Accessibility

Accessibility Report

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Name of business/organisation	**Lower Peover Primary School**
Address:	**The Cobbles** **Lower Peover** **Knutsford** **Cheshire WA16 9PZ**
Date of site visit:	**Monday 4 November 2019**

Documents referred to:

1. British Standards Institution (BSI) (2018). *BS 8300-1: 2018, Design of an accessible and inclusive environment Part 1: External environment - Code of practice*.
2. British Standards Institution (BSI) (2018). *BS 8300-2: 2018, Design of an accessible and inclusive environment Part 2: Buildings - Code of practice*.
3. HM Government. (2010). *Equality Act 2010*.
4. HM Government (2015). *Approved Document M: Volume 2 - Access to and Use of Buildings other than dwellings.*

1.0 Introduction

Lower Peover Church of England primary school is located in the village of Lower Peover, Knutsford, WA16 9PZ. It is a single storey construction, situated at the end of a cobbled lane next to St Oswald's Church, and is surrounded on three sides by open fields. The school was originally founded in 1710 and currently provides education for approximately 200 children between the ages of 4 and 11 (Reception to Year 6).

In order to appraise access at the school a site visit was arranged by Jo Tinker, school business manager; a plan of the school layout was also requested for consideration.

Following a site visit to the school, and discussions with both the school business manager and the site manager Andy Williamson, several areas have been identified and recommendations made for improvements.

In physical terms a building can be made as accessible as the requirements of the current edition of British Standard 8300 (2018) and Approved Document Part M (2015), although this will not protect an employer or service provider from possible claims under the Equality Act 2010.

However, whilst the service provider must remove any barriers that prevent disabled people having access to services that are available to non-disabled people, achieving 'disability equality' is more than altering physical features within the built environment. To fully demonstrate a commitment to equality, good practice should be adopted throughout all business operations, notably in facilities management and staff and volunteer training. Furthermore, any service provider must look beyond the present and anticipate future need when making adjustments to improve access for disabled people.

2.0 Principles of appraisal

2.1 Disability and legal obligations

Discrimination occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably than others because of impairment (and this treatment cannot be justified), or when an organisation fails to make a reasonable adjustment to accommodate a disabled person (and that failure cannot be justified).

Under the Equality Act, a person is judged to be disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of the Act, 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial, 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months and 'normal day-to-day activities' include every day occurrences such as walking, eating, washing and shopping.

In Equality Law, disability is the one protected characteristic for which there is a distinct form of discrimination and there is a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This duty arises when there are factors that would place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person.

Adjustments to premises, policies, practices and procedures must be made in order to accommodate a person's disability. In these situations you are expected to take reasonable steps to avoid any disadvantage and ensure that physical access to the built environment is facilitated in accordance with the law and supplementary guidance Approved Document M and BS 8300.

In terms of aids and adaptions for disabled people, the code of practice BS 8300: 2018 advises how these can be provided, with examples of how accessible features can be installed. Approved Document M and BS 8300 have gradually made progress and in recent years it is largely acknowledged that all building users should be able to participate in work, education and leisure activities efficiently, safely and comfortably.

Where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to access (or to escape from the building in an emergency) you have a duty to take reasonable steps to:

- Remove the feature, or;
- Alter it so that it no longer has that effect, or;
- Provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature, or;
- Provide a reasonable alternative way of making the service available to disabled people.

2.2 Access Appraisal: jmd.accessibility

The access appraisal requires a site visit so that the premises and their immediate environment can be assessed. I visited on Monday 4 November 2019 and different areas of the site and buildings, and aspects of the facilities provided were reviewed during a 70 minute tour. During the site visit, I discussed the building and the external environment with the site manager Andy Williamson. The weather at the time of the site visit was clear, 12-13º.

Based on the findings, this report has been compiled which summarises the areas that need to be considered to assist the school in deciding how best to proceed. It will be beneficial for the school to have a clear plan of action for improvement to demonstrate a commitment to equal access and to demonstrate that the school has endeavoured to take reasonable steps to comply with the Equality Act.

