

Who is this document for?

This document is for all schools that Croydon Council has responsibility for, including nurseries, pre-schools, community schools – primary and secondary - special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), as well as for parents and disabled pupils. It complies with the requirement in the Equality Act 2010 that local authorities must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare and publish an accessibility strategy setting out how they plan to increase: the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums; improving the physical environment of the schools; and the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

The Council will publish the strategy along with the action plan and keep the strategy under review.

This accessibility strategy provides a framework to help schools develop and implement their accessibility plans for disabled pupils.

Academies, free schools, independent schools and other educational settings may also find this document useful in preparing their accessibility plan.

If you find it easier to read large print, use an audio tape, Braille or need to communicate in a language other than English, please let us know -

 020 8726 6000.

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Introduction

Research evidence shows that disabled pupils have disproportionately poor educational attainment and progression to further education. To bridge the gap in educational attainment between disabled and non-disabled pupils, appropriate steps need to be taken to remove any barriers to teaching, learning and extra curricula activities in schools and other educational settings.

Schools that are accessible, enable all pupils to participate in and access all aspects of teaching and learning. Accessible education is fundamental if disabled pupils are to fulfil their educational aspiration and potential. To exclude a pupil on the basis of disability would breach the Equalities Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together the different equality legislations to provide a single framework that will be more effective at tackling disadvantage and discrimination. Schedule 10 of the Equalities 2010 Act places a statutory duty on local authorities and schools to prepare and implement accessibility strategies and plans. These are aimed at increasing the extent to which a disabled pupil can participate in the curriculum, improving the physical environment of the school to enable better use of facilities and increasing the delivery and accessibility of information.

There are links with the Children and Families Act 2014. Section 30 requires Local Authorities to publish a 'local offer' in which it sets out details of all services and provisions available to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Local Authorities and schools must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Children & Families Act 2014 – to ensure that disabled pupils receive the appropriate support and facilities they need to enable them to fulfil their educational potential. This includes making every effort to improve accessibility for disabled pupils by removing any barriers or practice that could exclude or disadvantage them within and outside the classroom.

Ensuring disabled pupils have equal access to education is not only the law, but the right thing to do. It is therefore important that schools and all other educational settings have an inclusive and integrated approach to delivering education to disabled pupils. Having an accessibility strategy and plan will play a significant role in ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

It is recognised that many schools are already undertaking accessibility planning and are providing good support and teaching to disabled pupils. However the system doesn't always work in the way it should for all disabled pupils and more needs to be done to improve their access to education not just in school but in higher and further education.

Chapter 1: Why does the Council need an accessibility strategy for schools?

In keeping with legislative requirements in schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 - a local authority must have an accessibility strategy for disabled pupils in maintained schools for which it is the responsible body. The accessibility strategy sets out ways in which the Council will ensure that disabled pupils can take part fully in the education and facilities delivered by schools; and have the right access to the curriculum, physical environment and information. The strategy is to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils.

Maintained schools include: community schools; special schools; voluntary aided schools; voluntary controlled schools; voluntary aided special schools; voluntary controlled special schools; and foundation schools where the school employs the staff and has responsibility for admissions.

It is important to note that some disabled pupils may also have special educational needs (SEN) and may be receiving support through the school-based SEN provision or an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). There is a requirement for schools to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils with or without SEN are provided with the best possible education.

Chapter 2: Definitions

Disabled person

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. A physical or mental impairment includes learning difficulties, mental health conditions, medical conditions and hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism and speech, language and communication impairments (Equality Act 2010).

All forms of physical disability, sensory impairment or learning disabilities are implied when reference is made to disabled people.

Special educational needs

A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. (Children and Families Act 2014).

Social model of disability

The Council supports the social model of disability which recognises that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. For example, lack of physical access and lack of educational opportunities can be disabling factors.

The Council looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

Chapter 3: National and Legal context

Under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 - Accessibility for disabled pupils – a local authority must, in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body, prepare and implement an accessibility strategy. The accessibility strategy which is over a prescribed period sets out a strategy for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums;
- improving the physical environment of the 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; and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

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 schools' curriculums;**
 - (b) **improving the physical environment of the 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.**
- (3) The delivery in sub-paragraph (2)(c) must be—

- (a) within a reasonable time;
 - (b) in ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.
- (4) An accessibility strategy must be in writing.
- (5) A local authority must keep its accessibility strategy under review during the period to which it relates and, if necessary, revise it.
- (6) A local authority must implement its accessibility strategy.

