

The Essex accessibility strategy for schools

May 2010-2014

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Glossary

LA	Local Authority
SAI	Schools Access Initiative
VA	Voluntary Aided
SENCAN	Special Educational Needs and Children with Additional Needs
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

Introduction

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 extended the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to cover education. In addition to its duties under SEN legislation, since September 2002, the Local Authority has had three key duties towards disabled pupils, under Part 4 of the DDA.

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- To make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage.
- To implement an accessibility strategy to increase access to school education for disabled pupils.

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 uses a broad definition of “disability”, as follows:

“A person has a disability if, he or she, has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

The Local Authority recognises that its responsibilities apply to the full range of disabilities, including ‘mental impairment’ and not only to physical or sensory impairments.

Essex strategy

Essex County Council published its original strategy in 2003 and this is now due for review. This revised strategy, covering the period 2010 – 2014 is aimed at all users within Essex, whether they are pupils, parents or carers and covers the three areas required by the planning duties in the DDA:

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

This strategy takes into account significant changes in national policy both towards schools and local authorities and towards children and young people with disabilities and their families. There is a recognition that the achievement of the Every Child Matters outcomes for all children cannot be delivered by any one school operating in isolation. Thus, there is now a focus on collaborative working between schools and partner agencies through such developments as the extended services and Children's Centre agenda, behaviour and attendance partnerships, the 14 – 19 curriculum etc. Identifying and removing barriers to access and participation must take into account extended services, new ways of working and new approaches to curriculum delivery in and around partnerships of schools, both mainstream and special.

Since December 2006 there has been a legal duty on all public sector organisations to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, referred to as the disability equality duty. This requires local authorities and schools to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The disability equality duty brought in by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 includes the following elements:

- a general duty;
- a specific duty;
- a reasonable adjustment duty.

The general duty

This duty requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled pupils that is related to their disability;
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

The general duty applies across schools' duties:

- to disabled pupils;
- to disabled staff;
- to disabled parents/carers and other users of the school.

The specific duty

In addition to the general duty there is a specific duty for schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the general duty.

The main requirements of the specific duty are to:

- prepare and publish a disability equality scheme;
- involve disabled people in the development of the scheme;
- implement the scheme;
- report on it.

In effect the general duty sets out what the schools have to do; the specific duty sets out how schools have to do it and what they need to record as evidence of what they have done.

Reasonable adjustment duty

The Disability Discrimination Act requires schools and local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory requirements when they:

- Act to prevent disabled pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage;
- Are aimed at disabled pupils;
- Are anticipatory;
- Enable pupils to participate in education and associated services.

When deciding if a reasonable adjustment is necessary to avoid placing disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage, schools need to consider the potential impact on disabled pupils in terms of:

- time and effort;
- inconvenience;
- indignity and discomfort;
- loss of opportunity;
- diminished progress.

Aiming high for disabled children

The three priority areas for improving outcomes for disabled children in 'Aiming high for disabled children: better support for families' are

- empowerment;
- responsive services and timely support;
- improving quality and capacity.

These require improved access to information, facilities and inclusive activities and opportunities. By 2011 this strategy should enable disabled young people and their parents to report a more favourable experience of curriculum participation, education and associated services and the information that is available to them. This strategy complements, and is consistent with, the key elements of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.

Removing barriers to achievement

This strategy sets out the government's vision for enabling children with special educational needs to realize their potential and to improve provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs.

The strategy proposes action in four key areas:

- early intervention: to ensure that children who have difficulties with learning receive help as soon as possible and that parents have access to suitable childcare. This will need greater co-ordination between health, education and social care in dealing with young children with SEN and disabilities;
- removing barriers to learning: to ensure that more and more children with SEN attend mainstream school and are able to participate fully in school life. They will need specialist expertise and resources to support them in school;
- raising expectations and achievement: by developing teacher's skills and strategies for meeting SEN children's needs;
- developing improvements in partnership: including consistency in management of SEN, delegated funding to schools and greater integration of education, health and social care in meeting the needs of children and families;

The Accessibility Strategy complements, and is consistent with, the key elements of the Removing Barriers to Achievement Strategy and includes:

- an explanation of the legal requirements;
- guidance on preparing an access plan in the context of a disability equality scheme;
- local authority aims and how we will know we have been successful in achieving these.

