



DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES

**EDUCATION ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY
2003-2006**

FEBRUARY 2003

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EDUCATION ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY: 2003-06

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 Devon County Council is committed to reducing barriers to learning and attainment and improving the access to inclusive education of all learners with special needs or disabilities, in line with the stated aims of central government¹. This principle is endorsed by Devon Education, Arts and Libraries (EAL) Strategic Plan 2002-2005 (Objective 4: high quality support for pupils with special educational needs) and is an important element of the Education Development Plan 2002-2007 (Priority 4: Narrowing the Gap and Tackling Underachievement). It is reflected in the consultation paper *Excellence for All Children: The Development of an Inclusive Education System in Devon* 2004 and will be a key element of the Single Plan for Children and Young People. The Devon Children's Trust will actively promote the interests of children with disabilities.

1.2 There are three strands to the planning duty on LEAs:

- access to the curriculum;
- access to information;
- physical access.

The points which follow are intended to give guidance to schools when they are considering their accessibility plans and to assist Local Authority [LA] officers in decisions which require the prioritising of allocated funds including Schools Access Initiative and resources allocated through the LA's Asset Management Plan. For each element there will be implications for how the LA allocates funds and the steering groups which monitor progress towards targets will be cross-referenced where necessary.

1.3 The aim of this strategy is to link existing policy procedures and practice in maintained schools across Devon in order to increase opportunities for children and young people with disabilities to access their local mainstream provision. This restates the LA's commitment to inclusive education.

1.4 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Disability Code of Practice for Schools (2002) clarifies the definition of disability. A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

1.5 It is a statutory requirement for the LA to publish an Accessibility Strategy and in turn for each maintained school to publish an Accessibility Plan. These are intended to increase accessibility and develop inclusive education provision for children with disabilities. In *Accessible Schools* (DfES 2002), it is made clear that once a school has produced an Accessibility Plan, it then has a statutory duty to implement the plan and allocate adequate resources to it.

1.6 The strategy enshrines the principle that local and accessible educational provision should be made whenever possible. In its broadest sense, this means improving accessibility for children and young people with disabilities to teaching, learning and related activities in individual schools. Improvements will be made as a result of the access audit and in response to the teaching and learning requirements of an individual young person.

¹[*Inclusive Schooling, (DfES, 2001); The SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2002); the Disability Code of Practice (Schools) (DfES, 2002); Accessible Schools (DfES, 2002); QCA Planning, Teaching and Accessing the Curriculum for Pupils with Learning Difficulties; National Curriculum Inclusion Statement, and related documentation*].

1.7 Statutory Assessment of a child or young person's special educational need includes consideration of provision necessary for the young person to enable access to the curriculum. (Education Act 1996, DfES Code of Practice on SEN 2001).

1.8 During the summer of 2002 every school in Devon was consulted on its accessibility for children with disabilities, including physical barriers to learning and training and development requirements in terms of teaching and support staff. The results of that survey made an important contribution to the development of this strategy.

1.9 The Devon Accessibility Strategy has been developed according to legislation and guidance. It is, however, only a starting point, the strategy will develop as a result of ongoing evaluation and review and will be updated regularly building upon emergent good practice.

2.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, and the Disability Rights Commission Disability Code of Practice (Schools) 2002, LEAs and schools have a duty not to discriminate against children and young people with disabilities. This specifically includes admissions policies, exclusion procedures, the provision of educational services, including teaching and learning, participation in educational visits, music, drama and sports activities.

2.2 The legislation poses new duties on schools and LEAs to plan to increase the accessibility of mainstream schools for children and young people with disabilities. This involves setting out plans for:

- maximising access for pupils with disabilities to the school curriculum, including participation in after-school clubs, cultural and leisure activities or school visits;
- improving the delivery of written information to pupils with disabilities, including handouts textbooks, timetables and information about school events;
- improving access to the physical environment of schools.

2.3 The Accessibility Strategy is designed to ensure that:

- all schools understand their roles and responsibilities regarding the right of disabled pupils to have equal opportunity and access to high quality education;
- all schools understand that disabled pupils have the right to an education without experiencing any disadvantage or discrimination;
- plans are in place for high quality training for school governors, centrally retained LA staff and partners;
- the Education Asset Management Plan prioritises accessibility issues and capital investment is secured;

- the importance of accessibility and inclusion are explicitly stated in all education policies, strategies and plans.