To assist in this process, recommendations have been prioritised as follows:
Priority 1: Implement immediately to eliminate a serious barrier or hazard to access and use of the building.
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.
Priority 3: Plan adaptation work to be implemented to suit identified building users requiring adaptations to be made.
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.
Priority 5: Arrange for assistance to be readily available where appropriate.

It is a good idea to involve disabled people from the local area and ask them for their input into any plans you have drawn up. Where reasonably possible, facilities should be able to be shared by disabled people and non-disabled people alike. So for instance, disabled visitors ideally should be able to park in the same area and enter through the same door. Where specially adapted facilities are required for disabled

people, such as universally accessible toilets, they should be grouped together with those for non-disabled visitors, not placed somewhere separate.

2.3 Scope of appraisal

It should be noted that the issues considered in the report, if addressed, will improve the use of the site and buildings for all occupants and not just those users with visible disabilities. The appraisal focuses on key elements of the site including arrival, parking, and horizontal circulation together with essential facilities such as toilets.

2.4 The appraisal criteria

A. The need to maximise access to the building/site so that it is welcoming and inclusive to all.
B. Recognition that it is unlawful to refuse to accommodate disabled people because of their disability.
C. Provisions stipulated in the 2015 Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.
D. British Standard BS 8300:2018 - Design of an accessible and inclusive environment Parts 1 and 2 - Code of Practice.
E. Currently published good practice and design guidance, notably, *Design for Access 2.* Manchester Disabled People's Access Group, Manchester City Council.

2.5 Restrictions to the appraisal

This appraisal will focus on accessibility issues, hence comments on employment rights and duties and legal definitions are beyond the scope of this appraisal and separate legal advice should be sought.

Even if all the recommendations in this appraisal are adopted this will not guarantee compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Act is not compliance based and relates to elimination of discrimination that cannot be solved by changes to design features alone.

This appraisal should not be seen as a health and safety document in relation to egress in the event of an evacuation, and although comments will be made in relation to means of escape, any barriers should be discussed in detail with the local Fire Officer and a strategy agreed for implementation.

3.0 Summary of findings and recommendations

3.1 Commitment to inclusion

It would appear that Lower Peover primary school is keen to promote inclusion within the school population and across the site, including the inclusion of disabled people. There is a recognition that social interaction and inclusion can help build skills and self-confidence in pupils, and a member of staff has been appointed as the School Inclusion Manager.

However, the school building and the external site must be accessible for disabled pupils, staff and visitors and this needs to be delivered in practical terms in the anticipation and provision of reasonable adjustments. To achieve disability equality, there is an evolving and ongoing duty to make adjustments to physical features, and if this can be achieved it will assist the school in providing a more inclusive environment for pupils, staff and visitors.

The school has several policies and documents that were evaluated prior to the site visit, such as Equality Information Policy (also referred to as Equality Plan), Equal Opportunities Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Plan. However, when I appraised these documents I noted that some were outdated and/or overdue for review. Moreover, the Accessibility Plan is an accessibility audit produced by an access consultancy in 2014, which has not been reviewed annually as part of an ongoing commitment to making improvements. As such, the school has not identified actions or a timescale for achieving the recommendations of the report.

At the time of the site visit, the school, did not have a member of staff who could act as an ‘access champion’, so that parents, pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors have a point of contact if they have any access issues. This is particularly important for people who are visiting for the first time, as at present there does not appear to be a system whereby the school enquires whether visitors have any access requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Check all school policies and documents which relate to issues of access and inclusion to ensure that they are both current and consistent. Following on from this report, develop an access plan with a clear timescale for making improvements and review the access plan annually as part of an ongoing commitment to ensure equal access – **Priority 2:** Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Designate someone at the school (member of staff or volunteer) who can act as ‘access champion’, so that the parents, pupils, staff, volunteers and visitors have a point of contact –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.2 Website

Lower Peover primary school has its own website and the information seems clear and easy to use, although I could not find a dedicated area that prospective disabled staff, disabled visitors or the parents of disabled pupils could view detailed access information.

RECOMMENDATION:
Ensure that there is a dedicated area on the school website that disabled visitors, prospective employees and the parents of pupils can visit for access information. *See Guidance Note below* –
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

GUIDANCE NOTE: The information on the website should conform to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and be usable with screen readers and other assistive software. It should include clear and simple directions, (preferably with a map to the location) and accurate information about, for example, accessible parking.