This strategy should be read alongside the:

Children and Young Peoples Plan

LA strategy for Children and Young People with SEN and Additional Needs (2008/12)

The Essex Disability Equality Scheme (2006/09)

These plans individually and collectively, demonstrate the Local Authority commitment to ensuring disabled children and young people are treated equally.

The vision for children and young people with disabilities in Essex

The Essex Strategy for children and young people with SEN and Additional Needs (2008 - 12) sets out our vision and principles that underpin them for providing an inclusive education where appropriate for children and young people. This vision includes all children and young people with disabilities.

Our vision is for children and young people to have:

- a positive family life leading to as independent an adult life in the community as possible;
- a broad, balanced and relevant range of learning opportunities;
- improved life chances;
- social and leisure pursuits in the community;
- access and use of community facilities;
- family, friends and key people in the community to support their independence and participation
- swift and easy access to resources and support services, enabling early intervention;
- education as close to their own homes and communities as possible.

The Essex County Council Corporate Plan sets out corporate goals relating to this strategy that include:

- raising achievement levels of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- raising educational standards and attainment;
- ensuring children and young people are kept safe;
- increased choice in school admissions;

- healthier lifestyles for the communities within Essex.

The key aims emerging locally within Essex are to:

- raise attainment and achievement of children and young people with disabilities by ensuring increased access to the curriculum;
- develop and resource a flexible range of provision to support inclusion of children and young people with disabilities by improving the physical environment of schools within Essex;
- increase participation of parents / carers, children and young people with disabilities through improving delivery of information to families of disabled children.

A range of mainstream secondary and special schools will have improvements to school buildings during the life of this strategy and beyond, through the Building Schools for the Future initiative.

Accessibility plans

The Disability Discrimination Act requires schools to put in place an accessibility plan to improve the access to education for disabled pupils over time. The school's plan meets the statutory requirements when:

- it is in writing;
- it covers the following three strands of increasing access over time;
- increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
- improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services at the school;
- improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

Accessibility Plans should be:

- adequately resourced;
- implemented;

- reviewed;
- revised as necessary (e.g. when accommodation improvements or repair and maintenance work are being planned, where the organisation of the curriculum is being considered or school activities are organised);
- it is renewed every three years;
- information about the accessibility plan is reported to parents/carers annually.

Disability equality schemes

There is a specific duty on schools and local authorities to develop a disability equality scheme. Local Authorities and secondary schools were required to publish their disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006 primary and special schools by 3 December 2007. These should be reviewed on an annual basis.

Schools are required to undertake the development of the scheme in a particular way and to include particular elements. They must:

- involve disabled people (pupils, staff, parents, siblings) in the preparation of the scheme.

Schools must also set out in their scheme:

- how disabled people have been involved in its preparation;
- their arrangements for gathering information on the effects of the schools policies on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees;
- their arrangements for gathering information on the effects of the schools' policies on the educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled pupils;
- the school's methods for assessing the impact of its current or proposed policies and practices on disability equality;
- the steps the school is going to take to meet the general duty (the schools action plan);
- the arrangements for using information to support the review of the action plan and to inform subsequent schemes;

- that they will implement the actions in their scheme within three years;
- that they will report on their schemes annually;
- that they will review and revise their scheme every three years.

Key aim 1: To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

Where we want to be

- Children and young people with disabilities will increasingly participate in all of the curriculum experiencing high quality personalised education.
- To continue to broaden the exchange of good practice between both special and mainstream schools.
- To further develop and maintain skills of School Improvement Partners (SIPS) and School Improvement / Inclusion personnel within the LA in relation to schools work with disabled pupils.

How we will know we have been success

When there is evidence that:

- feedback from schools indicates a high level of satisfaction with support from LA retained services e.g. the Specialist Teacher Team;
- feedback from mainstream schools, pupils, parents/carers and from special school and LA evaluation confirms that outreach to mainstream schools from special schools has broadened the exchange of good practice;
- successful information sharing with School Improvement Partners is resulting in good progress, improved attendance and reduced exclusions for children and young people with disabilities along with better home to school transport including access to out of school activities.