3.0 **PRINCIPLES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1 The aim of the Accessibility Strategy is to work towards educating all children at their local school.

The County Council will work in partnership with all schools to promote inclusion – a policy that respects diversity and supports equal opportunities. It is recognised that inclusion is a process and not a fixed state. The *Excellence for All Children: The Development of an Inclusive Education System in Devon* identifies steps which will indicate our progress towards a more inclusive model.

- The County Council values the achievement of special schools in offering a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where children are given the opportunity to make progress in educational and social skills. Our special schools have the potential to provide expertise, advice and professional development to mainstream colleagues, as well as continuing to provide an appropriate setting for some pupils.
- Children, parents and carers will be involved in the planning and provision. The County Council will seek to ensure early identification and to meet parental preference where it is appropriate. It will also work in partnership with providers of further education to promote a smooth transition to appropriate opportunities for continuing education.
- The County Council, through its Children's Services Division will work with other agencies to establish joint agency specification of provision with a common classification of SEN.

3.2 The following policy statements and aims are derived from the principles listed in paragraph 3.1 and provide the framework for the detailed proposals in this Plan:

- All children and young people, irrespective of their learning or other difficulties, are entitled to and should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum.
- Our aim is to include pupils in mainstream schools when, given appropriate resources, their needs can be met there and they can benefit from such a placement. There will be consultation with parents, Governors, teachers and professional staff to ensure this is in the interest of all children.
- Progress towards inclusive education will be sustained, whilst retaining specialist provision for a minority of Devon children.
- The County Council is committed to training and supporting staff in meeting special educational needs. The use of 'outreach' specialist workers from special schools to support colleagues in mainstream schools where there are children with special needs will be encouraged.
- Schools will be given maximum flexibility in determining how SEN resources will be deployed, providing the statutory responsibilities regarding delivery of

provision specified in the Statement are met. Intervention at the earlier stages of the Code of Practice will be encouraged.

- The County Council will work with parents and carers as key partners in the assessment procedures and in determining educational provision.
- The Local Authority, through its Children's Services Division, will develop existing partnerships across Social Care and Health Authorities, and with providers of further education, voluntary organisations and the independent sector as appropriate.

4.0 **LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

4.1 A summary of legislation and guidance with more detail can be found at Appendix 1.

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*
- *SEN and Disability Act 2001*
- *Approved Document M of the Building Regulations (Access and Facilities for Disabled People), 1999*
- *Code of Practice BS8300 Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people*
- *Education Act 1996*
- *The Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 Code of Practice for Schools*
- *Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils*
- *DfES Code of Practice on SEN (2001)*

5.0 **LINKS TO OTHER PLANS AND POLICIES**

5.1 The Accessibility Strategy overlaps significantly with other Devon plans and policies and national guidance.

- *Education Development Plan 2002-2007*
- *Early Years Access and Admissions*
- *Greater Inclusion in Devon Schools*
- *Special Educational Needs in Devon (updated Spring 2002)*
- *DfES Code of Practice and Toolkit*
- *National Curriculum 2000*
- *QCA Guidance on the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties*
- *Index for Inclusion*
- *Accessible Schools*
- *Inclusive Schooling*
- *Asset Management Plan*

For further details, please see Appendix 2.

7.0 **INCREASING THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISABLED PUPILS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE CURRICULUM**

7.1 Devon County Council will ensure that resources and expertise are used effectively to increase the skills of teachers and support staff in providing an inclusive curriculum for all children and young people.

Strategies will include:

- ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of qualified teachers and support staff to offer advice on including pupils with low incidence disabilities in maintained schools;
- auditing training needs by a variety of methods including course evaluations, sampling, questionnaires, consultation with SENCOs and academic councils;
- direct support, intervention and advice from specialist services.

The dissemination of best practice in inclusive education by:

- the use of educational psychologists and advanced skills teachers in specialist areas such as autism ;
- the use of lead teachers and demonstration classrooms in mainstream and special schools for the national strategies;
- the provision of local support groups led by excellent practitioners;
- partnership with voluntary organisations and parent groups;
- joint initiatives with other agencies working for and with young people with disabilities;
- the development of outreach support from special schools and support centres.

