



APPLEBEE WOOD SCHOOL

Accessibility Plan

2026-2029

Document owner	J. Findlay-Pidcock
Plan period	September 2026 to September 2029
Review cycle	Three yearly, with annual monitoring
Specific interim review	Post-occupancy review following relocation to the new school in January 2027
Approval	Governors
Purpose	To set out the school approach and actions for improving accessibility
Scope	Pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and other stakeholders
Published on website	Following approval

1. Aims

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve and maintain the physical environment so disabled pupils can take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services.
- Improve the availability and accessibility of information for disabled pupils.
- Ensure accessibility remains central to the school's transition into its new DfE-funded building in January 2027.

Applebee Wood School is committed to treating all pupils fairly and with respect and to providing access and opportunities without discrimination. Accessibility is integral to the work of a special school and is considered through curriculum planning, communication, the physical environment, reasonable adjustments and individual support.

The plan is available to the school community following approval. Paper copies and alternative formats can be provided on request. Concerns about accessibility may be raised through the school's usual complaints procedure.

2. School context and information gathering

Applebee Wood School is a special school for pupils aged 4 to 16 and currently has approximately 180 pupils. The school supports pupils whose needs include Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, and Sensory and/or Physical Needs.

The school follows the STEPS curriculum. A whole-school Total Communication approach is used, including Makaton, PECS, symbols, Now and Next boards and Widgit software. Speech and Language Therapy supports the school, with input from other external agencies including Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy as required.

In reviewing accessibility, the school considers the needs of its pupil population, EHCP outcomes, curriculum access, staff knowledge and training, the physical environment, communication and information, professional advice, individual reasonable adjustments and feedback from stakeholders.

3. Legislation and guidance

This plan has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and relevant Department for Education guidance. The Equality Act requires schools to plan to increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum, improve the physical environment and improve the provision of information to disabled pupils.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where a disabled pupil would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled pupils. Accessibility planning is considered alongside the school's duties relating to special educational needs and disabilities, health and safety, medical needs and equality.

4. Accessibility action plan

4.1 Increase access to the curriculum

Aim: To ensure the curriculum is delivered in ways that enable pupils to participate meaningfully and successfully, with barriers identified and addressed.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
• The STEPS curriculum is used and provision is adapted to pupils' individual learning and EHCP needs. • The school uses a whole-school Total Communication approach, including Makaton, PECS, symbols, Now and Next boards and Widgit software. • Resources and teaching approaches are adapted to communication, cognition, sensory and physical needs. • Speech and Language Therapy contributes to pupil support; advice is also obtained from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and other agencies where required. • Reasonable adjustments and specialist resources are used according to individual need. • Accessibility is considered when planning educational visits, enrichment, PE and off-site activities.	• Maintain a curriculum that is accessible and appropriately adapted for the changing needs of the pupil cohort. • Ensure staff have the knowledge, resources and professional advice needed to support pupils effectively. • Prepare curriculum teams and pupils for accessible use of the new school environment.	• Review curriculum accessibility and individual barriers through curriculum, EHCP and pupil-progress processes. • Continue needs-led staff CPD relating to communication, physical, sensory and learning needs. • Review assistive technology, specialist equipment and communication resources when needs change. • Ensure reasonable adjustments are considered for visits, enrichment and wider school activities. • Include curriculum accessibility and specialist resource requirements within transition planning for the new building.	• Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher • Curriculum leads and class teams • Relevant therapists / external professionals • School Business Lead where resources or premises are affected	Annual monitoring throughout 2026-2029; new-building transition actions by January 2027	• Pupils are able to access learning and wider school activities appropriate to their individual needs. • Reasonable adjustments and specialist resources are in place where required. • Monitoring and EHCP review evidence demonstrates that accessibility barriers are identified and addressed.