The Equality Act 2010 includes the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149), also referred to as the 'general duty' which applies to local authorities and schools to make sure that consideration is given to how different people will be affected by activities, helping to deliver policies and services which are efficient and effective; accessible to all; and which meet different people's needs.

The Equality Act 2010 (section 20) also imposed a duty on Local Authorities and schools to make reasonable adjustments and to take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that the school provides for pupils. This includes planning better access for disabled pupils through the provision of auxiliary aids, such as coloured overlays for dyslexic pupils, pen grips, adapted PE equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software. It is unlawful for a school to charge a pupil if they make any reasonable adjustments.

Chapter 4: Local Context

Local Authorities have the strategic lead and oversight for the education of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Local Authorities are responsible for maintained schools where funding, employment of staff and admissions is through the local authority.

Croydon Council

Croydon has the largest population of young people in London where 21.9% (81,637) of the population are aged 0 – 15 years. Table 1 below provides the percentage breakdown and types of disability in primary and secondary maintained schools.

Table 1

Primary Maintained Schools	Secondary Maintained Schools
6.9% have ASD as primary need	9.6% have ASD as primary need
2.2% have a physical disability	3.1 % have a physical disability
1.7% have a hearing impairment	1.8% have a hearing impairment
0.8% have a visual impairment	1% have a visual impairment
35.9% have a speech, language or communication difficulty	13.7% have a speech, language or communication difficulty

According to the January 2016 school census data:

- 2.8% of the school population in Croydon has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan, compared to 2.7% in Outer London and 2.8% in England.
- 11.7% of pupils in Croydon receive SEN Support compared to 10.9% in Outer London and 11.6% in England
- 12.9% of pupils in maintained primary schools have a Statement of SEN, an Education Health and Care Plan or receive SEN Support compared to 13% in Outer London and 13.4% in England
- 13.4% of pupils in maintained secondary schools have a Statement of SEN, an Education Health and Care Plan or receive SEN Support compared to 12.3% in Outer London and 12.7% in England.

Source for this information: Department for Education January School Census SFR 29-2016 published July 2016.

Croydon Council is committed to advancing equality and inclusion in everything it does. Many schools are already providing accessible education for disabled pupils. This accessibility strategy has been produced in order to continuously improve accessibility to school buildings and access to education and information for disabled pupils.

Croydon's Equality and Inclusion Policy

Croydon's accessibility strategy is in line with the Council's Equality and Inclusion Policy 2014 - 2016 which sets out our vision to create a fair society through the services we provide, the people we employ and the money we spend. This involves creating a place where people, including disabled pupils, have a sense of belonging, are united by a sense of shared values around opportunity and fairness so that everyone can lead fulfilling lives.

The strategy will enable the delivery of the following priorities:

- Make Croydon a place of opportunity and fairness by tackling inequality, disadvantage and exclusion.

- Close gaps in educational attainment by working with local businesses and community groups to enable people of all ages to reach their full potential through access to quality schools and learning.
- Provide accessible information by maintaining a record of the specific access needs of our residents and use this to provide information in alternate formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio tape etc. and offer a translation and interpretation service if requested;
- Carry out an equality analysis of all new or revised policies, procedures and practices and use this insight to deliver accessible and differentiated services

Ambitious for Croydon outcomes

The Accessibility Strategy links closely to several key strategic objectives for Croydon:

- **Growth** - To enable people of all ages to reach their potential through easy access to quality schools and learning
- **Independence** - To help families be healthy and resilient and able to maximise their life chances and independence
- **Enabling** - To be innovative and enterprising in using available resources to change lives for the better.

Croydon Strategic Partnership

Achieving Access for All - Making services accessible. Croydon Council has produced a guide to making information and services accessible to disabled people. It brings together in one place a range of practical information that will help to make services accessible for disabled people. The accessibility strategy is consistent with the Council's general equality duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Chapter 5: Accessibility Strategy for Croydon Schools

Access to learning should not be restricted by a pupil's disability. Improving accessibility for disabled pupils by delivering lessons in a flexible and inclusive way can give disabled pupils a positive experience of the education system, reduce inequalities in educational outcomes and improve life chances. Schools have a great opportunity to help shape disabled pupils life for the future.

