



THE MINSTER SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

School Lead: School Business Director

Date of last review: Autumn 2017

Date of next review: Autumn 2022

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Signed by Chair of Committee:

Introduction

The school has extensive experience of meeting the needs of young people with a wide range of learning support needs and physical disabilities. The accommodation has been designed so that it has no physical barriers to access and it is likely that a number of students with new and different types of needs will be admitted in the future.

A thorough review has been undertaken to consider:

- the accommodation and other physical needs of all students with special needs or disabilities;
- the curriculum, pastoral and other support needs of these students.

This document is in two parts:

1. A description of the steps that have been taken to make the building fully accessible for students and adults with mobility difficulties, in accordance with DDA, SENDA and Building Regulation requirements. Steps have also been taken to meet the needs of individuals with hearing and visual impairments.
2. The outcomes of access surveys carried out across all departments in the school. This identifies areas of need, the steps to be taken to ensure access to all curriculum areas by all students and the associated training needs for staff.

The specific needs of individual students with special educational needs or disabilities are assessed prior to entry to the school and a detailed plan drawn up to ensure that they gain the maximum benefit from their time at the school. This overall plan is provided as a general source of information about the physical attributes of the building. It can also be used to help plan strategies to meet the needs of individual students. It is designed for use both by members of the internal school community and a wider group of people, such as parents, feeder primary schools and others who are interested in the school's approach to this area of its work.

Part 1 - Accommodation description

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The school is for 1600 pupils and approximately 150 part time and full time staff. The building is generally 2 stories with a 3 storey section at the south end. The ground slopes up a hill at the south end of the site. The Governors and staff of the school are committed to making the school fully usable and accessible by people with all types of disability. This is reflected not only in the design of the building but also in the management practices and pedagogical approaches adopted by staff. This document should be read in conjunction with part 2 of the school's Special Needs and Disability Access Plan produced in accordance with its duties under the SEN Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act (2010).
- 1.2. The school has been designed with reference to Building Regulations Approved Document Part M (2004). The school has contributed to the design brief including room data sheets describing detailed requirements for the operation of the building. Further input has included meetings and consultation with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) access officers. An NCC guide to complying with the DDA in schools has informed the design approach but has not been fully adopted, as the scope of this guide was written originally for PFI schools where adaptations in the future were harder to ensure.
- 1.3 The measures taken to ensure an inclusive environment with good accessibility to all users of the site and building including visitors, students and staff are set out below. Included below are specific areas where an alternative approach to that described in the approved NCC document has been adopted. This has been done to prevent disability discrimination without these measures conflicting with the operational requirements of the services to be provided. NCC guidelines that have not been adopted have been noted, and where approval for this course of action has been given by NCC, this is recorded.

2 Approach to Building

- 2.1 The building is visible from the main access road. There is a system of external signage and external lighting providing clearly distinguished routes for visitors approaching from Nottingham Road by foot, bike, car, or bus.
- 2.2 The main entrance is clearly recognisable from Nottingham Road aligned with a new pedestrian crossing. A path leads pedestrians directly from the road to the main entrance, which has a protective canopy.
- 2.3 Cyclists will find cycle racks directly ahead close to the second entrance.
- 2.4 There is a set down area suitable for wheelchair users arriving in cars. A pathway leads from here to the main entrance
- 2.5 There is bus drop off and collection area for the pupils on the western side of the building. This is used between 8.30-9.00am and 3.15-3.45pm. Pupils arriving by bus use the secondary entrance, which also has a canopy.
- 2.6 Vehicles turn off, after moving through the area noted in item 2.5, to a separate car park for staff and visitors. There are sufficient parking spaces for all members of staff.
- 2.7 There are identified parking spaces for regular users of the building who are also wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. From this parking area wheelchair users can reach the second

entrance after travelling approximately 50m. Entrance is controlled via an intercom system. With up to 1800 persons in the building including students, teaching staff and the facilities team.