The provision of information on teaching and learning through:

- the EAL website;
- publications, including CD Roms and videos;
- consultancy support and advice to schools and governing bodies;
- the provision of courses to meet identified needs and priorities for training.

8.0 IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION TO DISABLED PUPILS

8.1 Devon County Council will ensure that information normally provided in writing to its schools is available to disabled pupils in alternative and appropriate formats. The LA is also aware that some parents/carers of pupils in school will themselves have a disability and will adopt the same principles in respect of the provision of information.

8.2 Schools have been asked:

- if they have existing or potential pupils requiring the provision of information in alternative formats;
- if 'Yes', to identify the three priorities for improvement;
- to detail advice or support that would be required.

Responses

A large number of schools identified specific alternative formats in response to the first question. Those who responded in a form of words other than 'No' to the first question then went on to elaborate the types of alternative format they considered to be a priority, and then linked this answer to the type of support required in the third question.

Most responses to the first question could be grouped into strands relating to two main areas of educational need – sensory impairment (hearing and vision) and communication needs. Although the question was about pupils, the answers were mainly concerned with alternative formats so there was an overlap with the second question.

Information in alternative formats	Number of references
Sign language, including Makaton and British Sign Language	9
Lip-reading, including Cued Speech	4
Radio aid hearing equipment	1
Language modification	1
Subtitling for videos	1
Large print modification	11
Low vision aids, including magnifiers	1
Symbols, including Rebus	7
The use of coloured overlays	2
Audio recordings	1
The use of ICT, including communication aids	10

Not all of the schools that had answered positively in this question went on to identify priorities. The majority of answers for the second question were related to equipment provision and more closely linked to curriculum access and not specifically related to the 'provision of information'. There was, therefore, a heavy emphasis on the provision of laptop computers. For the purposes of tabulation, these have been included in the total responses for ICT. There would be an expectation that if, for example, a pupil required information to be provided in an alternative format that was available through a non-technological means, this should be preferable to one requiring an expensive high tech solution.

Priorities	Number of Responses
ICT, including laptops	32
Large print	10
Symbol systems	10
Low vision aids	5
Sign language	4
Audio tape	2
Cued speech	1

There was a high correlation between the first two questions and to the advice and support required. In the main, these responses to the third question related to services that the LEA is already providing, especially via the Support and Advisory Teacher Service.

Advice required	Number of Responses
Specialist teachers, including PD	9
ICT	9
Visual impairment	7
Communication and interaction difficulties, including ASD	6
Deafness and Hearing impairment	5
Medical	2
Educational Psychology	1
Specific Learning Difficulties	1
Learning Difficulties	1
Down's Syndrome	1
Speech and Language therapy	1
Schools' Library Service	1

Implications

Of the three strands associated with the Accessibility Strategy, this would appear to have been the strand that produced the least detailed response.

The major strategic implications for Devon County Council are:

- the provision of specialist support and advisory services;
- the production of LEA information in a range of alternative formats as identified;
- the availability of services capable of producing/supporting production of materials in alternative formats to/for schools.

8.3 As well as the provision of information orally this will include alternative formats such as:

- Braille;
 - Large print;
 - Audio tape;
 - Lip reading;
 - Sign language;
 - the use of a recognised symbol system such as Rebus;
 - the use of ICT and communication systems.
- The information will take account of pupils' disabilities and the preferred formats of the pupils and their parents and/or carers whenever possible.
 - Devon County Council will help schools, through advice, to make written material available in alternative formats.
 - Devon County Council will provide for children with disabilities with additional needs through the provision of support and advice to schools and other educational establishments.

8.4 This will be done through the provision of specialist advisory teacher and educational psychology services for:

- deaf and hearing impaired children and young people;
- children and young people with visual impairments;

- children and young people with communication and interaction difficulties including autism;
- children and young people with physical difficulties;
- children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- children with learning difficulties.

This will be undertaken through direct visits to schools, planning and other meetings, the provision of training and access to suppliers of high cost items, such as Braille machines, embossers etc in order to produce information in alternative formats.

9.0 **IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS**

9.1 The Education Asset Management Plan describes the condition, suitability and sufficiency of school accommodation in Devon.