For a disabled pupil to fulfil their educational potential will require an education that prepares them for an active and fulfilling life, whether through mainstream education, with additional support, or through special education. The Children and Families Act means that children with special educational needs will have a single Education, Health and Care Plan, which will move with them through schools and into further

education. These will be supplemented by the local offer for children with Special Educational Needs that all Local Authorities are required to publish.

The local authority and school should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.

The specific duty in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 - Accessibility for disabled pupils - requires Local Authorities to put in place an accessibility strategy.

Croydon's approach:

(a) Increasing access to the schools' curriculums

In considering how disabled pupils' access to the curriculum can be improved, the local authority and schools should not just look at specific curriculum areas and subjects such as, English, mathematics, languages, sciences, music and physical education, but any other out-of-school services provided on school premises.

What do we mean by access to the curriculum? Access to the curriculum ranges from teaching and learning to school trips, visits, after school activities and school events.

Who is responsible? Early years settings and schools are responsible for providing a broad, balanced and accessible curriculum for all pupils. Extra provision to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is provided through Croydon's Ordinarily Available provision – see Table 2 below. The Ordinarily Available provision must be available in every school in Croydon and schools are expected to provide sufficient teaching and support staff to deliver it.

What support is available to settings? Support is provided to early year's settings and schools by the local authority Early Years advisers, School Improvement advisers and the 0-25 SEND team. Every school has a linked advisor who will regularly review provision and standards of practice. The 0-25 SEND service will also undertake quality assurance of school provision and standards. Forums have been established for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) across early years, primary and secondary settings. A training programme has been available for schools which includes Awareness Training on Disability; Effective Interventions; and Narrowing Gaps and Raising Attainment. Croydon Special Schools can be commissioned by to Council to provide outreach support to mainstream settings on effective strategies for teaching.

Table 2: Ordinarily Available Provision – Access to Curriculum

Schools and other educational settings will:

- Use screening and testing tools to identify key strengths in individuals learning profile and establish key priorities to support progress
- Use observations and dialogue with pupils to identify preferred learning styles
- Use modified or alternative learning objectives in daily teaching across all curriculum and subject areas
- Use short term targets to address progress in core skills identified and recorded in individual or group plans
- Use tailored interventions and resources for pupils with the greatest need
- Involve parents and pupils in planning and reviewing of personalised plans
- Identify other arrangements that may be made to support active engagement and participation in learning in class lessons and extra-curricular activities
- Use flexible groupings across the curriculum to support independence and progress – the following are examples:
 - Ability/mixed ability groupings
 - Small group /paired work/ individual supported by a teacher or teaching assistant - Peer support
 - Short term individual support focusing on listening, concentration, social skills, solution focused approaches
 - Regular small group work with an emphasis on relationships, emotions, social skills, conflict resolution
 - Small group work to learn appropriate behaviours and for associated learning difficulties - Support that uses solution focused/ restorative/ motivational approaches - Circle of friends
 - Access to additional circle time activities
 - Access to ICT and specialist equipment
- Ensure the frequency and duration of focused group and individual support is responsive to the nature and level of specific need of each group or individual pupil
- Provide out of hours learning support such as homework club and booster classes
- Provide a balance between out of class catch-up support and inclusion in class learning to avoid isolation from their peer group and the age related curriculum
- Ensure the curriculum and daily lessons reflect a range of learning styles across all subjects
- Support learning by use of practical materials and a range of visual cues
- Ensure work is divided into manageable steps
- Use precision learning techniques to introduce and embed key knowledge and skills
- Where possible link learning to first hand experiences and personal interests
- Use specific catch-up programmes to establish core reading, writing and mathematical skills for groups of pupils working just below age related expectations
- Use specialised teaching and individualised learning programmes for pupils with the greatest need such as Reading Recovery and Catch up Numeracy and Catch Up Literacy

- Use a range of ICT, additional access to ICT, specialist aids and adaptations effectively to promote inclusion and learning
- Prepare and provide a bank of visual aids, symbols and specialist resources to support access to the curriculum and wider aspects of the school day
- Ensure class and subject teachers adapt teaching style to take into account specific needs of pupils within lessons and across different subjects
- Ensure the pace of lessons is adjusted with rest breaks built in as required.
- Ensure work and resources are modified to support access, for example colour of worksheets, increased font size and double spacing and texts transposed to braille.
- Ensure arrangements are made to support formal assessments, tasks and public exams such as additional time, amanuensis, rest breaks, use of ICT and enlarged papers.
- Ensure that level, pace, amount of teacher talk/ instructions are simplified
- Ensure teacher approaches take account of the difficulties for some pupils in understanding social rules and expectations within the classroom by good preparation for any change and setting clear routines.
- Consider an alternative, differentiated curriculum that allows flexibility to teach according to emotional needs, not chronological age
- Provide access to play, creative activities, drama
- Use support and guidance offered by Croydon Special Schools Outreach
- Engage with specialist services to support assessment of needs and guidance on the nature of support and resources to promote good progress including the Education Psychology Service and Croydon Literacy Centre