- 2.8 The car park area is secured by gates only when the building is not in use. If the building is in use after core school hours, the gates to the car park will be open. A number of parking spaces fall outside the secure fence line.
- 2.9 Vehicles and pedestrians are kept apart with separate routes to the main front door along paths at shallow gradients not exceeding 1:35. Cyclists will be required to dismount where using pedestrian pathways.
- 2.10 There is a pathway linking the Minster School to Southwell, part of which is a public right of way. Cyclists will be required to dismount when using this path.

3 External Areas

- 3.1 All thresholds are level. External areas are generally level around the buildings apart from the stepped amphitheatre. The rugby pitch and all weather pitch (AWP) are at a higher level to the south of the site, reached by sloped paths at less than 1:20 gradients.
- 3.2 The amphitheatre is accessible by wheelchair at the top and the bottom. NCC has agreed that there is no requirement to run a ramped access to each stepped level of the amphitheatre.
- 3.3 There are sports pitches at the south end of the site. There is a rise of nearly 4.5m to the level of the AWP and Rugby pitch. These are reached by stepped and sloped access paths, at less than 1:20 gradient. However, the travel distance and rise are still considerable and an assessment was made to check if this would discriminate against disabled spectators as well as players as they were considered excessive for independent pupil users, as well as public use. An option to add an external lift to reach the AWP and Rugby pitch was considered but found not to be a feasible solution. NCC has agreed that sufficient provision for access had been made given the site constraints and there is no external lift to reach the rugby pitch and AWP.
- 3.4 Spectators and users in wheelchairs may be assisted to reach the Rugby pitch and AWP via the sloped access paths. Vehicle access is also available to the AWP and from here the rugby pitch can be reached.
- 3.5 Other turf pitches include 2 football pitches and/or the field and track area. These are fully accessible. Wheelchair users accessing the pitches from the changing rooms exit the building through the doors in the curtain walling to the amphitheatre.
- 3.6 The MUGAs, located by the fully accessible changing rooms, provide sufficient space for wheelchair users and viewers. The changing room doors allow for the use of sports wheelchairs.

4 Entrance and External Doors to the building

- 4.1 At the main entrance from Nottingham Road, there is one side hung power assisted entrance door (operated either by motorised assistance as one approaches the door or by wall mounted mid height push buttons opening the doors) leading through a draught lobby to the reception desk. This entrance foyer leads directly to the school through a secure doorway.

- 4.2 At the second entrance from the car park, there is one side-hung power-assisted entrance door (operated either by motorised assistance as one approaches the door or by wall mounted mid height push buttons opening the doors) leading through a draught lobby to the reception desk. This entrance foyer directly leads to the school through a secure doorway.
- 4.3 There are two levels of manifestation on the glass at between 1400mm to 1600mm high and between 850mm and 1000mm. There are clearly visible warning signs on these doors indicating that they are power operated. They are capable of manual operation and will fail open should the power fail. The threshold to these doors is level with the internal floor. All other external doors also have a level threshold.
- 4.4 To have automatic opening doors at both the front door and internal lobby door would work against other access and environmental control measures. NCC has therefore agreed that having external automatic doors only is sufficient. This allows a disabled person to get into a sheltered area unaided where they can be received, but preserves the security of the rest of the building.

5 Internal Accessibility

- 5.1 Glazed screens and vision panels to doors create a sense of openness through the building interior. Where full height glazing is used, it is made manifest in the detail design in accordance with the requirements of Building Regulations part M.
- 5.2 Reception desks at the main entrance, library, 6th form, and student services are designed with a lowered section for wheelchair users.

6 Internal doors

- 6.1 The use of self-closing doors in circulation areas has been avoided where possible. However, a limited number of doors on closers are required for fire compartmentation and means of escape. All such closers in circulation areas are on electromagnetic hold open controls to prevent disruption to circulation through the building and promote openness. Where mechanical door closers are required for fire safety purposes they have been selected for their ease of opening by young children and wheelchair users. All closers are adjustable to improve ease of operation.
- 6.2 In cases where doors to disabled WCs open out into circulation areas these are restricted to areas in excess of 1800mm wide or where limited occupation is anticipated. In some cases disabled WC doors open inwards to avoid impact on circulation areas. In these cases the WC doors can also be opened to swing outwards in case of emergency.