A full Access Audit will be undertaken in all Devon maintained schools in order to assess the appropriateness of the school premises to improve access to inclusive education for all learners with special needs or disabilities. The Audit will assist in the development of each school's Accessibility Plan and will be undertaken by a suitably qualified surveyor together with the premises manager or their representative.

The Access Audits will identify physical barriers to accessing the school facilities by all users in five principal areas:

- Approach to the school;
- Entering the school;
- Moving around the school;
- Getting out of the school;
- Building management.

It is proposed that every school where possible should have the following facilities:

- An appropriately signed site entrance;
- Accessible car parking;
- An accessible main entrance and reception area;
- Accessible toilet facilities;
- Accessibility to the curriculum, other school activities and facilities where the activities take place on different levels;
- Provision of auxiliary aids, where appropriate
- Safe egress from the buildings, including in an emergency evacuation.

The Access Audit will summarise all recommendations with budget costs (at the time of Audit, excluding fees) and will be incorporated in the Education Asset Management Plan. This will enable the Authority, in working with its partners, to identify and invest in the priorities in accordance with the principles of the Education Asset Management Plan.

All data relating to the accessible and physical environment of Devon schools will be contained within the County Council's AMP system. The data will be available for all

schools and other interested parties to access to ensure fairness and transparency for the identification of capital investment in Devon schools through the Education Asset Management Plan

All new school building projects will, as a minimum, be required to address Part M of the Building Regulations in order to meet the needs of all pupils, staff and visitors and thereby also fulfilling the legislative requirements. Additionally, where the LA undertakes projects as a part of its annual capital programme it will adopt the principles identified below. The County Council will also encourage schools to adopt a similar approach in projects they promote using devolved resources.

9.2 Devon County Council will increase year on year the number of mainstream schools which are fully accessible to students with disabilities and ensure that sufficient specialist facilities are available to meet the needs of existing and potential pupils.

- A full access audit of existing school premises will be undertaken to assess the appropriateness of the school premises to improve access to inclusive education for all learners with special needs or disabilities.
- DCC will ensure that any new buildings planned will take full account of the needs of pupils with disabilities;
- The school buildings and grounds should be designed to enable all members of the school community to enter and access all aspects of school life to the best of their ability.
- All members of the school community should be treated with dignity and respect and their individual needs must be accounted for.
- The design should enable pupils to be physically, psychologically and emotionally comfortable and feel safe and secure.
- Adequate space will be allowed to promote flexible use and management of general school areas with the provision of specialist facilities and support rooms, appropriate storage for equipment and aids.
- Design will take account of pupils' physical growth and the increasing or reducing levels of support that may be required.
- Good levels of natural light with natural and artificial lighting, controllable, effective and comfortable heating and ventilation systems that can be adjusted will be promoted. Good acoustic design will be ensured.
- Creative use of colour and contrasts will aid way-finding and provide stimulating or soothing environments.
- Adjustable furniture and suitable equipment will be advised to enable full participation in the curriculum.
- Specialist facilities, e.g. accessible toilet/shower will be located so that pupils can access them from a reasonable distance.

- Schools will be supported in seeking appropriate advice when undertaking small refurbishment, adaptations or extension projects to make provision for disabled access and to plan incrementally to improve access and facilities for pupils.
- Funding will be targeted at providing appropriate facilities for those pupils already in schools and those to be admitted in the current or following academic year.
- When agreeing priorities for major adaptation and/or extensions under for example the Schools Access Initiative, officers will take the following into account:
 - the necessity of having fully accessible mainstream schools within a reasonable travelling distance of each community; this will include the provision of specialist facilities for particular disabilities at a sufficient number of these schools to meet identified need;
 - the decisions of appeals committees and SENDIST in cases of parental preference;
 - the provision of specialist facilities in special and mainstream schools to enable them to provide a fully inclusive curriculum for all existing and potential students which supports the LEA in educating students in its maintained schools.

10.0 **DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

10.1 During the audit of accessibility in the summer term, schools were asked to identify training needs for teachers and support staff. The following broad areas were identified across the LEA and will be used to inform the allocation of Standards Funds in order to implement the Accessibility Strategy.

10.2 **Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum**

Schools were asked:

- to specify their particular priorities for training when utilising delegated funding for the next three years;
- to identify the priorities for schools in terms of retained advice and support.