For pupils with physical disabilities or medical conditions:

Specific assessments should be referenced or undertaken to establish the degree of impairment/disability and its potential implications for and impact on curriculum access.

- Visual impairment: Settings will be aware of a pupil's visual field and acuity and light sensitivity in order to provide support including accessible print size, mobility, independence, communication skills, and social interaction.
- Hearing impairment: Settings will be aware of a pupil's degree of hearing loss in order to provide support for communicative intent, expressive language skills, speech clarity, language comprehension, social communication skills and use of technology.
- Physical disability: Settings will be aware of the scope of a pupil's disability, physical restriction, levels of pain, mobility and therapy needs in order to support independence, self-care, communication.
- Medical needs: Settings will be aware of the effect of a pupil's medical condition, impact of medication, level of fatigue and triggers likely to prompt an emergency response in order to monitor level of attendance, place restrictions on certain activities, regulate temperature levels as well as to support self-awareness and regulation, and communication skills.

(b) Improving the physical environment of the schools

The physical environment of schools includes aspects of the environment that affect children's physical wellbeing (health, exercise, and safety, independent mobility).

If a school's environment is inaccessible this can cause problems for disabled pupils. Examples include steps, stairs, and lack of colour contrast. The Council and schools can meet the needs of disabled people by ensuring that the environment and facilities are accessible to all.

It is against the law for a school to treat disabled pupils less favourably. This includes: discrimination arising from a disability. For example a disabled pupil who is prevented from going outside at break time because it takes too long to get there.

Everyone can benefit from good accessibility, including those of us who do not consider ourselves to be disabled. Accessible schools, inside and outside, help most pupils to learn and play independently. This will also benefit a parent/carer pushing a child's buggy or using a wheelchair.

An accessible physical environment recognises that we are all different and plans for this diversity. This include helping to remove any barriers that prevent disabled pupils from accessing and using the building and work and play spaces safely and easily, regardless of disability.

Croydon's approach:

What do we mean by access to the environment? Reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the classroom or within an early years setting or school to create safe spaces and workstations for pupils with Autism Spectrum or emotional or behavioural difficulties. Reasonable adjustments also need to be made for pupils with disabilities – to provide physical access and auxiliary aids.

Who is responsible? Early years settings and schools are responsible for providing an accessible and safe environment for their pupils and making reasonable adjustments accordingly. Croydon council will ensure that new or re-modelled mainstream accommodation will provide withdrawal spaces, individual work stations, reduce distraction and sensory overload for pupils where it is appropriate and an efficient use of resources The council will also plan new buildings and major extensions/alterations in line with quality industry standards and regulations to facilitate access for pupils with physical impairments and medical needs.

What support is available to settings? Support services from health and education can advise about adaptations to the inside and outside environment. This can include advice and guidance for issues of physical space and opportunities to help pupils with sensory integration needs.

Table 3: Ordinarily Available Provision – Access to the Environment

Schools and other educational settings will:

- Ensure the classroom learning environment is organised to facilitate access and promote independence, e.g. resources and equipment labelled with words and symbols
- Ensure the classroom layout is created and varied to ensure pupils can hear and see the teacher, for example desks arranged in a horseshoe shape facing the teacher.
- Ensure that if required a pupil(s) has access to a quiet, distraction free zone
- Ensure a range of ICT is used effectively to promote inclusion and learning
- Ensure the use of a sensory checklist to determine any potential environmental stresses or intolerances which may impact on learning, especially in relation to pupils on the autistic spectrum
- Ensure that individual or group support is in place to assist as required with practical lessons, personal care, therapy programmes and support movement around the school. This could include buddy systems.
- Ensure systems are in place to assist safe travel around the school site e.g. corridors kept clear of lockers and clutter
- Ensure access to all areas of the building through installation of lifts, ramps, widened doors if necessary.
- Ensure access to appropriate personal care areas, accessible toilets, hoist, changing bed
- Provide facilities to join peers for lunch
- Provide withdrawal space for medical interventions and therapy programmes if necessary
- Ensure adaptations are made to the teaching environment to support access and promote independence. This might include:
 - Planning of appropriate use of classrooms to maximise access over time
 - Review of lighting arrangements and use of anti-glare film.
 - Introduction of sound field systems and hearing loops.
 - Introduction of items such as specialist seating, height adjustable work benches to facilitate access
 - Furniture organised to allow ease of wheel chair access and appropriate proximity to technology.
 - Review of pupil seating arrangements to ensure good posture management and easy access to support and teacher input.
 - Careful positioning of specialist equipment and resources to ensure optimal usage.
 - Provide an individual programme based on specific need – a quiet area in the classroom may be useful for individual work.

