



Brent Local Authority
Education Accessibility Strategy 2010-2014

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1.0 Vision, Values and Ambitions of Brent's Accessibility Strategy

The overall objective of this strategy is to minimise any adverse effects a pupil's learning difficulty or disability (LDD) might have on their learning outcomes by removing barriers to their learning.

Brent's ambitions for children and young people with LDD are to:

- develop tailored solutions to meet the needs of individuals, families and communities;
- develop an inclusive community welcoming to all;
- ensure all children and young people, whatever their needs, are able to access the same wide educational and life opportunities
- improve integrated service delivery, developing a 'team around the child' approach.

Brent's Children and Families Department promotes the key requirements, values and objectives of the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement through a network of support services including school improvement services, educational psychology service, specialist SEN advisory support, asset management and transport services.

To be fully effective it is important that this strategy is well understood, easily available and is clearly informed by other Brent strategies and plans such as Brent's Disability Equality Scheme, the Brent Children and Young People's Plan, Brent's Asset Management Plan and Brent's Strategy for Children and Young People with SEN and/or Disability.

2.0 Data on SEN and disability

In October 2009, just over 20% of the Brent School age population were identified as having special educational needs either at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of SEN. Brent maintains nearly 1500 statements of SEN. This represents just over 2% of all children and young people aged 0-19. Over 50% of children with statements attend mainstream schools where they receive additional support.

The number of pupils undergoing statutory assessment towards a statement of SEN has shown an increase of approximately 35% over the past 4 years.

Table 1: Statutory assessments initiated

2006	196
2007	258
2008	242
2009	264

The Authority is facing a significant increase in the number of children and young people identified with autism across the whole spectrum of needs. There are also increasing numbers of children with complex difficulties entering mainstream primary schools requiring high levels of support. In addition, it is anticipated that increasing numbers of pupils with moderate learning difficulties (many with additional social, emotional and communication needs) and pupils with complex physical and medical needs will be placed in their local mainstream school with support rather than at a special school.

The Authority is committed to expanding local specialist provision within mainstream and special schools as an alternative to out-Borough placements. Taking into account the above factors and the projected increase in school population in Brent, current planning assumptions are that we will need to increase capacity for local, specialist placements (in special schools or additionally resourced mainstream provision) by 30% over the next 10 years.

The Disability Equality Duty requires that data is collected and analysed for young people with SEN and disabilities. Not all children identified with SEN will have a disability and not all children with disability will have special educational needs. The data currently available for planning relates mainly to children with SEN. This needs to be addressed in the next phase of the accessibility strategy in conjunction with health services.

Priorities arising from data on SEN and Disability

1. Systematically collect and analyse relevant data about children and young people with SEN and disability and use it explicitly to plan provision and promote inclusion.
2. Undertake the necessary strategic planning to meet increased demand for local SEN provision in mainstream and special schools.

3.0 Support provided to schools.

The local authority, through the School Improvement Service, provides advice and support for schools on the leadership and management of special educational needs and disabilities and the development of inclusive practice. This support continues to include written guidance, review meetings between schools and school improvement advisers and a wide range of training. Specific training and support is provided for new SENCOs and Brent promotes and supports the Ofsted framework for school self evaluation, provision mapping and the Primary National Strategy Self Evaluation toolkit for SEN and Disability. A three year rolling programme of LDD audits is carried out in all Brent schools to support school self-evaluation.

Brent's Children and Families Department also provides a wide range of specialist advice and support to schools and pupils through, for example, the Educational Psychology Service, the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service and other outreach services operating from schools or nurseries. In addition, the Department works with a wide range of partners including the Primary Care Trust and the Central and North West London Mental Health Trust. These services and partners will be closely involved in implementing this strategy. The arrangements for partnership working are set out in Brent's Children and Young People's Plan.

Monitoring shows that training, service quality and guidance are relevant and well regarded and therapeutic services are seen as very beneficial to pupils.

The review suggests that schools in general have adopted inclusive practices, trained staff in both LDD awareness and in specific skills and include within their senior management team a person with LDD responsibilities. However because of staff turnover and greater inclusion in mainstream schools, the Council proposes to continue to provide awareness training and skill-based training.

Priorities for Support provided to schools.

1. Continue the rolling programme of LDD audits of all schools to support school self evaluation and monitor quality of school accessibility plans and disability equality scheme.
2. Encourage all leadership teams to include staff with responsibility for LDD;
3. Maintain training programmes on disability equality and accessibility planning and continue to provide advice to schools on reasonable adjustments in specific cases.

4.0 Development of Premises

Progress has been made in improving the accessibility of schools for those with mobility problems through investment in the main capital programme supplemented by the Schools Access Initiative grant.

Table 2: Accessibility of Brent Schools

	2006	2009
High accessibility – school has capacity to deliver an inclusive curriculum with no significant physical barriers	15	24
Medium accessibility – school has capacity to deliver an inclusive curriculum but physical barriers restrict scope	51	43
Low accessibility – Physical barriers limit ability of school to deliver an inclusive curriculum	20	16

The highly accessible schools are spread across all 5 localities which means there is an accessible school within reasonable travelling distance for most families. It is becoming more expensive to increase physical accessibility because the works now required in medium and low accessibility schools are more extensive and also because additional fire precaution works and more complex evacuation arrangements are now necessary. Given the improvements to physical accessibility that have already been put in place, it is proposed that the priority for use of School Access Initiative funds now shifts to aiding the inclusion of pupils with a wider range of needs including autistic spectrum condition, sensory impairment behaviour and emotional needs and mental health disabilities.