Responses

It is almost inevitable that some of these training needs were related to specific circumstances at the moment in time, e.g. the individual needs of pupils who may have recently arrived at the school. An analysis of all responses, however, provided a relatively clear picture of identified training needs across all phases. These responses are set out below in descending order of priority, with numbers of responses in each row.

Rank order	Category	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
1	General SEN training for LSAs	18	5	0	23
2	Behaviour	10	4	4	18
3	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	10	3	4	17
4	SpLD/Dyslexia	14	2	0	16
5	General Disabilities	9	1	0	10
6=	SENCO Training	9	0	0	9
6=	Differentiation	8	1	0	9
6=	Language and communication difficulties	8	1	0	9
6=	Physical Difficulties	7	2	0	9
10	Dyspraxia	6	1	0	9
11=	Visual Impairment	3	2	0	7
11=	General/Moderate Learning Difficulties	3	1	1	5
13=	Hearing Impairment	2	2	0	4
13=	Signing	2	1	1	4

It is reassuring that much of this training is already available to schools, provided by LEA Advisers, Advisory Teachers and Educational Psychologists. There is an extensive programme of training available for LSAs and other support staff in identified areas of special educational needs. Similarly, there is regular training provided for SENCOs within the Authority. This questionnaire has helped to confirm that prime areas of concern in all phases are behaviour management and working with pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, issues that will continue to be emphasised in the training available within the LEA.

35 schools stated clearly that they wanted centrally provided advice and training on the whole range of special needs. The most common specific areas mentioned on top of this were communication and interaction (28), and physical difficulties (25), followed by emotional, social and behavioural (22), and sensory impairment (14). Severe Learning Difficulties, ICT and Specific Learning Difficulties were each mentioned by fewer than five respondents.

There were ten additional answers which mentioned retaining the 'status quo' in terms of available support, and thirteen mentioned Educational Psychologist support specifically.

11.0 TARGETS

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To update the Parent Partnership information pack outlining the Service and how parents can receive guidance, support and information, including training courses that will enable them to gain greater understanding of how children's special needs can be met in mainstream school 	Information to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Years School Action and School Action Plus Assessment, Statement and Review (including Transition Planning) Funding Disagreement Resolution 	SEO (SEN)	May 2003	Parent Partnership Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce information to parents to explain how children with specific conditions are and can be included within mainstream schools, including Autism/Asperger's Downs Syndrome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information pack 	Head of SATS	September 2003	Standards Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide information about the role of specialist support staff and the role of Connexions to assist transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information pack 	SEO (SEN)	September 2003	Parent Partnership Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide guidelines to help parents support their children with special needs in mainstream school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information pack 	SEO (SEN)	September 2003	Parent Partnership Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable Devon schools to increase the inclusivity of the curriculum for pupils with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SENCOs, ASTs, special school teachers and other expert staff are involved in creating a programme of effective dissemination of best practice Specialist and expert teachers, national strategy consultants and other advisory staff work together to ensure that pupils who need 'Wave 3' interventions are effectively supported 	SEN Adviser SEN Adviser	September 2003 April 2003 – ongoing	Staff time
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven effective interventions are promoted to support participation in the curriculum The use of the 'P' levels continues to be promoted as necessary in mainstream schools 	SEN Adviser SEN Adviser	Staff time	
OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate the delivery of written information in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEA and schools to review all its methods of 	SEO (SEN)	September 2003	Education

