

Accessibility Strategy

(Support to Schools)

2014-2016



“ We are committed to securing excellence in education for all and we want to enable all young people in Nottinghamshire to fulfill their potential. ”

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Vision and Values
- 3 Key Services
- 4 Pupil Specific Adaptations
- 5 Admissions
- 6 Transport
- 7 Publication of the Accessibility Strategy



1 Introduction

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1.1 The aim of the Accessibility Strategy is to identify the methods by which Nottinghamshire County Council is able to assist pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to access the National Curriculum. This is achieved through the provision of specialist support and a programme of improvement to the physical environment of the schools in Nottinghamshire.

1.2 Break-down of population

Nottinghamshire is a large and diverse county. It is estimated that there are currently 235,960 children and young people resident within the County between the ages of 0-25 and this number is projected to increase by 6% over the next 20 years. Of these children and young people, more than 1 in 5 have some degree of SEND; 1.2% having a Statement of SEND or an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan. The primary SEND needs identified by schools, broken down into educational stages are:

- Primary Schools – Speech, Language and Communication;
- Secondary Schools – Social, Emotional and Mental Health;
- Special Schools – Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

1.3 Within Nottinghamshire there are a total of 338 schools, 282 are Primary, 45 Secondary and 11 Special. Of these, there are currently a total of 77 Academies; 35 Primary, 40 Secondary and 2 Special. For the purposes of this Strategy, the term 'Schools' will include Maintained schools, Academies, Free Schools and Voluntary Aided Schools.

1.4 Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 (The Act) consolidates and replaces the previous discrimination legislation for England, Scotland and Wales. The Act states that a pupil has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing. More guidance on the definition of disability is available from:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/odi_equality_act_guidance_may.pdf

(Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils')

A copy of the Equality Act 2010 can be accessed via the following link:

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

1.5 Under the Equality Act Schedule 10, the Local Authority is required to prepare and implement an Accessibility Strategy:

- for those schools and nurseries for which they are responsible
- which will increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums
- which will plan the improvement of the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which pupils with SEND are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools.

- which will improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled
- which will indicate how the Local Authority will provide information to school governing bodies on their responsibilities with regard to the disability discrimination legislation and access issues
- which is reviewed regularly and where progress towards the aims of the Strategy are monitored appropriately.

expanded within the document 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils' (please see the link to this document below):

www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/Reasonable%20adjustments%20for%20disabled%20pupils_0.pdf

- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils
- be regularly reviewed

1.6 Schools must implement Accessibility Plans, which will:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided (this duty is

1.7 Schools and school governors have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and achieve their full potential. The County Council will assist schools and school governors to meet this duty through the provision of specialist support and advice and, where appropriate, by making physical adjustments to the fabric of the school.



2 Vision and Values



‘We are committed to securing excellence in education for all and we want to enable all young people in Nottinghamshire to fulfil their potential.’



(source: Nottinghamshire County Council Strategic Plan 2014-2018)

2 Vision and Values

2.1 The County Council is committed to the improvement of attainment for all pupils, including those with SEND. Ensuring that learning is accessible to all children and young people in ways that will enable each individual to achieve the best outcomes for them is the guiding principle that underpins this strategy.

2.2 Nottinghamshire County Council’s ‘Pathways to Provision’ sets out guidance to support practitioners in identifying a child, young person and/or family’s level of need, and clarifies the referral pathways to the most appropriate services. The Pathway can be accessed through the search facility on the County Council’s webpage, or by using the following link:

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/caring/childrenstrust/pathway-to-provision/pathway-to-provision-documents/

2.3 Nottinghamshire’s SEN Strategy is currently detailed within two documents; Inclusion Plus and 5 Steps to Collective Responsibility. A comprehensive review of the Nottinghamshire SEN Strategy will take place during 2015/16.

a) Inclusion Plus – SEN and Inclusion Strategy for Nottinghamshire 2009-2012

<http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/inclusionplussenandinclusionstrategyfornottinghamshire2009-2012.pdf>

This document summarises the outcomes of a comprehensive review of SEN and Inclusion that was undertaken throughout 2008. The report identified four priorities for improvement:

- **Behaviour**

To create balanced and graduated provision and responses that meet the needs of a range of children and young people with behavioural needs. This issue was expanded within the behavior strategy – 5 Steps to Collective Responsibility.