7 Door Leaves

- 7.1 Door leaf widths to classrooms generally have a clear opening of at least 850mm. The minimum clear width of any doors (excluding projections) is 800mm allowing for comprehensive pupil, staff and visitor access throughout the building. Side clearance of at least 300mm is provided between the leading edge of the door and a return wall.
- 7.2 Door leaves have laminate finish faces, set within a natural finished timber frame and painted wall. Colours have been selected to provide sufficient visual contrast to assist partially sighted users at doors.

- 7.3 Store and cupboard doors are generally white laminate, with white painted frames. This has been accepted by the school and Building Control because they are to rooms not generally used by pupils or the public.

8 Door Furniture

- 8.1 All door opening furniture to classrooms, circulation areas, and administration areas is of a lever action type and is of a contrasting colour to the door leaf.

9 Internal Corridors

- 9.1 Corridors are generally at least 1800mm wide, allowing two wheelchair users to pass each other. Corridors are never less than 1250mm (in the admin area).

10 Vertical Circulation

- 10.1 There are two lifts each with a capacity for up to thirteen people providing access to the first and second floors. Their sizes (1575x1400mm) were agreed with NCC and are sized to take a wheelchair. They are provided with lift call controls mounted between 900 and 1100mm high with relief symbols and audible announcements both internally and externally. Lift controls allow the use of a proximity fob for independent access.
- 10.2 There are eight accommodation stairs, and two internal access stairs to plant room areas. Stairs have contrasting nosings visible against risers and treads, and all have closed risers. All areas below stairs and landings are used for cupboards and stores, thus preventing risks to partially sighted users in these areas.
- 10.3 There are wheelchair refuge bays in the stairwells. There are alarm systems for wheelchair users in these locations.

11 Disabled WC and Sanitary Accommodation

- 11.1 The building is provided with sanitary accommodation to meet the needs of all the building users including wheelchair users and other people with mobility difficulties. This includes pupils, visitors and members of staff. Pupil toilets on the ground floor will also be used by the public out of hours. There is provision for semi-ambulant users in all toilets.
- 11.2 There are twelve wheelchair accessible toilets in total, located adjacent to all areas where there is toilet provision. 4 of these toilets are available for use by both staff and pupils in wheelchairs. Eight are for use by staff and all pupils. Part M of the Building Regulations stipulates disabled toilets as 1500 x 2100mm internal dimensions. NCC's optimal size for disabled toilets is 2200 x 2000mm. NCC has agreed to 2200 x 1800mm.
- 11.3 On the ground floor near the entrance there is a hygiene room containing a wheelchair accessible toilet, sluice and a hoist. There is also an assisted shower room adjacent to the main changing rooms that serve the sports hall and gym. This space also includes a wheelchair accessible toilet. The WCs in both these spaces have an integral bidet system.

12 Special Educational Needs provision

- 12.1 The SEN area is located near to the Learning Resource Centre and student services reception, and is integrated into the school.
- 12.2 A retreat room is provided adjacent to a staff leader base and SEN classroom. The SEN classroom can be subdivided. The retreat room is a low stimulus room, lit by a skylight but with no windows or other external views, and is available for students in distress. Some children will come here with challenging behaviour and children with Autistic spectrum disorders can also self-refer to this space. This space has different levels and types of adult support and supervision depending on the room use at any specific time.
- 12.3 Teaching assistants are able to take groups of students from classrooms to an adjacent space to continue learning; for example in a seminar room or breakout space, so that students can stay in the learning environment area. Teaching assistants will be able to take some students off to the SEN classroom or Study Centre, adjacent to the retreat room, for review, in a more intimate, less formal, calming area. This space can be subdivided into two separate areas with a folding acoustic screen or used as one space equivalent in size to the general teaching classrooms.