3.3 Arrival at the school

It is important to be aware that the ease of orientation in, and way-finding through an area is supported by signage. On the day of the site visit, there was some standard signage to identify the school from the B road.

When approaching the school good signage is essential to assist in way-finding to car parks. On the day of the site visit I could not find any signage to identify where the vehicle parking areas were located, which could cause motorists some confusion.

RECOMMENDATION:
Signage to identify the location of the car park should be located where it is clearly identifiable and visible when approaching the school along the Cobbles. The signage should provide details regarding accessible parking for blue badge holders and use a simple, non-decorative and clear font -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.4 Accessible parking

According to Code of Practice BS 8300, any car parking provision needs to accommodate designated spaces for disabled people, including wheelchair users. Design and location are essential to ensure that parking options and choices are provided in terms of disabled persons' parking provision.

Parking for cars and other vehicles needs to cater for a range of activities and people, including parents, staff, visitors, people making deliveries, etc. Hence, any car parking provision at the school should include designated spaces for disabled people, including wheelchair users.

There was not a suitable parking scheme at the school in terms of the design and location of disabled persons' parking provision; this is essential to ensure that parking options and choices are provided for Blue Badge holders.

At the school designated disabled parking provision was provided within two parking areas, but there was an absence of clear signage to direct people to these accessible parking bays.

RECOMMENDATION:
Provide clear signage to direct people to accessible parking bays on the school site - **Priority 2:** Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.4.1 Vehicle parking area 1

On arrival at the school there is space for four vehicles to park at the front, close to the main school entrance, where there is one designated accessible parking bay. The external signage across the site did not clearly identify where this accessible parking bay was located and the bay itself was not clearly marked.

The accessible parking bay was not adequately sized and at present does not enable vehicle doors to be fully opened. Significantly, a zone of 1200 mm wide had not been provided to enable a disabled driver or passenger to get in or out of a vehicle and safely access the boot, rear hoist or rear access ramp. The location close to where traffic circulates to drop off pupils would make loading and unloading a wheelchair from the rear of a vehicle very difficult at times.

There were not any road markings (hatchings) to indicate areas that needed to be kept clear. There was a 'disabled parking' sign, but this was located low down and not easily identified on approach.

3.4.2 Vehicle parking area 2

There was a larger parking area at the rear of the school located on the right hand side. This area was previously a field, although a constructed surface had been partially applied at some point.

The route to parking area 2 involved using the road (which was gradually sloping), as there was not an access route which led to it. This would be problematic for disabled people, including those who have mobility impairments and those who are Deaf and hard of hearing, who may not be able to hear vehicles approaching.

The vehicle parking area and route to/from it did not have a consistently firm, slip-resistant and reasonably smooth surface. Vehicle parking was on grassed areas, which should not be used, as parking on a grassy surfaces will mean that the area will not remain accessible over time and through wet weather conditions.

Approaching and moving around this parking area involved using surfaces that were not firm or slip-resistant to travel on. Moreover, the surface of the parking area did not permit convenient access to/from the parking spaces, or allow for convenient transfer into and from a wheelchair.

There were two accessible parking bays identified in vehicle parking area 2. A zone of 1200 mm wide had not been provided to enable a disabled driver or passenger to get in or out of a vehicle and safely access the boot, rear hoist or rear access ramp.

There were not any road markings (hatchings) to indicate areas that needed to be kept clear. Both spaces had a ‘disabled parking’ sign, but these were located low down and not easily identified.

The two accessible parking bays were not located on a durable hard surface which would present difficulties to disabled people.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Provide a rear car park on a hard surface where surface materials are slip-resistant when wet to allow for rain and other environmental factors –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Provide a smooth transition and accessible surface in vehicle parking area 2 to permit convenient access from the parking space onto the surrounding area. *See Guidance Note below* – **Priority 2:** Implement as soon as possible to improve access

GUIDANCE NOTE: It is acknowledged that in this particular setting a different approach might be required, with the mixed use of indigenous materials, for example, gravel for the vehicle parking areas and a hard surface for the transfer zone and pedestrian path routes where necessary.