- **Financial Resources**

Nottinghamshire has a strong partnership with schools and, in consultation with the Schools Forum, is continuing to review and adjust the devolution of funding so that it can be targeted accurately to address local need.

- **Graduated Response**

To develop a graduated range of responses, including specialist, targeted and universal support.

This is being addressed through the development of specialist support for learning in mainstream school settings; improving the physical environment within schools through the County Council's capital and maintenance programmes; developing extended services and opportunities for children and young people within the special school population

- **Integrated Locality Teams**

This initiative aims to develop an integrated, locality based support service that responds to the needs of individuals, their families and their localities. This is aimed at developing services to reduce 'gaps' in educational achievement between those pupils with SEND and those without.

- b) **5 Steps to Collective Responsibility**

This is a strategy for improving arrangements for children and young people with social emotional and behavioural difficulties (now classified as Social Emotional and Mental Health – SEMH).

A copy of the document is found at:

<http://bit.ly/1Wtrus6>



3 Key Services

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3.1 The County Council operates a number of initiatives aimed at supporting Access to the Curriculum for children and young people with SEND, including:

- The devolution of funding streams directly to schools, to enable the effective local distribution of funding. This includes:
 - Additional Family Needs Funding (schools to direct queries to casework. teamleader@nottsc.gov.uk)
 - High Level Needs Funding (schools to direct queries to: hln.panel@nottsc.gov.uk)
- Physical Disability Support Service – consists of specialist teachers, who provide specialist advice to schools to promote the inclusion of pupils with complex physical or medical needs. Referrals are usually made by Schools
- Disabled Pupils Access Panel – the panel consists of representatives from Education and Health (including specialist input from Occupational Therapists) and co-ordinates the allocation of resources to enable physical access to schools (see Section 4 – Pupil Specific Adaptations)
- Inclusive Technology Panel – the panel consists of specialist teachers from the Schools and Families Specialist Services and co-ordinates the provision of specialist ICT equipment to pupils. Referrals are usually made by schools and specialist teachers
- Communication Aids Panel – the panel consists of representatives from Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Health (including specialist advice from Speech and Language Therapists) and co-ordinates the provision of specialist communication aids to enable pupils for whom such a device is the only way that they have of communicating to

express themselves and access the National Curriculum. Referrals are made by NHS Speech and Language Therapists

- Complex Health Needs Panel – the panel consists of representatives from Health and Education and co-ordinates the provision of support for specialist health needs in schools, particularly those cases where invasive support is required e.g. diabetes and epilepsy. Referrals are made by schools and the Panel meets annually to consider requests for the coming school year.

3.2 The Nottinghamshire SEND Local Offer is a resource that provides information about the help and support available for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire aged 0 – 25 years. It covers services and provision across education, health and social care within the public, private and voluntary sectors. It provides access to universal services for all children and young people with SEND, as well as targeted and specialist support for those with more complex needs, who may additionally have an EHC Plan. The Local Offer can be accessed at: www.nottinghamshire.sendlocaloffer.org.uk

3.3 A minority of children and young people with particularly complex needs will require support through a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan. This plan replaces the statement of Special Educational Needs. Further information about the EHC Plan pathway can be obtained by viewing the Nottinghamshire County Council's EHC Plan animation via the link below:

<http://nottinghamshire.familyservicedirectory.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/site.page?id=zWZ8hGAI9vw>

and/or via the EHC Plan leaflet –

<http://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/nottinghamshire/fsd/files/ehcplanpathway.pdf>

4 Pupil Specific Adaptations

4 Public Specific Adaptations

4.1 The County Council ensures compliance with the specific duties contained within the Equality Act 2010 that refer to the physical adaptations to buildings necessary to ensure the provision of access for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The County Council seeks to increase accessibility across the range of schools available to the families of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire. The County Council will work with schools to ensure that the investment made provides robust and enduring facilities for the current and future school population.