(c) Improving the delivery of information

Improving the communication and delivery of information to disabled pupils is a key component of the Act and its requirements. The Act requires local authorities and schools to improve their communication with disabled pupils. This means taking steps to ensure that in communicating with all pupils, responsible bodies make sure that disabled pupils are included fully.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has an important part to play in ensuring that disabled pupils maximise their opportunities for accessing information.

The delivery of information in (c) must be:

- within a reasonable time;
- In ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents.

What do we mean by access to information? Information in education settings should be available and easy to understand for all pupils. Information should also be shared between professionals and other staff to ensure key intelligence on pupils' progress is used. Families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities often find it difficult to find out about services they may be entitled to. Providing clearer access to information will help families understand the range of services available as well as ensuring more targeted and specialist services for those who need them. The way in which information is provided is also important – for instance alternative formats should always be offered and as some families do not have access to the internet, paper copies of information should also be made available.

Who is responsible? Settings are responsible for ensuring that they provide information to pupils and to families in a way that is easy to understand. As part of the reforms of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities system Croydon council, as with other local authorities, is required to publish a Local Offer of information and services that are provided locally for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND. Croydon's Local Offer may be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/sendoffer . Schools are required to publish information on the services they provide to pupils with SEND – this is known as the School Report - the information should be clearly signposted on the school website and a link should be made to the Local Offer.

What support is available to settings? Early years and school settings in Croydon have been provided with advice and guidance on publishing their School Report. The SENCO forums provide further updates and Early Years and School Improvement Advisors as well as the 0-25 SEND service continue to work with settings to improve provision. Advice may be sought from support organisations on the best methods of providing information to pupils with specific needs – for example Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum.

Croydon's approach:

Table 3: Ordinarily Available Provision – Access to Information.

Schools and educational settings will:

- Ensure that use of language is simplified with short and concise instructions
- Ensure that learning is supported by use of practical materials and a range of visual cues
- Undertake a review of learning resources to ensure vocabulary and language are accessible and not ambiguous
- Use visual timetables for whole class and individualised to support most needy pupils.
- Use social stories to develop understanding of daily school routines and socially appropriate behaviours for pupils
- Include pupils in setting and monitoring their targets
- Involve parents regularly in providing information on progress and ways of supporting targets at home
- Ensure pupils and parents are actively engaged in decision making and planning for ongoing provision
- Make use of advice, information and training from local and national voluntary services on best practice in providing information and communicating with children and young people
- Ensure staff are able to use Makaton or other signing support to aid communication and understanding
- Use personal passports for children with more significant needs to ensure all teaching and support staff are aware of strengths and particular areas of need and intolerances.
- Ensure dedicated time is set aside to support liaison between teachers and staff delivering interventions to evaluate impact and refine provision as required
- Ensure all staff are fully aware of the specific sensory, physical and medical needs of any pupil and are aware of any plans, protocols and procedures in place to ensure safe and effective education - and that class and subject teachers use this knowledge to adapt their communication, lessons and set tasks.
- Ensure key staff have had specialist training and are skilled at meeting the needs of particular pupils such as supporting daily testing and the functioning of equipment to support hearing access for a pupil with a hearing impairment; or training in manual handling for a pupil with significant physical needs.
- Ensure input at class and school level to raise peer awareness of the nature of different impairments and the support they can offer
- Keep records to include observations assessment
- Undertake risk assessments of difficult times (during) the school day
- Create opportunities to work with positive role models.

Chapter 6: Engagement and Consultation

Croydon Council is committed to working closely with children, young people and families in Croydon. In preparing the draft accessibility strategy, we have sought the views of schools staff, disabled pupils and parents/carers on the 3 access areas to improve - schools' curriculums; physical environment of schools; and information – mentioned in the Equality 2010 Act.