School Access Initiative funding has already been used to improve the acoustic environments of those mainstream schools who have additionally resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment and also to support the development of secondary provision for autistic spectrum condition (ASC) at Preston Manor High School.

There are other planned developments to increase the capacity of mainstream schools to effectively meet a wider range of special educational needs. It is proposed that a primary ASC additionally resourced provision is developed and also that a primary and secondary additionally resourced provision is established for children and young people with complex physical and medical needs as an alternative to special school placement.

Brent has now been successful in gaining entry to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. This is a major opportunity to use capital investment to transform learning and promote inclusion in Brent Secondary Schools. A strategy for change document is being developed in collaboration with secondary headteachers. Under these proposals, each secondary school will be a SEN Centre of Excellence providing for a wide range of special educational needs. In addition, additional resourced mainstream provision will

be established in some schools for moderate learning difficulties with additional needs and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

There has been investment in special school provision and a new post 16 block has been established at Hay Lane and Grove Park schools. A major re-building programme for the two schools has also been developed and approved.

Priorities for development of premises

1. Shift the priority for use of the School Access Initiative funds towards facilities that will aid inclusion of children with autistic spectrum condition, sensory impairment and behaviour and emotional needs.
2. Continue the 5 yearly audit for establishing the accessibility of school accommodation, identifying programmes of work to make the physical environment more suited to children with SEN and disabilities.
3. Establish specialist additionally resourced mainstream provision for
 - Primary and secondary aged pupils with autistic spectrum condition
 - Primary and secondary aged pupils with complex physical and medical needs
 - Secondary aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties with additional needs
 - Secondary aged pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties

5.0 Provision of information

In line with the recommendations of the Lamb Inquiry, the Authority believes that good accessible and open information is the key to the development of positive working relationships with parents, schools and partner agencies. This needs to be underpinned by written publicly available information.

Information on SEN is available through the website and other publications. Information has been updated during the period of the previous accessibility strategy and this needs to be continued to ensure full compliance with the SEN information regulations.

Similarly, schools need to provide clear, digestible information to parents including the publishing of their Disability Equality Scheme.

For children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities, accessible information will need to be made available, using alternative formats where required. Limited progress has been made in this area and it will need to have greater focus within the 2010-12 strategy.

Priorities for information and guidance

1. Improve information to parents about school accessibility, local approaches to promoting inclusion and roles and responsibilities of schools and the local authority.
2. Provide information for children and adults in alternative formats where required.

6.0 Consultation, implementation and review

The Authority will undertake wide consultation on this strategy and the following groups will be consulted

- Headteacher and chairs of governors of Brent schools
- Diocesan authority
- A representative group of children and young people, including those with disabilities, through youth participation structures
- A representative group of parents of children and young people with disabilities, through the Parent Partnership Service
- Local Primary Care Trust and CAMHS Service
- Brent Association for Voluntary Action (BRAVA)
- Teachers Panel

Once consultation is complete, the final strategy will be issued. Implementation of the strategy will be monitored through the SEN and Disability Advisory Group. An annual report on implementation will be made widely available.

Priorities for consultation, implementation and review.

1. Improve the ways in which schools, parents, children and disabled people can contribute to the development review and monitoring of this strategy.



Local Authority Education Accessibility Strategy 2010-12

Summary of priorities

1. Systematically collect and analyse relevant data held by the local authority and partner agencies about children and young people with SEN **and** disabilities and use it explicitly to plan provision and promote inclusion.
2. Undertake the necessary strategic planning to meet increased demand for local SEN provision in mainstream and special schools
3. Continue the rolling programme of LDD audits of all schools to support school self-evaluation and monitor quality of school accessibility plans and disability equality schemes.
4. Encourage all leadership teams to include staff with responsibilities for LDD behaviour and mental health needs.
5. Maintain training programmes on disability equality and accessibility planning and continue to provide advice to schools on reasonable adjustments in specific cases
6. Shift the priority for use of Schools Access Initiative funds towards improvement of facilities that will aid inclusion of children with a wide range of needs including autistic spectrum condition, behaviour and emotional difficulties and sensory impairment.
7. Continue the 5 yearly audit for establishing accessibility of school accommodation identifying programmes of work required to make the physical environment more suited to children with LDD.
8. Establish specialist additionally resourced provision for
 - Primary and secondary aged pupils with autistic spectrum condition
 - Primary and secondary aged pupils with complex physical and medical needs
 - Secondary aged pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional needs
 - Secondary aged pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
9. Improve information to parents about school accessibility, local approaches to promoting inclusion and roles and responsibilities of schools and the local authority.
10. Provide support to schools in providing information for children and adults in alternative formats where required.
11. Improve the ways in which schools, parents, children and disabled people can contribute to the development, review and monitoring of the strategy.