Key aim 2: To improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

Where we want to be

- Where sufficient effective and appropriate provision is developed within Essex to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people with disabilities.
- Where the LA is maximising use of all available funding streams to sustain the drive towards schools that are fully accessible to children and young people with disabilities.
- Where pupil specific adaptations are undertaken as appropriate to enable individual children and young people to attend local schools.

How we will know we have been successful

When there is evidence that:

- an increased percentage of children and young people with disabilities are educated in county and secure their first choice of school;
- high emphasis continues to be placed on removal of barriers to accessibility throughout schools, taking full advantage of the opportunities presented by the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programme initiatives to accelerate progress;
- individual pupil information is used to inform specific adaptations to their local mainstream schools where appropriate.

Key Aim 3: To improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils and their parents/carers

Where we want to be

- Where the LA has established and has in place procedures, expertise and support arrangements for providing information in alternative formats.
- Where there is follow up with disabled children, young people and their families to seek feedback as to whether information in alternative formats is effective.
- Where the LA is proactive in sharing good practice across schools regarding information, strategies and formats that have worked well.

How we will know we have been successful

Where there is evidence that:

- there is an agreed process in place for determining the appropriate use of alternative formats and funding and systems support the production of information in the required formats;
- there is a process in place to ensure feedback on the effectiveness of alternative formats and there is evidence that the LA is acting upon such feedback from children, young people and their families;
- there is a process in place for easily capturing and sharing good practice and that it is being used on a regular basis.

Appendix 1 The Essex Accessibility Strategy for Schools Action Plan 2010 - 2014

Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

Key aim	Action	Success criteria
1	Children and Young people with disabilities will increasingly participate in the curriculum experiencing high quality personalised education	Feedback from schools indicates a high level of satisfaction with support to children from LA practitioners
2	To continue to broaden the exchange of good practice between both special and mainstream schools	Feedback from mainstream schools and self evaluation by special schools confirms that outreach to mainstream schools has broadened the exchange of good practice
3	To further develop and maintain skills of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and School Improvement / Inclusion personnel within the LA in relation to schools work with disabled pupils	Successful information sharing with School Improvement Partners to support challenge to schools results in good progress, improved attendance and reduced exclusions for children and young people with disabilities

Improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services

Key aim	Action	Success criteria
1	Sufficient effective and appropriate provision is developed within Essex to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people with disabilities	Increased percentage of children and young people with disabilities are educated in county and secure their first choice of school
2	LA to maximise use of all available funding streams to sustain the drive towards schools that are fully accessible to children and young people with disabilities	High emphasis continues to be placed on removal of barriers to accessibility throughout the schools estate, taking full advantage of the opportunities presented by the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programme initiatives to accelerate progress
3	Pupil specific adaptations are undertaken where appropriate to enable individual children and young people to attend local schools	Individual pupil information is used to inform specific adaptations to their local mainstream schools where appropriate

Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils and their parents/carers

Key aim	Action	Success criteria
1	The LA has established support arrangements in place, expertise and procedures for providing information in alternative formats	There is an agreed process in place for determining the appropriate use of alternative formats and funding and systems support the production of information in the required formats
2	There is follow up with disabled children, young people and their families to seek feedback as to whether information in alternative formats was effective	A process is in place to ensure feedback on the effectiveness of alternative formats and there is evidence that the LA is acting upon such feedback from children, young people and their families
3	The LA is proactive in sharing good practice across schools regarding an alternative format that has worked well	A process is in place for easily capturing and sharing good practice and is being used on a regular basis

Appendix 2 Employment of teachers with disabilities

Advice to schools

All responsibility for complying with the employment provision of the Act lies with the employer, which for this purpose is the Governing Body in all cases. Governing Bodies have a responsibility not to discriminate in respect of the recruitment, selection, employment and dismissal of disabled people and for making reasonable adjustments to their employment arrangements or premises for disabled employees or prospective employees. In the case of Community or Voluntary Controlled schools, the Local Authority also has responsibility not to discriminate against disabled employees or prospective employees when exercising employment powers.

What is considered under the Act?

