Aylesford School

Accessibility Policy

In Conjunction with Mitie

Ratified/Reviewed by…	Date	Date to be reviewed
LGB	September 2024	September 2027

Access Statement

Project Overview

At the start of the development of this school the advice of the KCC Access Officer was sought. These consultations have proved valuable and it is confirmed that the proposals for the school follows the advice that was given. Where there have been access difficulties, these have been discussed with the KCC Project team and an agreed approach has been followed.

Consequently, the school is designed to conform to BS8300: 2001 ‘Code of Practice’ Design of buildings and its approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.

In addition to this, measures are included to give “inclusion” for students. DfES Building Bulletin 91 ‘Access for disabled people to schools’ buildings’ and BB94 “Inclusive School Design” detail these requirements. Compliance with these documents will help to ensure that suitable features, fittings and equipment are provided throughout the school. They also detail ways of ensuring that the needs of people with hearing and sight problems, as well as limited mobility, are met.

Amongst the items which the school provides under the accessibility banner are dedicated drop-off areas within the layouts, along with sensitively located disabled parking bays and minibus/taxi access and parking. Pedestrian crossings are provided to promote improved accessibility and safety.

Approaches to building entrances are direct and clearly signed, are well lit and are highlighted using luminance contrast. Approaches are level or have shallow ramps to the main entrance doors which have assisted opening. In the event of a fire, these automatic doors have fail-safe devices.

Reception areas are carefully detailed and well-lit to assist the disabled visitors, staff and pupils.

Throughout the school, circulation routes are broad, well-lit and well defined. Circulation routes are to be managed by the school to maintain clear access and egress paths.

Doors have been detailed throughout the school. Main entrance doors have assisted opening and ensure an effective clear width exceeding 1000mm.

Main corridor doors generally use electro-magnetic hold open devices to ease movement throughout the building.

Doors to classrooms are single leaf door sets of 1010mm structural opening and a minimum clear opening of 800mm. Most classrooms do not require self-closers. Care has been taken with leading edge dimensions.

Platform lifts are available to disabled and wheelchair users in this school. These will increase the independence of such users and are large enough for most electronically powered and self-propelled wheelchairs. These lifts are not for general school use.

Fire safety refuges for wheelchair users on the upper floors in the school are provided within the fire escape routes. Generally, stairs have been detailed for “inclusion”.

Wheelchair accessible WCs are provided within reasonable travel distances throughout the school although, in some cases, the 40m run is exceeded. In addition, the male and female changing rooms have accessible disabled accommodation.

Hearing induction loops are fitted where appropriate and fittings are detailed for ambulant disabled user to improve inclusion.

The school has been designed to meet the requirements of Part M of the 2004 Building Regulations. The school plans have been approved by the Building Regulations Approved Inspectors.

Existing Buildings Scheduled for Refreshment

It has been agreed that existing buildings do not require full accessibility upgrades. However, careful attention has been taken in the detailed specifications as follows:

Repainting – select the colour scheme to improve the visual separation between planes and features such as doors. This is simple to achieve and can even add some architectural drama to spaces.

Acoustics can be improved. Floor finishes – Supercord carpet laid in classrooms and corridors is better acoustically than vinyl or needlepunch carpets.

If a new ceiling is installed, the Hygiene acoustic ceiling specified will improve the room acoustic performance if there is no ceiling currently in the room. New acoustic celling was fitted in summer 2022.

Lighting. Where new lighting is being provided then it should be reaching the minimum lux levels appropriate for that teaching space. Whole school LED light has been upgraded 2024.

Aylesford School was a phased redevelopment of the existing school site. The existing C Block is retained but the remainder of the school buildings have been demolished.

The site available for new buildings is controlled by the need to retain the existing playing fields.

Overall, the design has allowed a high degree of accessibility to be achieved to the new buildings. The new buildings are designed to provide access to all teaching and staff areas of the school.

Access within the retained building is improved by the addition of a new stair and platform lift. The remainder of the retained block scheduled for refreshment has been completed and, as a result, the existing standard of accessibility remains.
The sequence of comments follows the headings of BS 8300:2001:

4. Car parking, setting down points and garaging

The vehicle and pedestrian approach are good.

Setting down points are available at each end of the school.

Wheelchair accessible parking is provided close to the main entrance, plus additional provision at the opposite end of the school.

Garaging is not provided.

5. Access routes to and around buildings

It is a clearly defined route with an almost level approach.

The routes around the new buildings are reasonably level, with no need for steps.

Each teaching block is linked by a broad, gently sloping path with a canopy.

6. Entering a building

There is a clearly defined main entrance.

Wheelchair friendly thresholds are provided.

An assist opening main entrance door is provided.

A double door entrance, with an opening leaf of 1000mm effective clear width, is provided.

Doors are fully glazed with appropriate manifestation.

Easy to use door furniture has been provided.

Mat wells have been avoided.

Flush barrier carpets with a slip resistant finish are provided.

The reception desk incorporates a lowered section for wheelchair users.

7. Horizontal circulation

The school is designed with a clear circulation route.