To further develop the strategy, the Council consulted specialist organisations such as disability equality groups, special schools and other relevant specialist organisations.

To encourage the public and key stakeholders to engage and respond to a consultation on the draft accessibility strategy for disabled pupils, the consultation documents and questionnaires were widely publicised using different modes of communication e.g. via the intranet, bulletins, email, and social media channels. Stakeholders had the opportunity to respond to the consultation online or hard copy. All of the respondents completed the questionnaire online.

The strategy will be published / circulated to all stakeholders, and reviewed annually to measure progress. An action plan has been developed alongside the strategy to show the steps that will be taken to fill any gaps in provision or address any barriers.

The consultation feedback has been used to finalise the strategy and action plan.

Full details of the responses to the engagement and consultation is published on the Get Involved website online web-link – www.croydon.gov.uk/accessibilitystrategyconsultation.

Engagement with schools, children, young people, parents/carers

Summary / analysis of responses to questionnaire

In developing its three years (2017 – 2019) accessibility strategy for disabled pupils, during December 2016, Croydon Council used a questionnaire to seek the views of school staff, disabled pupils, and parents/carers on the 3 access areas mentioned in the Equality Act 2010. This was enable us to: better understand what the current position is on disabled pupils' access, and identify any accessibility barriers.

Level of response

We received a total of 10 responses, of which 8 were from schools / members of staff / teachers; and 2 from a parent/carer of a pupil. The analysis of responses below is more of a qualitative nature because of the low response rate as the quantitative results would not be statistically valid.

Please note that whilst questionnaire was sent to all Croydon maintained schools, the responses from the 8 schools should not be viewed as representative of the views of all schools. However, the responses will be used as an indication possible access areas and issues that require more attention.

Key findings

Access to the curriculum

A high majority of respondents felt that their school support universal access to learning, and try to find appropriate resources to meet the individual need of pupils. For example, the use of large font and coloured paper for pupils with visual impairment; and hearing devices and sound-field systems within their school to aid pupils with hearing impairment. However, some respondents pointed out that support/resources can only be provided when a pupil's additional needs have been identified and the school is notified.

Physical environment

Half of the respondents from schools stated that they did not believe their school was fully accessible. Some of the respondents expressed concerns about the number of stairs within their schools, a lack of ramps/lifts and inaccessible corridors and toilets within older school buildings for pupils who use wheelchair.

A majority of the schools who responded, cited that disabled pupils are encouraged to take part in assembly, Music, Drama, P.E. and other activities, with lessons adapted to meet the varying needs of pupils. This include painting door frames and steps within the school in colours to aid visibility; and ensuring that disabled pupils are able to attend school trips by making arrangements ahead of educational visits so any necessary provisions can be put in, such as ramps for train journey.

Information

Half of the schools teachers who responded stated that they ensure they work with pupils, parents, SENCOs and teachers when setting targets for disabled pupils. This is done through parent evenings and review meetings for Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). If a parent has a disability - hearing or speech impairment, the school work closely with the pupil in order to communicate with the parents.

Schools use different approaches to inform parents/carers and disabled pupils about additional services/support they may be entitled to, for example, Early Help Assessment, and signposting to outside agencies.

Support from the Council

Respondents stated that they would like to receive from the Council: a checklist to ensure they are fulfilling their statutory duty; advice and guidance; and assessment.

Diversity and Equality monitoring

Respondents to the questionnaire:

Ethnicity:

- 70% White/Northern Irish/British
- 20% Any other White background
- 10% Do not wish to declare ethnic group

Disability:

- 10% Mobility
- 10% Other
- 80% None

Consultation with Disability Organisations / Special Schools / Disabled pupils / Parents/Carers

To ensure that the views of those affected by the Accessibility Strategy are used to further develop and finalise the draft Accessibility Strategy, we consulted a wider range of stakeholders between 17 March and 28 April 2017. This included: disabled pupils, parents/carers, special schools, disability equality groups, disability and special educational needs organisations.

The accessibility strategy has been amended in the light of responses to the consultation.

Below is a summary of responses and key emerging themes from the consultations.

