – PDC 4 th February – PDC 11 th February – Howe Bridge Sports Centre
SENCOs and/or other staff	1 day – Increasing Inclusion – Summer 2004 Conference, facilitated by the LA Support Services and Educational Psychologists

Wigan LA Funding Summary

<p>1</p>	<p><u>Delegated Budgets</u> Mainstream schools can use their delegated budget to improve disability access including the use of developed capital funding.</p>	<p>2002 – 2003 £120 million (approx.)</p>	<p>2003 – 2004 £133 million (approx.)</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><u>Standards Fund</u> Money is delegated to schools under the SEN and inclusion headings. This money is a key source of funding for training teachers, teaching assistants, other staff and governors.</p>	<p>2002 – 2003 £236,903 (for SEN in all schools) £783,275 (for student support in secondary schools)</p>	<p>2003 – 2004 £264,089 (for SEN in all schools)</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><u>Schools Access Initiative (SAI)</u> Which provides capital funding specifically for disability Access projects in Mainstream schools. This is an annual allocation to be spent during the appropriate financial year. The DfE has given Wigan LA permission to carry the 2002/3 budget over to 2003/4, in order that the outcomes of the current consultation on the review of specialist provision is known, and in order to match spending across the three proposed inclusion areas.</p>	<p>2002 – 2003 £454,508</p>	<p>2003 – 2004 £382,000 £279,000 – VA schools</p>

Useful Publications and Contacts

This list is not exhaustive. Many publications can be accessed or ordered through DfE and other websites as indicated.

Key documents

DfES: Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils. July 2002.
www.dfes.gov.uk/sen

Disability Rights Commission: Code of Practice for Schools. Available from DRC. Telephone: 08457 622 633. Website: www.drc-gb.org

DfES: Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs (Ref: DfES 0774/2001) published November 2001. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/sen

DfES: SEN Code of Practice 2001 and SEN Toolkit published December 2001. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.dfes.gov.uk/sbconstand

OfSTED: Evaluating Educational Inclusion – Guidance for Inspectors and Schools Ref no: HMI 235, available from www.ofsted.gov.uk Telephone: 020 7421 6800

The Stationary Office Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. £7.50 Explanatory Notes on the Act explaining what the legislation does and setting out the position before and after the Act £6.00.

Other useful publications

DfEE: National Curriculum 2000 sets out the curriculum for schools and local education authorities. Also includes a very clear section on Inclusion and an Inclusion Statement at the beginning of the document. Available from website www.nc.uk.net

DfEE/QCA: Supporting the Target Setting Process DfES Communication: 0065/2001 (Revised March 2001) Guidance for effective target setting for pupils with special educational needs 2001. Also known as the 'Pscals'. Available from DfES Publications Centre and website: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties 2001. £60. Available from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Publications PO Box 99, Sudbury, Suffolk. CO10 2SN. Tel: 01787 884 444. Website: www.qca.org.uk

Useful Websites

BECTA: British Educational Communications and Technology Agency www.becta.org.uk

Inclusion Website: <http://inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk>
(provides free catalogue of resources for teaching professionals, learners, parents and carers. Includes publications, software, hardware guidance and links to other organisations.

DRC: the Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org