preferred format of the individual	communications to ensure access for all to council and school communications		– ongoing	Revenue and Delegated budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sources of providers to translate written information into preferred formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEA support services to advise schools on providers 	SEO (SEN)	April 2004	Delegated budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools to identify the preferred method of communication for their service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEA support services to advise 	SEO (SEN)	April 2004	Delegated budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish comprehensive PD service across all Devon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link with Voluntary Sectors 	Head of SATS through Memorandum of Understanding	September 2004	Core budget of SATS and element of Out-County budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide moving and handling training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and deliver training programme 	PD Advisory Teacher	April 2003 – ongoing	Core and Delegated budgets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance booklets on PD and Sensory Difficulties and CIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulate to all schools in Devon 	Head of SATS	April 2004 for completion of all four	Standards Fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop area support groups for schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish new groups in Academic Councils 	CIDS Co-ordinator; PD Advisory Teacher; HI and VI Teams	April 2004 – ongoing	Delegated funding and core
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply ICT/SEN audit information to other Devon schools receiving pupils who are registered blind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and circulate information 	Head of SATS	April 2005 – ongoing	Delegated funding and Exeptional funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence a programme of Access Audits in 2003/04 in order to establish with schools, collectively and individually, priorities that will inform the LEA’s Access Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access audits undertaken at identified schools Access audit reports presented to Head of each school with estimated costs of recommendations 	Group Manager, Capital Strategy	April 2003- April 2004 April 2003- March 2004	Revenue Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a programme for the first three years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of access audits to identify barriers at each school presented to Accessibility Steering Group 	Group Manager, Capital Strategy	Spring 2004	
OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER	TIMESCALE	RESOURCES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Steering Group consider priorities and 	Group Manager,	April 2003 –	Revenue budget

	<p>identify three-year strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and forecast pupils that will be entering the education system and likely admission to specific schools Access Audit data incorporated onto the Asset Management Information System Links to Asset Management Plan to identify and confirm prioritisation process Consult with all schools on a programme of works to establish priorities for the first three years of the Accessibility Strategy Accessibility Strategy and Accessibility Plans incorporated into Local Policy Statement and Statement of Priorities 2003 	Capital Strategy	<p>ongoing</p> <p>January 2003 – ongoing</p> <p>April 2003 – ongoing</p> <p>Meeting of Premises Board in Summer Term 2003</p> <p>July 2003</p>	Revenue budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 'Devon' minimum standard as part of the project brief for new education buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the design brief for all new education buildings to incorporate the County Council standard for accessible buildings 	AEO (Capital Strategy)	April 2004	Revenue budget

Legislation and Guidance

- The **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**, (Part IV) (**the DDA**), outlines detailed duties in respect of disability discrimination on employers, service providers and other organisations, including schools' services for children and young people.
- The **SEN and Disability Act 2001**, (Appendix 11) in amending the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, makes it unlawful for education providers to discriminate against a disabled child or young person by:
 - treating a disabled child less favourably on the grounds of their disability than a non-disabled child, without justification, in the arrangements made for education;
 - failing to take reasonable steps to change any policies, practices or procedures which place a disabled child or young person at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled child; this will require all education providers to review current policies and practices and make appropriate amendments; and
 - failing to take reasonable steps to provide education using a reasonable alternative method where a physical feature places a disabled child or young person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled child or young person.
- In meeting these duties, the school will not be required to remove a physical feature or structure, but should take reasonable steps to work around the issue to enable access if at all possible.
- The Act also requires education providers to plan systematically to improve the accessibility of schools for disabled children and young people, through the planning route.
- The requirements of **Approved Document M of the Building Regulations (Access and Facilities for Disabled People), 1999** will be addressed in any new build/replacement projects. It is preferential to use the **Code of Practice BS8300 Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people** as it is more onerous. It is important to ensure that accessibility issues are addressed at the planning stages for new projects. Recommendations from the Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE), the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) are also taken into account.
- The **Education Act 1996**, as amended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001, places duties on schools and LEAs relating to the assessment of, and provision for, children and young people with special educational needs. Children have special educational needs if they:
 - have a learning difficulty which is a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of their age, or
 - have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the LEA, or

- are under compulsory school age and fall within the definitions above, or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them.
- The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) published **the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 Code of Practice for Schools** in June 2002. It explains the disability discrimination duties on schools and LEAs and shows how they might meet those duties, exemplified with case studies.
- The DfES Circular "**Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils**", published in July 2002, provides guidance on the statutory planning duties, which are to improve the physical environment of the school to enable better access; to increase the extent to which pupils with disabilities can participate in the schools' curriculum, and to improve the provision of information/learning materials for pupils with disabilities. Non-statutory guidance is also given on the preparation of the statutory Accessibility Strategy (LEAs) and Accessibility Plans (schools).
- LEAs and schools must have regard to the (revised) **SEN Code of Practice (2002)** in fulfilling their duties. This statutory guidance sets out a framework for effective school-based support and for developing strong partnerships between parents, schools, LEAs, health, social services and voluntary agencies, in order to work towards removing barriers to participation and learning.