13 General construction details

- 13.1 Switches and sockets for general use are provided within the range of 450mm min and 1200mm max above the adjacent floor level. The school has agreed to have white switches even when set on a white wall or white dado trunking.
- 13.2 NCC agreed that no ramp is required to the stepped stage of the recital room as the room can be configured to allow visitors or performers who are wheelchair users to use the main floor area.
- 13.3 Careful use of contrasting colours has been used to aid navigation for visually impaired building users, particularly at staircases and in public areas. The grey fair face concrete columns contrast with the light coloured floor in the heart space. Dark walls are not combined with dark floors. NCC agreed that there is no requirement for skirting at brick wall/floor junctions.
- 13.4 Colours are used to define departments to assist wayfinding. Internal signage has colours and graphics or symbols to assist wayfinding. Floor colours vary and help distinguish circulation areas.
- 13.5 Blinds to windows are medium grey and perforated for views through.

14 Aids to Communication

- 14.1 A hearing enhancement system has been provided in the following public and performance spaces:

HG110/111 Drama studio
DG150 Recital Room
HG102 Assembly Hall

This system is not required in spaces adjacent to these performance areas. For normal speech, a person wearing a hearing aid can switch the unit to its normal operation. Induction loops have not been provided within:

HG100 Heart space
HG101 Dining
HG098 Dining
HG099 Resource Area
EG071 Servery area
EG095 Sports Hall

A hearing enhancement system has also been provided at the main entrance reception area.

Portable hearing enhancement systems will be provided by the school for use in all teaching spaces in each department when these are required.

15 Teapoint Facilities

- 15.1 There is one public teapoint facility within the building, on the ground floor. The worktop is set at no more than 850mm from the floor and the taps are the lever type. Furniture can be arranged to allow a turning space of 1500 x 1500mm immediately in front of it.

16 Accessible Furniture

- 16.1 The provision of specially designed, wheelchair accessible furniture has been limited to certain locations. There is appropriate provision at the reception desks at main reception, student reception, library and sixth form reception. A height adjustable desk is provided in each standard classroom and special access arrangements for specific rooms have been made as detailed below.
- 16.2 Office areas can be reconfigured for specific staff wheelchair access needs. Provided sufficient space for a three point turn is available for wheelchair users, layouts have been agreed as acceptable by the school.
- 16.3 ICT use in breakout areas: Fixed worktops are 900mm high, with 700mm clearance below. Loose tables at standard heights have been provided in corridor breakout spaces providing workspace at differing heights.
- 16.4 Wheelchair seating and a row of loose seating is allowed for in front of the retractable seating to the studio theatre.
- 16.5 Generic rules for sinks were agreed with NCC as follows:
Height adjustable sinks are used only in food technology. Where several sinks are available in worktops at 850-900mm, one lower sink is generally fitted to a lowered area of worktop at 720mm. In the science department, this applies to three rooms only as item 16.12 below. Where only one sink is available, or two including a specialist sink such as a dyebath, the wheelchair user's desk will be supplied with a bowl for washing and sinks fitted to suit 900mm high furniture. If a sink is fitted to 720mm high worktop, no unit is fitted below so that there is full wheelchair access. If a standard sink is at 850-900mm, a unit can be fitted below, as this height is not suitable for a wheelchair user.
- 16.6 Belfast sinks: generic rules agreed with NCC as follows: to be positioned to have 1/4 turn lever taps to the side to allow access for wheelchair users. The Belfast sinks do not require access to 3 sides.
- 16.7 The Junior Department has a lower sink at 720mm in the wet area in the corridor. There is insufficient space to add a higher sink. This means there is not a sink for staff at 850mm and Junior

department staff are aware of the risk of back pain from using a low sink. This approach has been agreed with NCC.