Disability relates to a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Physical impairments include sensory impairments such as visual, hearing and speech. Mental impairments include learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of mental illness. Examples of the latter may be depression, schizophrenia, anxiety and stress. Hidden impairments are also covered (e.g. mental illness or mental health problems, learning disabilities, dyslexia, dyspraxia, diabetes, epilepsy, autism, speech and language impairments and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)). Further details can be found in the handbook *Employment of Disabled Persons Guidance: A Model for Schools*, which is available to customers of Essex County Council Human Resource Service. Schools can obtain further advice by calling the Human Resource Team's Helpline, 01245 436120 or writing to Essex County Council Human Resource Service, County Hall, Chelmsford, CM2 6WN.

Duty to make reasonable adjustment lies with the school as the employer and the school's Accessibility Plan should take account of this. If, for example, a teacher develops a progressive disability his or her needs should be discussed and prioritised and plans be made to make adjustments at appropriate times. If the school is considering employing a disabled person, individual needs should be identified and practical means to meet them should be developed in full discussion with the potential employee.

If a school has a disabled employee or wishes to recruit someone with a disability, assistance is available through the Government's 'Access to Work' scheme.

It is important to recognise that their support does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement health and safety regulations, or replace the responsibilities required by the Disability Discrimination Act. Minor adjustments and inexpensive special equipment for a disabled member of staff should be provided from school resources. However, as well as giving advice and information to disabled people and employers, Access to Work make grants available towards any substantial extra employment costs that result from a person's impairment.

Access to Work can carry out a thorough professional assessment of an individual's needs, which is extremely helpful to both parties. It can also help pay for:

- communicator support at interview (CSI) which meets the full cost of hiring an interpreter to remove barriers to communication at interview;
- a support worker, which allows the applicant to use the services of a helper. Types of support might include reading to a visually impaired person, communicating for a hearing impaired person via sign language (other than at interview which is covered by CSI), providing specialist coaching for a person with learning difficulties or helping a person with care needs;
- special aids equipment to help a disabled person function in the work place;
- adaptation to premises or to existing equipment;
- assistance with the additional costs of travel to, or in, work for people who are unable to use public transport.

All enquiries should be directed to:

Access to Work
Business Centre
900 The Crescent
Colchester
CO4 9YQ

Telephone: 01206 288788

Textphone: 01206 288789

Appendix 3 Assessing individual need

Adaptations required for individual pupils are established by specialist teachers and other professionals. Criteria taken into account include:

- the length of use for the child;
- the benefits the adaptations offer the child and future children;
- the implications for the child of attending the nearest adapted school;
- the overall cost.

Adaptations required for individual pupils are resourced from capital if the estimated construction cost, ex-fees, amounts to more than £10,000.

The LA has a central store for large items of equipment, which are listed on a database and are available for allocation to individual pupils.

Strategic prioritisation

Capital investment is prioritised according to criteria taking into account demographic pattern, communications, the locations of accessible schools individually and, in the case of primary schools, in their clusters, the degree of existing accessibility, and the likely numbers of future pupils with mobility disabilities. Development planning for the Building Schools for the Future initiative (BSF) and the Primary Capital Programme (PCP) are taken into account as far as possible although the long delivery timescales for these major initiatives mean that access improvements to schools that will ultimately benefit from them must sometimes be carried out in order to serve immediate needs.

Early concentration in the programme was on ensuring that at least one accessible secondary school was provided in each urban area. This was followed by a focus on smaller communities where there is only one geographically isolated secondary school. Consequently the county's more rural districts now show a high proportion of accessible secondary schools. New schools and major remodelling projects have extended the impact of the SAI-funded programme.

The Schools Access Initiative (SAI) is funded from supported borrowing allocated on a two-yearly basis.

It is considered that the greatest initial need for major capital investment lies with mobility disability. Adaptations required for other types of disability are generally affordable from school resources, or from funding available to support the individual.

Within that context, it is felt that the SAI fund is best used on those substantial capital improvements that cannot reasonably be funded by schools. In practice this has meant a concentration on providing secondary schools with required major improvements. These are planned to enable delivery of a substantial proportion of the curriculum to pupils with mobility disabilities, as well as providing so far as practical access to the social life of the school. These projects do not attempt to make schools fully accessible, but to put in place an effectively accessible environment that each school can then develop through its own Accessibility and Premises Development plans.