4.2 Improve and maintain access to the physical environment

Aim: To maintain appropriate accessibility in the existing premises and ensure accessibility needs are addressed through transition to and occupation of the new school.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
• The existing school comprises original accommodation dating from 1968 together with newer sections. • Step-free/wheelchair access is available to teaching areas. • Accessible toilets and hygiene/changing facilities are available. • Hoisting equipment is available, including a movable hoist. • Accessible parking is provided at the front of the school. • Outdoor areas/playgrounds are accessible. • The current building does not require a lift; the new two-storey school will have a lift. • All areas of the existing school are accessible. The school works flexibly, including through use of equipment such as the mobile hoist, to remove individual access barriers. • The school works closely with families to understand individual needs and maintain an	• Maintain safe and appropriate accessibility in the current school for the remainder of its operational use. • Use reasonable and proportionate interim measures where barriers are identified, recognising the planned relocation. • Ensure the new school's accessibility features are ready for operational use and meet the identified needs of pupils, staff and visitors.	• Complete/update an accessibility walkaround of the existing site and record any barriers and proportionate interim measures. • Keep accessible routes, entrances, toilets, hygiene facilities, parking and outdoor access clear and maintained. • Review room allocation and arrangements where an individual has a mobility, sensory or other access need. • Continue to use and review PEEPs for relevant pupils and staff, including when needs or accommodation change. • As part of new-build familiarisation, handover and snagging, review accessible routes, entrances, parking/drop-off, lift access, hygiene/changing facilities, hoists, sensory rooms, quiet spaces, therapy/small-group spaces and accessible outdoor areas.	• Senior Leadership Team • School Business Lead • Site Supervisors / Site Team • Trust COO and Trust Estates Lead • Relevant specialist professionals where required	Existing site: ongoing to January 2027. New school: readiness work before 18 January 2027. Post-occupancy review during Spring 2027.	• The current site remains safely and appropriately accessible until relocation, with identified barriers managed through reasonable adjustments. • Accessibility features in the new school are operational and available from occupation. • Post-occupancy findings are documented, assigned and followed through. • Transport arrangements take account of individual accessibility needs so pupils can participate in off-site activities wherever reasonably practicable.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
accessible and inclusive approach. - The school has five minibuses/vehicles used to support pupil transport and activities. Two smaller minibuses are not accessible to everyone; three other vehicles provide more accessible options, including two fitted with tail lifts. - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are used for relevant pupils and staff.		- Undertake a post-occupancy accessibility review after pupils move into the new school and record actions arising. - Plan vehicle use so that pupils who require accessible transport are allocated an appropriate vehicle, including tail-lift vehicles where required.			

New school transition: The DfE-funded new school is on track for occupation from January 2027, with pupils expected to attend in the new building from 18 January 2027. Planned accessible provision includes hygiene rooms, hoists, sensory rooms, quiet spaces, accessible playgrounds, additional outdoor areas serving Early Years and Key Stage 1 classrooms, accessible parking/drop-off, a lift, accessible changing rooms and therapy/small-group work spaces. The new school will not include a hydrotherapy or swimming pool.

4.3 Improve the delivery of accessible information

Aim: To ensure pupils and other members of the school community can receive and understand information in formats appropriate to their needs.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
- The school uses Makaton, symbols, Now and Next boards, PECS and Widgit software as part of its Total Communication approach. - Communication is adapted to pupils'	- Maintain accessible pupil-facing information and communication across the school. - Ensure parents/carers can request information in an accessible	- Review key pupil-facing information and signage and adapt using symbols or other communication supports where appropriate. - Continue to provide alternative formats and	- Senior Leadership Team - Class teams - School office / administration team - Speech and Language Therapist	Existing provision: ongoing. Transition materials before 18 January 2027. Signage/wayfinding review during Spring 2027.	- Pupils receive information using communication approaches appropriate to their needs. - Parents/carers can access alternative or translated communications when needed.

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE	OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO COMPLETE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
individual needs with professional advice where appropriate. • Alternative versions of letters can be provided for parents/carers. • The parent app, ClassDojo and text-based communications can be translated where required.	or translated format. • Ensure signage, wayfinding and transition information for the new building reflect the communication and sensory needs of pupils.	translated communications according to need. • Consider accessibility when publishing key documents and information online. • Develop accessible orientation and transition materials before the move to the new school, tailored to pupil need. • Review signage and wayfinding in the new building following occupation and respond to feedback from pupils, staff and families.	where appropriate • School Business Lead / Site Team for signage and premises matters		• Pupils are supported to orientate to and understand the new school environment. • Any information-access issues identified after the move are recorded and addressed.

5. Monitoring arrangements

This Accessibility Plan covers September 2026 to September 2029. Progress against the action plan will be monitored at least annually. The plan may be reviewed earlier where there is a significant change in pupil need, provision, legislation or accommodation.

Because the school is relocating during the life of this plan, a specific post-occupancy review of the physical environment and associated accessibility arrangements will take place during Spring 2027 following the move to the new school. Actions arising from that review will be incorporated into this plan or the school's operational improvement arrangements as appropriate.

The plan is owned by J. Findlay-Pidcock and is subject to approval and oversight by Governors. Relevant leaders will report progress and significant accessibility issues through the school's established governance arrangements.

6. Links with other policies and documents

- Equality information and objectives / Public Sector Equality Duty information
- SEND policy and SEND information report
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Educational Visits procedures
- Emergency evacuation arrangements and individual PEEPs where applicable
- Complaints procedure

7. Approval and review record

Action	Name / body	Date	Notes
Written by	J. Findlay-Pidcock	September 2026	
Approved by	Governors	September 2026	
Annual monitoring		September 2027	Includes post-occupancy findings from Spring 2027
Next full review		September 2029	Earlier review if required