- 16.8 Food technology has a height adjustable sink and cooker in perimeter. This has been agreed with NCC.
- 16.9 CG053 3D Art, CF057 Art 2, CF236 Art 1: height adjustable sinks provided.
- 16.10 CG059 Food Technology, CG231 Food Technology: one height adjustable sink, one adjustable height cooker, all with no units below. Agreed with NCC.
- 16.11 CG060 Multi Materials, CG063 Multi Materials: a separate height adjustable worktable has been provided. A wheelchair position has not been provided at a standard four-person worktop.
- 16.12 CS311 Science Lab, CS312 Science Lab, CS317 Science Lab: in each room, one sink (without drainer) and adjacent worktop lowered to 720mm, no units below. Agreed with NCC.
- 16.13 Generally in all rooms in Block C with Belfast sinks: taps to Belfast sinks are lever style and side mounted wherever possible to allow ease of reach by wheelchair users. Agreed with NCC
- 16.14 Other equipment: Semi-industrial tools etc: each item has its own specific health and safety risk and access by users in wheelchairs will be assessed by the school on a case by case basis. Multimaterials adjustable worktops for wheelchair users allow a second student to share the desk to avoid isolation. Agreed with NCC.
- 16.15 Use of servery and dining area: no special provision has been provided in the dining area. Wheelchair users will be assisted by fellow pupils or staff.
- 16.16 The furniture colours have been selected to provide adequate contrast for visually impaired users.

17 Other Developments

- 17.1 The school will continue to work closely with its feeder primary schools and NCC to identify any potential students with specific access needs at the earliest possible opportunity. This will allow any further adaptations to be made or specialist equipment to be provided well in advance of the student's admission to the school.
- 17.2 Similarly, any potential new member of staff with specific access needs will have their requirements assessed and addressed prior to taking up a post in the school.
- 17.3 The school will ensure that appropriate training in the use of specialist equipment is given to relevant staff working with students and adults with specific access needs.
- 17.4 The school's emergency plans, including the fire evacuation plan, will be reviewed regularly to ensure that systems are in place to ensure the prompt evacuation to students or adults with mobility needs to an appropriate place of safety in the event of an emergency. Personal evacuation plans are created for those who need them.

Part 2 - Curriculum Access survey

Summary of responses

The table below summarises the individual responses from departments to the curriculum access survey.

	Area of need	Subdivisions	Means of ensuring access	Training needs identified
A	Cognition and learning needs	Specific learning difficulty	<p>Differentiation using resources from a bank or designed on a one off basis to meet individual needs. Can include worksheets, writing frames, guided reading.</p> <p>One to one support including simplified or modified tasks.</p> <p>Use of guidance and specific support from learning support department.</p> <p>Use of TAs and DAs to work with individuals or small groups</p> <p>Contribution to and use of IEPs and other personalised learning information</p> <p>Grouping students according to ability and needs</p> <p>Setting group sizes appropriate to needs</p> <p>Sharing good practice through staff development activities</p> <p>Access to appropriate ICT equipment and learning resources</p> <p>Recognition of different learning styles possibly linked to groupings of students</p> <p>Use of specific packages available from internet to help meet students' particular needs or address specific subject needs</p> <p>Group based activities to allow and encourage peer learning for less able students</p> <p>Increased use of speaking and listening activities and reduced reliance on written work for students who find writing difficult.</p>	<p>Approaches to supporting students with dyslexia.</p> <p>Development and sharing of strategies for successful differentiation in mixed ability groups</p> <p>Development of material for students entering at level 2 or below to access the curriculum</p> <p>Development of resources and teaching techniques to accommodate different learning styles</p> <p>Provision of student specific information to be enhanced and supported with suggested strategies for meeting needs</p> <p>Tailored support for staff based on needs of individual students</p> <p>Need to keep up to date with any LEA initiatives, training opportunities for TAs and technological developments.</p>