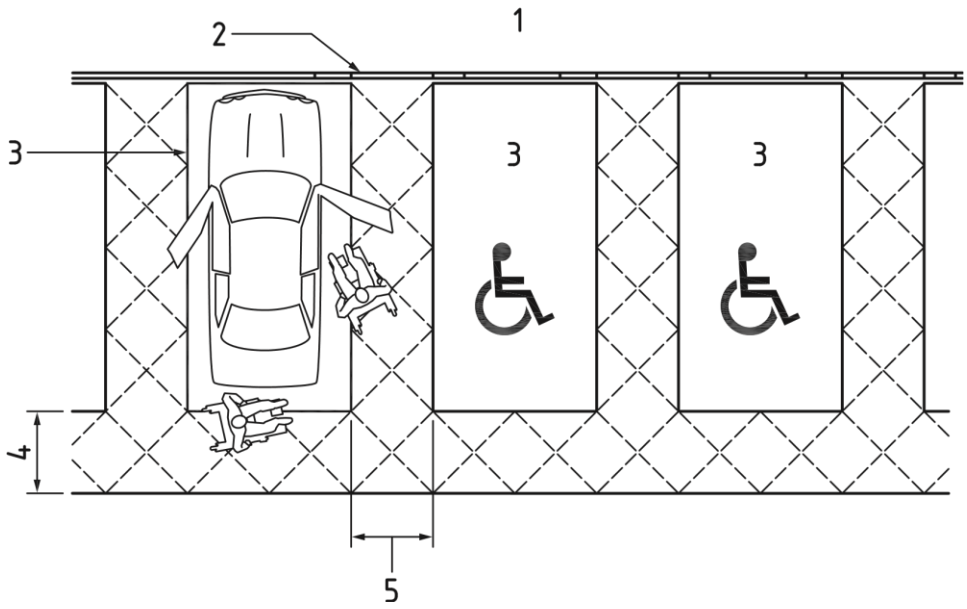
Ensure that any designated accessible parking bays are set out in accordance with BS 8300 Code of Practice and clearly marked with on-road symbols and provide signage to guide blue badge holders to their location. *See Guidance Note below -*
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

GUIDANCE NOTE: Designated accessible parking bays should be the right size (2.4m wide by 4.8m long) and have a clear side and rear transfer space (1.2m wide). These zones should be marked with durable markings contrasting visually with the surface to which they are applied, as show in Figure 1, below.

An enlarged standard space of 3.6 m wide × 6 m long should be provided -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Where space permits, one large designated accessible parking space, 4.8 m wide × 8 m long, should be provided to cater for commercial vehicles converted for side or rear access using hoists or ramps -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Figure 1: Layout of designated accessible parking



Key

1	Preferred access route avoiding travel behind parked cars
2	Dropped kerb or level access
3	Standard 2 400 mm × 4 800 mm designated accessible parking space
4	1 200 mm wide safety zone for boot access and cars with rear hoists, outside the traffic zone
5	1 200 mm wide marked access zone between and at either end of designated accessible parking spaces

SOURCE: British Standards Institution (BSI) (2018). *BS 8300-1: 2018, Design of an accessible and inclusive environment Part 1: External environment - Code of Practice*.

3.4.3 Number of accessible parking bays

Due to the nature of the parking, it was not clear how many spaces were provided in total across the site. BS 8300 Code of Practice stipulates that designated accessible parking spaces should be provided as a minimum in accordance with *Table 1*, below.

Table 1: Provision of designated accessible parking spaces

	One space for each employee who requires one	**Designated spaces** % of total parking spaces	**Enlarged spaces** % of total parking spaces
Workplace	Yes	5	5
Educational buildings	Yes	5	5
Shopping, recreation and leisure	Yes	6	4
Transport car parks	Yes	5	5
Medical and health facilities	Yes	6	4
Religious buildings and crematoria	Yes	Min 2 spaces 4 or 6% whichever is the greater	
Sports facilities	Refer to Sports England guidance		

SOURCE: British Standards Institution (BSI) (2018). *BS 8300-1: 2018, Design of an accessible and inclusive environment Part 1: External environment - Code of Practice*.

Additionally, where there is evidenced local need that a higher percentage is required, for example, to accommodate disabled pupils or parents, this should be provided accordingly.