Other Policies and Plans

➤ **DEVON COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

This document sets out the principle priorities for the community in Devon, based on partnership and consultation with all parties within the community

➤ **DEVON BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN**

This document sets out the process of accountability through target-setting and review in all areas of the council's work, based on the principles of Best Value.

➤ **DEVON DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY**

The policy seeks to promote equality of opportunity in the way in which the council services are delivered

➤ **DEVON EDUCATION INCLUSION STRATEGY**

This (non-statutory) strategy aims to fulfil national and local expectations and duties on promoting equality of opportunity in education and to reduce social exclusion.

➤ **DEVON EDUCATION ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This statutory plan centres on the physical use of education buildings and aims to identify and prioritise capital investment to ensure their condition, suitability and sufficiency, in order to raise achievement for all learners. One of its key purposes is to "...ensure inclusivity to allow access by all to school buildings and grounds."

➤ **DEVON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY**

This statutory policy aims to indicate the LEA's approach to identification, assessment and provision for children with special educational needs. There is a very significant overlap of children who have SEN and those with disabilities, although not every child with a disability has SEN, and vice versa.

➤ **DEVON SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN**

This statutory document provides information for schools and other partners of the LEA on general educational provision within the County, and is a key tool in the planning of school places; information about and planning for special educational needs provision and accessibility dovetails within the overall Plan.

➤ **DEVON EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

This statutory document is intended to focus efforts on school improvement and raising achievement, through schools' own internal review and development systems and the LEA's statutory duty to monitor, challenge and support its schools; the development of inclusion, improved accessibility and provision for SEN is one of the major themes.

DEVON BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

Focusing on steps to improve inclusion for children with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, this plan aims to promote coherent and comprehensive local arrangements for tackling behaviour and discipline needs.

➤ **DEVON EARLY YEARS DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE PLAN**

This plan aims to ensure the provision of good quality free education places for all three and four year olds and good quality affordable childcare for children aged 0 to 14 in every neighbourhood. Accessibility in private sector early education settings is the responsibility of the providers (proprietors), however, a copy of this Accessibility Strategy will be sent to every provider. The Accessibility Strategy does cover the nursery units attached to mainstream primary schools in Devon, however.

➤ **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN (LED BY SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE)**

This Plan aims to ensure that children in need are encouraged and enabled to achieve their full potential through effective multi-agency planning and delivery of services.

Publications and useful addresses

Disability Rights Commission (DRC) publications

A range of information and guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is available from the DRC, including the highly recommended Code of Practice for Schools and TALK video:

Telephone: 08457 622 633

Textphone: 08457 622 644

Fax: 08457 778 878

E-mail: enquiry@drc-gb.org

Post: DRC Helpline, FREEPOST, MID02164, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 9BR

Website <http://www.drc-gb.org>

Department for Education and Skills Publications

Code of Practice on School Admissions (1999)

Circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

The SEN Toolkit (2001) DfES

Accessible Schools: Planning to increase access to schools for disabled pupils (2002)

Accessible Schools: Summary Guidance 2002

The Department for Education and Skills, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BT

Telephone:

Public enquiries: 0870 000 2288

Publications Centre: 0845 602 2260

DfES Website: www.dfes.gov.uk

HMSO

- Building Bulletin 87 – Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools (1997)
- Building Bulletin 90 – Lighting Design for Schools (1999)
- Building Bulletin 91 - Access for Disabled people to School building
- Building Bulletin 93 - (out for consultation) Acoustic Design of Schools
- Building Bulletin 94 – Inclusive School Design. Accommodating pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (2001)
- Designing for 3 to 4 year olds: Guidance on Accommodation for Various Settings (1999)
- Managing School Facilities, Guide 7: Furniture and Equipment in Schools: a Purchasing Guide

The Stationery Office, PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/general enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax Orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: bookorder@thseso.co.uk

Website: www.clicktso.com

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

SENDIST, 7 th Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NW

Telephone: 020 7925 5750

Fax: 020 7925 6926

Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education

Room 2S203, S Block, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QU

Telephone: 0117 344 4007

Fax: 0117 344 4005

Website: www.inclusion.org.uk