Major circulation routes exceed 1800mm clear width.

There are some projections from walls, but these have been minimised as far as possible.

Floors in corridors

The floors are level with a non-patterned finish.

Lighting to corridors

The lighting is even, diffused and without glare.

Doors leading into corridors

These have generally been avoided, with the exception of the sports hall doors, as it is dangerous for door to open into sports halls.

Doors across corridors

The majority of doors across corridors are fitted with magnetic hold open devices. During the school day the doors are held open. Out of main school hours these doors are released and self-close.

Doors fitted with self-closing devices

Fire doors across corridors are fitted with hold open devices.

Most doors into classrooms are single leaf doors. These use 1010mm structural opening door set, giving an effective clear width in excess of 800mm. Most classroom doors do not require self-closers.

8. Vertical circulation

Steps and stairs

Stairs are designed with a going of 280mm and a rise of 167mm, as Building Regulations Part M for schools.

Goings are uniform, and treads are carpeted with contrasting reduced slip nosings.

Rise of flights

The maximum rise is 12 steps.

Stair clear width

Minimum clears width is 1200mm.

Landings

Level landings are provided at the head of stairs.

Handrails

Handrails are provided on both sides of stairs and continue around the landings at a height of 900mm above the pitch line of flights and 1100mm above the landings.

Each handrail projects 300mm beyond the first and last nosing.

Artificial lighting

The illuminance at tread level exceeds 100lux.

Surface finishes

Heavy duty carpet is provided with contrasting aluminium nosings.

Internal ramps

There are no internal ramps.

Lifts

Enclosed platform lifts are provided to serve each teaching block. The use of platform lifts was discussed at the outset of the project and agreed with the KCC Access Officer. Platform lifts comply with BS6440. Ambulant students will not be encouraged to use the lifts for school discipline reasons.

An existing building (TB3) is retained and refreshed as part of the scheme. A new stair block, and platform lift are provided to serve this building. This allows wheelchair access to the upper floor of this building for the first time.

Stair lifts are not provided.

9. Surfaces and communication aids

Finishes have been selected with good practical characteristics. The key features are as follows:

Floors

Main circulation areas are contract cord carpet or reduced slip vinyl finish. This is matt finish with low resistance to wheelchair users. It is a reduced slip surface. Carpet reduces echo in corridors.

Finishes in classrooms are either carpet or a reduced slip vinyl finish with an acoustic backing.

Skirtings are provided and are coloured to match the walls.

Walls

Generally matt or satin finish paint on smooth board finishes. The colour scheme contrasts with the floors, ceiling and doors.

Doors, architraves and ironmongery

Doors are a painted finish. This allows a contrast between the door opening and the surrounding architrave and main wall.

The ironmongery is easy to grip, low snag risk and contrasts with the background.

Ceilings

Generally, white matt or satin finish. Ceilings have been selected to give a suitable acoustic performance in each area.

Signs

Signage is provided where appropriate.

Public address system

A public address system is provided.

Hearing enhancement: This is provided in key areas such as the school hall and reception area.

10. Facilities in Buildings

The new buildings have been designed to give accessibility to allow the curriculum to be taught. General teaching areas are wheelchair accessible. Specialist subjects have wheelchair accessibility to all areas of the curriculum.

The acoustic performance within the classrooms is generally as Building Bulletin 93 for the new buildings. Reverberation noise and background noise are reduced as part of the design. However, hearing assistance is not provided within general classrooms and pupils requiring hearing support will require additional equipment to be supplied.

Windows

Sill heights have been set to allow furniture to be replaced against walls. Views from the rooms are restricted for all pupils when seated. Pupils are not expected to need to open windows.

Public telephones are not provided in the school.

11. Assembly Areas

Counters and reception desks

A wheelchair accessible section is provided. Hearing assistance is provided.

Raked floor lecture rooms

All rooms have level floors.

12. Individual rooms

For classrooms, see comments above.

Showers and changing rooms

2 wheelchair accessible combined toilet/shower changing rooms are provided as part of the sports department suite of rooms. These are separate from the main pupil changing areas as this allows these rooms also to be used by adults and gives privacy for showering away from other pupils. A degree of separation weighed up against a pure policy for inclusion reflects the realities of life in schools.

Provision of lavatory accommodation

Wheelchair accessible toilets are provided as part of the toilets area design. A single wheelchair accessible toilet is provided. This is separate from the pupil toilets as this allows adult use of the toilet as well as for pupils, giving flexibility. This toilet is designed as BS 8300, fig 55. An alarm is provided in this toilet.

Within the pupil toilets, an ambulant accessible cubicle is provided, designed as BS 8300 fig 60.

Location of toilets

Toilets are distributed throughout the buildings in response to the education planning agreed with the school.

Teaching block 2 has no toilets. This is to allow more toilets to be located in Teaching blocks 1 and 4. Teaching block 3 uses the existing provision. This has been agreed with the school and Building control.

13.0 Building Types

The above commentary demonstrates the work carried out to comply with BS 8300, clause 13.9.1, for educational, cultural and scientific buildings