Stakeholders were asked for:

- Their views on the content of the draft Accessibility Strategy and action plan
- Any positive experiences where a school has been accessible/ improved their accessibility for disabled pupils in the borough?
- Suggestions on how the curriculum; physical environment; delivery of information could be improved
- Barriers for pupils with disabilities in schools and suggestion of how these could be removed

Level of response

A total of 14 responses have been received mainly from parent/carer of a child/children with a disability.

Key findings

Content of the strategy

The majority of respondent support the information contained within the draft Accessibility Strategy. 79% support or partially support the information contained in the strategy.

“This strategy will help to protect him and other children like him”. (Parent/carer of child with SEN at mainstream school)

‘It will Encourage acceptance and prevent (try to) disability discrimination. Every child and parent deserve a positive educational inclusive experience irrelevant of academia ability - to encourage the child to reach their full potential and feel 'part of the community'. (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – SENCO).

The 3 respondents who indicated that they did not support the content of the draft strategy did not give a reason.

Main concerns raised in relation to barriers disabled pupils face in schools

- Most schools feel they cannot meet a child's needs in mainstream school if the child has ASD
- Inexperienced staff / teachers lack training in SEN / to recognise hidden disabilities
- Disabled pupils not able to access all areas of the school building
- No positive images of disability on mainstream school websites

Some suggestions for improvement

- Ensure access to all areas of the building through installation of lifts, ramps, widened doors
- Ensure access to appropriate personal care areas and space for medical interventions and therapy
- Provide facilities to join peers for lunch
- Good transition programmes for children so the next setting has time to make adaptations.
- Lists of schools that are accessible would help when pupils are choosing schools
- Worksheets to focus on so that profoundly deaf pupils are not visually distracted

What more can the Council do to ensure that all schools are inclusive?

- Teacher training and more individualised support for the children
- Make teachers aware that for profoundly deaf pupil it might be better to put them in a higher set where it is (hopefully) quieter than in lower sets which tends to noisier.
- Training, honesty and challenging discrimination
- Acceptance of differences - not putting children/young people in one box
- Reinstate the Special schools outreach funding
- Helping the schools financially

Good practice

- The makeover of the rooms for the Hearing Resource centre at Kingsley a few years ago was fantastic.
- The disability access fund has supported schools to improve their premises. Chipstead and Woodcote now provide appropriate access for pupils with complex needs
- Ridgeway Primary created a lift for children who use wheelchair children to access the school

Ethnicity

- 50% of respondents did not wish to declare ethnic group
- 29% of respondents identify themselves as White – Northern Irish/British

Disability

- 50% of respondents gave no response regarding disability
- 14% consider themselves to have a disability - Hearing impaired; and ASD & Social Communication Disorder.
- 35% of respondents indicated that they are a parent/carer of a child/children with a disability,
 - Of these 'Learning Disability' was the highest with 14%, followed by Mobility, Mental Health, and 7% did not wish to disclose a disability.

END

Appendix 1

ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY FOR DISABLED PUPILS ACTION PLAN

a) Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums

The curriculum covers not only teaching and learning but wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure, sporting and cultural activities or school visits.

Priority	Action	Responsible Person	Timescale	Outcome
Improve participation in the curriculum and outcomes for disabled pupils and pupils with SEND.	Support school-to-school advice and sharing of good practice through networks such as the SENCO Forum and specialist outreach.			Better Support for disabled & pupils with SEND
	Include link to accessibility arrangements for exams on Local Offer	SEN Project Support Officer	April 2018	More pupils remain within mainstream education
	Build capacity in schools through a training offer in best practice			Disabled pupils can participate fully in school life

	Encourage schools to work on engaging parents/carers & disabled pupils in design and delivery of lessons, giving consideration to alternate approaches to teaching.			More disabled pupils taking up apprenticeship
	Work with schools to ensure that both the curriculum and schools IT meets accessibility requirements.			
Ensure schools follow best practice in supporting and including disabled pupils and pupils with SEND when planning school events and trips	Provide schools with best practice guidelines, e.g. info on transition from primary to secondary and include at SENCO Forum and on Local Offer.			Feedback from pupils that school events and school trips are accessible. More disabled pupils going into further education.
Portraying a positive image of disabled pupils.	Provide advice/ guidance to help schools / teachers /		June 2018	Positive attitude and representation of disabled pupils; no stereotyping of

	pupils on the social model of disability.			disabled people. Equal opportunities and choice for disabled pupils.
	Ensure all those working within a school have relevant disability equality and/ or awareness training.			Inclusive learning environment where disabled pupils' needs are met without focussing on their disability.

b) Improving the physical environment of the 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.