This will be achieved through:

- Individual pupil specific adaptations – the identification of access issues and how they will be addressed
- Routine building projects - ensuring that consideration is given to the impact upon pupils with SEND of any planned building maintenance or new building projects.

4.2 The County Council Access Officer provides expert access advice to the County Council and Schools to assist them to comply with their statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty. The advice provided will identify the 'reasonable adjustments' that could be made to enable pupils, staff and the public to access the services provided. The Access Officer is also able to provide specialist access advice to any member of the public.

4.3 Requests for specialist assessments are made by schools to the Disabled Pupils Access Panel, which meets on a monthly basis. These requests usually follow consultation with parents and health or other relevant professionals. Further information and referral forms can be obtained from the PDSS by e-mail at pdss@fountaindale.notts.sch.uk

4.4 The Panel considers applications from Schools relating to perceived Access issues and arranges for the appropriate assessments to be made. The assessments will identify any 'reasonable adjustments', including physical adjustments, that may be necessary, either by the School or the County Council to enable the pupil to access the curriculum. These 'reasonable adjustments' could cover a variety of requirements, which could include: specialist ICT Services, Occupational Therapy support, curriculum support, specialist equipment or building adaptations. Consideration is also given to whether alternative, more accessible, provision might be available, to inform families of their full range of choice.

4.5 Where adaptations are required to a building following an assessment of the pupils' needs, these are classified either as:

- Design projects (larger projects e.g. hygiene suite extension; lift extension etc.) These are longer-term projects that require building regulations or planning approvals
- or
- Fast Track projects (small to medium projects e.g. internal adaptations; external ramps etc.) These are generally short-term building projects to provide minor adaptations.

4.6 Where the Access Officer has identified physical adaptations that are necessary to enable the pupil to access the building, they will liaise with the school and commission the appropriate adaptations. With respect to Academies, this may involve the provision of funding directly to the Academy to enable them to undertake the work. The Academy will be required to enter into an agreement with the County Council. This agreement will recognize the funding, the specification for the provision and an understanding that the provision cannot be removed or remodeled in the future without the agreement of the County Council.

4.7 The County Council's maintained schools would be required to seek Landlord's Consent from the Council if they were to consider the removal or remodeling of any provision made by the County Council.

5 Admissions

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- 5.1** Nottinghamshire County Council seeks to provide good quality advice, support and information to parents and carers of children with SEND who are in the process of choosing a school for their child.
- 5.2** The County Council supports children and young people, wherever possible, to attend local mainstream schools through the provision of appropriate support, which could include undertaking adaptations to the school site.
- 5.3** In addition, advice and support is available through the School Admissions Team (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/admissions/contacts/>) on issues relating to school admissions and appeals for families who are finding it a daunting process. Specific queries can be emailed to admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk
- 5.4** Information relating to admissions issues can also be accessed through the Nottinghamshire SEND Local Offer or by contacting the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) which includes the former Parent Partnership Service, who can provide advice and support to families who are anxious or concerned about the process.
- 5.5** Nottinghamshire County Council operates a Fair Access Team, which provides assistance for families who are experiencing difficulties with locating a school placement. Referrals to the Fair Access Team are normally made via the Admissions Team.

6 Transport

6 Transport

- 6.1** The Nottinghamshire County Council 'Home to School' transport policy details the support available to assist children to travel to school. Further details are available from the Nottinghamshire County Council website: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/schooltravel/>
- 6.2** The County Council operates a Travel Training Programme, which aims to train children and young people with SEND to become more independent travellers. Details of the scheme are available from the following link: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/travelling/travel/itt/>

7 Publication of the Accessibility Strategy

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The Strategy is to be reviewed on an annual basis and it should be noted that the information contained within the Strategy is current at the time of writing.

We will promote and publish our Accessibility Strategy:

- Via the Nottinghamshire County Council's website
- Via the Nottinghamshire County Council's intranet
- Via the Nottinghamshire Local Offer
- By ensuring the strategy is available in different formats, when requested.



If you require this information in an alternative language,
large font, braille, audio tape or text only version, please
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