According to the Code of Practice, for educational buildings, the minimum number of designated accessible parking spaces should be one space for each disabled school employee (or volunteer) plus 5% of the total capacity for visiting disabled people.

RECOMMENDATION:
Ensure that the number of designated parking bays provided is in accordance with BS 8300 Code of Practice for accessible parking provision (for educational buildings). That is, one disabled space for each disabled school employee (or volunteer) plus 5% of the total capacity for visiting disabled people.
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.5 Horizontal circulation

3.5.1 External environment

Around the school building there were some narrow approaches. These can create difficulties for disabled people who need a generous amount of space when moving about. Uneven surfaces, surfaces of loose materials (e.g. unbonded gravel) and large gaps between paving materials cause problems for wheelchair users, people who are blind or partially sighted and people who are, generally, unsteady on their feet.

Across the site, there was a lack of clear signage to assist with wayfinding and there did not appear to be a marked pathway for disabled people to follow.

All the external surfaces at the school (pedestrian routes, ramps and parking areas) appeared to be reasonably free of contamination from leaves, lichen, and debris. This is essential to ensure that contamination does not reduce the slip resistance of the surface, as debris and litter can be a slip and trip hazard.

As it was daylight at the time of the site visit it was difficult to ascertain if the external routes and parking areas were well-lit. Lighting levels should to be monitored at the school to ensure they are sufficient.

Opposite car parking area 1 there is one dropped kerb on to a footway. Assuming that the area in front of this dropped kerb is kept clear at all times, it is possible for wheelchair users to turn left along the footway and reach the school's main entrance.

From the dropped kerb, turning right along the footway to reach the rear of the building, the footway is too narrow and the cross-fall across the footway makes it more difficult to walk/wheel along.

To be accessible, the minimum surface width of an access route (i.e. between walls, kerbs or path edgings) should be at least 1800 mm for general routes (although a width of 2000 mm is preferable to accommodate larger electric mobility scooters).

There were no additional dropped kerbs along this footway, including at the end. This is not an accessible route for disabled people and would be extremely difficult for a wheelchair user to travel along it.

RECOMMENDATION:
Ensure, wherever possible, that the minimum surface width of an access route is at least 1800 mm and install dropped kerbs along pathways where required, particularly at the end. Keep dropped kerbs and access routes free of obstructions.
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

3.5.2 External ramps

There were three external ramps across the school site that were assessed during the site visit. These were provided where there was a change in level between the external area and the school building. An access route should either be level along its length or should be gently sloping or incorporate a ramp in accordance with BS 8300.

It should be noted that some people with ambulant mobility impairments can have difficulty using ramps, and this should be borne in mind where a ramp is the only route.

In general terms, care should be exercised in the location and orientation of a ramp to avoid, where possible, glare and cross-shadows which can prevent people who are blind or partially sighted distinguishing changes in gradient. BS 8300 Code of Practice states that artificial lighting to a ramp should be evenly distributed, with an illuminance at ramp and landing level. Furthermore, visual contrast is very useful in enabling partially sighted people to perceive boundaries.

While it is acknowledged that cross-fall gradients present difficulties for wheelchair users, there is the risk that surface water will form puddles, which then freeze unless a cross fall gradient ensures effective drainage.

Ramp 1 – from School Hall to Playground

From the school's main hall, there is a single leaf door that opens outwards and leads to the playground outside (also a fire exit). The door was 1000mm wide, but the surface width of the ramp was less than stated in BS 8300 Code of Practice.

In order to facilitate movement in this location, a ramp was the only viable means of access as it avoided the need for a step. Whilst in this location a ramp was necessary, its existence and location were not clearly indicated as a person approaches.

The ramp had a practicable gradient within the guidance range.

This ramp did not incorporate a continuous detectable physical edge which people who are blind or partially sighted can follow. The lack of edge protection where there is a change in level means there is a risk of falling, and appropriate measures had not been taken to address this.

A landing had been be provided at the head of the ramp, but it was not clear of the door swing. The foot of the ramp did not have a landing and was within the playground area.

The surface of the ramp did not contrast visually with the surrounding area and its presence would not be discernible by people who are blind or partially sighted.