Primary schools are usually on a single level, and if they have first floor accommodation it often duplicates standard class bases available on the ground floor. Specialist accommodation is proportionately less of the whole than in secondary schools, and adaptations required for individual pupils can frequently be managed from revenue. (Capital is defined as work, ex-fees, estimated to cost over £10,000. This figure is under review.)

Primary schools with particular access difficulties are considered on an individual basis if they are located at a point of strategic need. In general, however, if there is an equal strategic for two or more schools to be adapted, policy is to attend first to the school with the least costly requirements.

All schools are encouraged to use their own resources on a continuing programme of access improvement, and in some circumstances matched funding or other support is available. Schools provide details of their projects to the LA in their applications to expend devolved capital funding. Many of the projects address access improvement needs. Schemes are quality checked by a property professional who advises on technical issues including conformity to appropriate standards and guidance, maintenance implications and so on.

Bids for Joint Capital Funding (JCF) frequently include access elements and are assessed in the same way. It should be noted that Voluntary Aided schools do not have access to JCF and the LA Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP) budget is under great pressure. Consequently in considering strategic prioritisation for SAI it is necessary to bear in mind that VA schools will find it more difficult to fund their own access adaptations than others.

A record is kept of the schools' self assessment of the proportion of the curriculum that is accessible to a pupil using a wheelchair. All schools are plotted on maps with accessible schools clearly indicated. Using this and other information the SAI budget is divided as follows:

- support opportunities;
- pupil-specific;
- secondary school improvement programme;
- primary school improvement programme;
- feasibility studies (fees);
- support for specialist provision;
- matched funding.

All new construction necessarily meets Part 'M' of the Building Regulations. SAI is not used to meet those statutory requirements, which should be included in the project specification and budget. However, sometimes support opportunities arise when it is seen that an improvement scheme at a school offers a means of further developing access with particular economy or practicability.

All consultants employed by the County Council are specifically charged in their contracts with investigating these 'virtuous opportunities' and these are sympathetically considered when resources can be identified, either from the school, from SAI capital, or, more usually, a combination of both.

Appendix 4 Support and strategies available to schools from SENCAN

Visual impairment

The Access Audit is carried out in order to advise the school on how safe its buildings and general environment are for a pupil with a visual impairment.

Improvements can be achieved by increasing the contrast of one object to another and by ensuring good lighting throughout the school.

More specifically:

Building structure and design

- High contrast paint on doors, skirting boards, windows and obstacles.
- Steps and stairs can be marked in contrasting colours to define the edge.
- Doors should be kept fully open or shut, and not ajar.
- Door knobs/handles and light switches may need to be in contrasting colour.
- Entrance and exit areas must be uncluttered with a clear area of movement.
- Boundary fencing needs to be clearly defined.

Environment

- Different floor surfaces must be identified and glare recognised as a hazard.
- Lighting should be consistent and without shadow – particularly in corridors.
- Blinds, curtains or filters can be used to control lighting levels.
- Slopes and stairs are best supported by handrails.
- Pupil movement kept to a one way stream, or to one side of the corridor.
- Obstacles and bags removed from the floor and chairs pushed under desks.

Equipment

- Large equipment should be stored consistently in the same place.
- Areas in the playground can include identified quiet areas.
- Equipment in the playground can be painted colour and tone contrasts.
- The pupil's own peg, drawer and/or locker needs safe positioning.
- PE equipment can be obtained in a range of colours.
- Fire extinguisher locations should be considered and marked with hazard tape

Signs

- Door signs should be in a regular position and at accessible height.
- Signs should be of high contrast, uncluttered and consistent in size and font.
- Warning, or directional signs, should be clearly positioned.

Visual needs

- Where the pupil arrives from public or private transport the area should be assessed.
- A member of the specialist teacher team will offer further advice on the individual pupil's needs.

It is important for schools to understand that the information relating to the access audit and the modifications suggested are advisory.

Physical and neurological difficulties

- Ensure that all pupil coat pegs, drawers and furniture are at appropriate heights to provide opportunities for all pupils and do not impede access.
- As many taps as possible to be suitable for use by pupils that have poor motor skills. Sinks and play equipment to be at a suitable height.
- Playground markings to promote appropriate motor planning games and route planning.
- Handrails to be placed appropriately adjacent to steps.