The physical environment includes steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, signs, interior surfaces, floor coverings, room décor and furniture.

Priority	Action	Responsible Person	Timescale	Outcome
Programme of work to be put in place to review and promote accessibility in all maintained schools.	Issue accessibility questionnaire to each school to review current position and future plans.		Apr 2018	Better understanding of accessibility in schools and future plans and priorities.
	Analyse questionnaire feedback and use to identify priorities.		Summer 2018	Accessibility planned into refurbishments and new builds.
	Promote information on accessible environment to schools, parents & pupils.		April and October of each year.	
	Obtain regular feedback from pupils and families on physical		Annual basis	Feedback on pupil experience.

	environment issues via questionnaires, focus groups etc.			
Programme of work to be put in place to review and promote accessibility in all maintained schools.	Work with pupils and families to collate examples of best practice in making reasonable adjustments to the physical environment. Sharing good practice through Schools' Bulletin.		Annual Basis Ongoing	Schools and families have clear understanding and expectations on best practice.
	Recognising and celebrating diversity across the school.	Schools' assembly; information evening.		
	Publish this on the Local Offer and PIP website	SEN Project Support Officer		More schools improving accessibility features
	Improve physical environment of schools	Check: Lighting and painting schemes to help visually impaired children;		

	Lifts and ramps to help physically impaired children: Carpeting and acoustic tiling of classrooms to help hearing impaired pupils.	Schools' caretaker: site manager or premises manager.		
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c) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its pupils, available to disabled pupils. The information should take account of pupils' disabilities, pupils' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. The information might include handouts, timetables, and information about school events. The school might consider providing the information in alternative formats (such as large print and audio tape) using ICT, or providing the information orally.

Priority	Action	Responsible Person	Timescale	Outcome
Local officer to be accessible to pupils and families	Review and develop accessibility features: - Use of symbols - Videos and photos - Browse aloud feature - Wikis for services Seek feedback on accessibility of Local Officer	SEN Project Support Officer		Feedback that Local Officer and school SEN Information reports are easy to access
Families to have easy access to clear information	Each school to publish a current SEN Information Report that contains			

<p>regarding support available for disabled pupils and pupils with SEND in each school.</p>	<p>key information in a clear format.</p> <p>Each school to publish an accessibility strategy/action plan.</p>			
<p>Schools' accessibility plan</p>	<p>Provide checklist to schools to ensure they are fulfilling their statutory duty. Review schools accessibility plan.</p>		<p>September 2018</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>Accessibility schools/buildings</p>

Appendix 2

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 pupils		
Are your classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils?		
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?		
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?		
Do lessons involve work to be done by individuals, pairs, groups and the whole class?		
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activities?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by some disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?		
Do staff recognise and allow for the additional time required by some disabled pupils to use equipment in practical work?		
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disabled pupils 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 pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?		
Are there high expectations of all pupils?		
Do staff seek to remove all barriers to learning and participation?		

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

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 pupils?		
Can pupils 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 pupils, including pupils 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 pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?		
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils 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
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 pupils?		
Can pupils 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 pupils, including pupils with SEN and disabilities; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?		

Source: DfES guidance. Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils

Appendix 3

Useful references for improving accessibility

The **Equality Act 2010 Act**, Schedule 10 - is the main law relating to disability discrimination and to special educational needs in education.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>

The **Children and Families Act 2014** reforms the legal system for special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3/enacted>

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

Special educational needs and disability: a guide for parents and carers:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344424/Special educational needs and disabilities guide for parents and carers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344424/Special_educational_needs_and_disabilities_guide_for_parents_and_carers.pdf)

The **Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)** website at

www.ehrc.gov.uk has guidance on public authority legal duties and a code of practice which can be downloaded free of charge.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission have produced technical guidance for schools on "Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils"

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/using-service-reasonable-adjustments-disabled-people>

The Employer's Forum of Disability has a range of advice and awareness booklets on access available via their website www.employersforum.co.uk

Disability Croydon can be contacted via their website on

www.disabilitycroydon.org.uk

Croydon Strategic Partnership Achieving Access for All

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/equality/strategies/achievingaccessforal>

Croydon Disability Forum acts as a support and advocacy body for the disabled community. Members can take part in working groups on a range of topics, including transport, housing, and employment & training. Tel. 020 8686 0049.

Email croydondisabilityforum@virginmail.com

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