	Area of need	Subdivisions	Means of ensuring access	Training needs identified
			<p>Access to SEN database allows staff access to student information, particularly relating to explanation of needs, funding, involvement and use of external agencies and advice on provision.</p> <p>Use of IEPs and review meeting minutes as sources of information.</p>	<p>Opportunities to attend conferences and other CPD activities including LEA conferences.</p>
B	Behavioural, emotional and social development needs	Behavioural, emotional and social difficulty	<p>Use of planned placement of students either with particular members of staff or in teaching groups to mitigate possible problems. Can relate to individual students or groups of students known to be likely to cause difficulties if they are together.</p> <p>Consideration of seating arrangements to produce supportive groupings</p> <p>Use of TAs and DAs to support individual students and members of staff</p> <p>Varied and appropriate teaching methods with regular feedback to/from students</p> <p>Clear, consistent and properly enforced guidelines on behaviour with graded responses to challenging behaviour. System of rewards for good behaviour.</p> <p>Providing clear directions and explanations of outcomes and expectations. Setting achievable goals and giving responsibility to students for reaching them.</p> <p>Liaison with relevant individuals and bodies, i.e. parents, carers, Heads of Year etc.</p> <p>Promotion of positive role models among peer group</p> <p>Use of exemplar materials to promote positive responses</p> <p>Place students in situations where success is more likely than failure in</p>	<p>Information needed about specific students prior to admission</p> <p>Sharing of good practice and successful techniques with particular types of behaviour and individual students within and across departments</p> <p>Positive behaviour management training to optimise student performance</p> <p>Intra and inter departmental support for colleagues having difficulty with known individuals</p> <p>Specific training on issues such as anger management and social skills training.</p>

	Area of need	Subdivisions	Means of ensuring access	Training needs identified
			order to promote and maintain confidence.	
C	Communication and interaction needs	Speech, language and communication needs	<p>Differentiated learning materials and equipment</p> <p>Use of TAs and DAs to support individual students based on shared knowledge of student needs</p> <p>Seek support of curriculum learning support and SEN colleagues</p> <p>Ensure that schemes of work reflect range of needs of all students</p> <p>Development of an audio based curriculum</p> <p>Appropriate pairing or grouping of students</p>	<p>Training needs to be offered due to lack of experience in school</p> <p>Use of podcasting, sound editing etc</p>
		Autistic spectrum disorder	<p>Use of TAs and DAs to support individual students</p> <p>Structure of activities and instructions needs to be clear and take account of student needs</p> <p>Ensure individual members of staff have access to complete information on student needs and IEP.</p>	<p>Training on meeting the needs of students with ASD, particularly in subjects with high degree of speaking and listening activities.</p> <p>Training needs to be for new members of staff and to update skills of existing staff</p> <p>Training on spectrum of conditions and impact on teaching and learning</p>
D	Sensory and/or physical needs	Visual impairment	<p>Enlarged printed resources or Braille versions</p> <p>Lighting and location of student in classroom</p> <p>Use of TAs and DAs to support individual students</p> <p>Use of technology such as magnification tools and other specialist equipment</p>	<p>Little experience of meeting the needs of VI students in school.</p> <p>General and student specific support needed for VI and HI students.</p>

	Area of need	Subdivisions	Means of ensuring access	Training needs identified
			Development of a spoken curriculum	
		Hearing impairment	Seating of student in room, use of appropriate technology and communication devices Provision of printed materials, given orally, if relevant Management of sound levels and acoustics in teaching space Teachers to use microphones as required	Use of new technology to support students with HI Training on different types of hearing impairment and implications for teaching styles
		Multi-sensory impairment	Varied teaching and learning styles required Consider time required to travel between lessons and adjust exit from lessons to accommodate	
		Physical disability	Any visits would require careful planning and possible pre-visit to check access provisions and identify any additional support or equipment that might be needed. Need to identify any parts of visit that might not be possible because of access difficulties and plan alternative/complementary activities. Ensure that appropriate/differentiated materials and equipment are available. Ensure that students are timetabled into spaces with appropriate equipment, particularly for practical subjects Ensure that tasks are appropriate to students given level of need, particularly in practical subjects Consider time required to travel between lessons and possible problems in congested circulation routes and adjust exit from lessons to accommodate	Planning for visits and completing necessary risk assessments Training required ensuring that staff can respond appropriately to individual student needs. Can be tailored as required when students are due to be admitted so that staff skills are matched to student needs.