- Adjustable height furniture in science and technology rooms.
- Alternative means of access determined to avoid difficult steps
- Contrasting colour paint to denote obstacles.
- Doorways to be accessible for wheelchairs
- All fire doors to be suitable and accessible for physically impaired pupils
- Door closures to be adjusted to enable access to pupils with less strength and mobility.
- All off-site visits to be planned with the needs of any physically impaired pupils in mind.
- Liaise with Health Authority staff when considering the height of any toilet aids and equipment that may be needed.
- Ensure that any adaptations to toilet areas allow space for a changing bench and suitable storage areas for care needs.
- All uneven surfaces around the buildings to be monitored and repaired.
- Any obstacles, steps, or uneven surfaces that cannot be removed to be clearly marked.
- The tread and riser of steps to be clearly marked with a contrasting colour.

General and specific learning difficulties

- Avoid asking pupils to read in public and asking peers to mark each others work – find an area of strength rather than a weakness to use publicly
- Use a multi-sensory approach during lessons - auditory, visual and kinaesthetic to maximise learning channels.
- Carefully consider presentation of work sheets – bold headings, clear print, use of white space, diagrams etc.
- Give pupils photocopies of key text so they can highlight as they go – it also helps to know the questions prior to reading the text.
- Regularly place the child with poor reading and writing skills with a group where they can contribute to the knowledge, whilst other read/record for the group.

- Ensure the work/materials suit the child's mental age, as well as the reading age. The pupil may need LSA or peer support to access print but may also need the mental stimulation/challenge of intellectually working orally with able peers
- Allow the support of using a table square when learning new mathematical processes if the child cannot establish long-term error free recall. Can they learn to master drawing up a table square in less than 5 minutes so they can make one at the beginning of maths exams and use it throughout?
- Ensure adequate reinforcement/consolidation of reading and writing skills to the level of automaticity.
- Use colour and visual clues to support reinforcement e.g. colour common letters in word strings and support minimal copying from the blackboard by varying colours or numbering lines.
- Help the pupil organise themselves by developing visual timetables, prompts and structures to support their memory and routines.
- Try to avoid every lesson being a challenge to read and write, when they should be engaging with the lesson content. Find alternative methods for recording e.g. diagrams, pictures, mind maps, key words colour coded etc. Such recording is easier to use for revision, is visually appealing and more likely to support recall.
- Where possible mark work on the content rather than accuracy, neatness or quantity. Re-writing work seldom improves the neatness or accuracy for such pupils. Try to make positive comments, they may not get many!

Hearing impaired pupils

Poor acoustics present a major challenge for any listener with a permanent hearing loss of any degree.

Pupils are mainly affected by three types of school noise

Background	Intruding	Internally generated
Examples include; Heating Ventilation Gyms School cafés Projectors Fans	Examples include; Aeroplanes Yells from outside Footsteps Corridor noise School buzzer	Examples include; Talking Scraping chairs and tables

Soft furnishings are very useful to reduce sound reverberation

- Soft/material blinds are useful to avoid glare from sunlight
- Curtains, drapes
- Drapes used within displays
- Carpets
- Sound absorbent floor materials for corridors etc.
- Rubber feet on chairs, tables and stools
- A 'quiet area' with upholstered chairs and cushions

Sound field systems can be installed with provide surround sound.

Use of a radio aid or micro-link.

Hearing impaired pupils need to sit centrally to maximise opportunities for lip reading.

Wall barriers need to be built between buildings and heavily used roads.

Partition walls for more open plan environments.

Absorptive treatment on walls, ceilings of gyms and classrooms.

Good classroom management reducing internal noise levels and noise spilling over to other classrooms.

Easy to understand signs and labels with pictures or symbols.

Speech and language difficulties

- Support pupils' understanding of the spoken word by using visual clues such as gesture, illustrations, diagrams and the written word. For some pupils this will include the use of symbols and augmentative and alternative communication systems.
- Modify adult language in terms of complexity of grammar, vocabulary and length of utterance to match pupils' level of understanding.

- Slow down the speed of talking and use pauses to allow pupils to process the language they have just heard.
- Repeat instructions, giving pupils another chance to hear the language. Then, if there are still difficulties, modify the language of the instruction.
- Support the pupils in learning to identify when they haven't understood and teach strategies so that they can make this known to others and seek clarification.
- Identify key vocabulary of the curriculum. Provide pupils with word lists which include definitions and/or cueing sentences. Pre-teach vocabulary prior to its introduction to the curriculum. Revise vocabulary to ensure pupils can say, understand, remember and recall the words as required.
- Support the organisation of language by using pictures, writing frames, spider-grams and mind-maps.
- Make the speech and language teaching points you are targeting an integral part of the activity.
- Provide written information in a straightforward style to back verbal information for both pupils and parents.
- Ensure that details of homework are given in sufficient time to be fully understood and recorded, with opportunities for further clarification later in the day.
- Support the development of conversational skills and other aspects of social communication via structured programmes and by offering guidance during day to day events.

Autistic spectrum disorder

Whole school needs – All staff need to be aware of pupils needs and implement strategies in a consistent way.

Designated adult – Named adult in school who pupil feels they can off-load concerns with on a regular basis.

Use of language – Language needs to be simple, direct, avoiding ambiguities and idiomatic phrases, such as 'kill two birds with one stone'.

Giving time – Time is needed to process language, such as the '10 sec rule' giving the pupil an opportunity to respond to requests.

Visual strategies – Present information in a visual or pictorial format to aid understanding, such as visual timetable, mind mapping techniques.

Safe place – Agree a safe place with the pupil that they can go to safely in times when they feel the need.

Reducing stress – Allow pupils to manage their stress by the use of their own particular 'stress busters' such as squeezing Bluetack, holding/touching a small item.

Homework – Timely support given to write homework in planner and schedules to record when homework is due in.

School visits/trips – Give attention to prior planning and preparation so that pupil can adjust to the change in routine required by a trip.

Liaison – Named adult in school so that parents/carers have a clear link with the school

(SENCAN has published guidance to support primary schools – 'Social Communication Guidance Key Stage 1/2' available through the Schools Info link.

Behaviour, emotional and social difficulties

A pupil with BESD is best supported when the following is in place:

Whole school/home – Positive relationships have been built between home and school with shared knowledge and ownership of policies and practices to ensure a consistent planned approach from all adults. Home School Liaison Workers can – act as lead professionals or help plan behaviour modification programmes in home settings.

Whole school systems – Systems need to be clear, consistently applied and explained in appropriate language with use of visual reminders. For example the Behaviour Support Teachers and Behaviour Workers can work with schools to negotiate and agree with staff and pupils whole school reward and sanction systems; anti-bullying policies and strategies, behaviour and discipline policies, transition programmes, and so on.

Positive environments – All children, including those with BESD, are more likely to progress when they are working and playing with positive role models in environments that

nurture mental health, self-esteem and resilience. Behaviour Support Teachers and Behaviour Support Workers and Home School Liaison Workers can work with schools, classes and individuals to foster these environments; generally, for example through surveys, action planning, consultations and training for staff, parents and governors, and specifically through individual programme planning, advice on SEAL and emotional literacy programmes, Smart Thinking*, relaxation skills, lunchtime and playground improvements etc. (*Smart Thinking programme teaches individuals, groups or whole schools a successful 'Stop, Think, Choose, Do' strategy, particularly useful for pupils with anger management/attention difficulties).

Classroom management strategies – rules, rewards, routines and behaviour management strategies need to be understandable, owned by pupils and staff and effective. The Behaviour Support Service can work with classes to set up sustainable systems including, assessing pupil voice, 'scripts' for staff to use in applying the language of reinforcement and discipline.

Individual programme planning – At times, staff in schools and parent/carers require extra support to manage individual pupils. Behaviour Support Staff can work with staff and pupils to negotiate, resource and implement programmes. They can also ensure the environments help support the individuals for example through peer support/mediation and play leader training.

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Essex County Council Schools Children and Family

You can contact us in the following ways:

Special Educational Needs and Children with Additional Needs (SENCAN)

By post:

Essex County Council
County Hall
Environment and Commerce
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1QH

By telephone:

01245 436292

By fax:

01245 436588

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

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