A handrail had not been provided at the open side of the ramp, throughout its length.

Ramp 2 – from Year 6 Classroom to Playground

From Year 6 Classroom, there is a single leaf door (also a fire exit) that opens outwards on to a landing. From the landing there is a 90º turn to the left down a ramp which leads to the playground area. The surface width of the ramp was less than stated in BS 8300.

In order to facilitate movement in this location, a ramp was the only viable means of access as it avoided the need for a several steps, but its existence and location were not clearly indicated as a person approaches.

The ramp had a practicable gradient within the guidance range.

A landing was provided at the head of the ramp that was the width of the ramp, but it was not clear of the door swing. There was not a landing at the foot of the ramp.

The top landing was the width of the ramp and less than 1500 mm long, clear of any door swing or other obstruction.

The surface of the ramp did not contrast visually with the surrounding area or the top landing, so its presence would not be discernible by people who are blind or partially sighted.

A handrail was provided on the open edge of the ramp, throughout its length, but it was fabricated from metal, which has a relatively low thermal conductivity. In locations subject to extremely cold or hot temperatures handrails should not become excessively cold or hot to touch, while being of a material that, if necessary, is sufficiently robust to resist vandalism or misuse.

Ramp 3 – from Technology Suite to Playground

From the school's technology suite, there is a single leaf door (also a fire exit) that opens outwards and leads to the playground outside. The door was 850mm wide, and surface width of the ramp was less than stated in BS 8300 Code of Practice.

In order to facilitate movement in this location, a ramp was the only viable means of access as it avoided the need for a single step. Whilst in this location a ramp was necessary, its existence and location were not clearly indicated as a person approaches.

The ramp had a practicable gradient within the guidance range. It had a camber on both the sides which was not level.

This ramp did not incorporate a continuous detectable physical edge which people who are blind or partially sighted can follow. The lack of edge protection where there is a change in level means there is a risk of falling, and appropriate measures had not been taken to address this.

Landings had not been be provided at the foot and head of the ramp. The top of the ramp was not clear of the door swing and the foot of the ramp was within the playground area.

The surface of the ramp did not contrast visually with the surrounding area and its presence would not be discernible by people who are blind or partially sighted.

A handrail had not been provided on either side of the ramp, throughout its length.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Ensure that the surface width of all ramps, between walls, upstands or kerbs are not less than 1500 mm. The width of the ramp should be maintained throughout the turn or turns –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that the surface of all ramps contrast visually with the landings and the edge protection so that they are discernible by people who are blind or partially sighted -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Provide a continuous upstand at least 100 mm high at any open edge of a ramp. The upstand should contrast visually with the surface of the ramp. The upstand is intended to prevent a wheelchair user falling over the edge of the ramp and can assist with cane detection -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Fit handrails to all external ramps, ensuring that the top surface handrails are between 900 mm and 1000 mm from the surface of the ramp, and between 900 mm and 1100 mm from the landing –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Any handrail that is fitted should be finished so as to provide visual contrast with the surroundings against which it is seen; It should be easy and comfortable to grip with no sharp edges, but able to provide adequate resistance to hand slippage; and continuously graspable along its entire length without obstruction -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

To maintain traction, all sloping surfaces should have a higher slip resistance than an equivalent level surface (the steeper the slope, the greater the friction needed to maintain contact with the ground without slipping) -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Provide signage to indicate the existence and location of any ramps as a person approaches. Signage should contrast visually with the background, use the International Symbol for Access *(example shown in Figure 2 below)* –
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Figure 2: International Symbol for Access, indicating ramped access

Where weather or low temperature results in surfaces being covered in snow or ice, the slip resistance of a surface ceases to be effective. It is therefore important that external ramp surfaces are kept free of snow or ice as part of the management regime of the external space. Winter maintenance regimes need to include salting for frost and ice on primary routes, including in particular steps and ramps.
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Fit timber or nylon-sleeved steel tube handrails (these are the most comfortable to touch in extremes of temperature) as the surface is of a low thermal conductivity. *See Guidance Note below* –
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

GUIDANCE NOTE: It is accepted that a metal handrail is more suitable in locations where resistance to vandalism and/or low maintenance are key factors.

3.5.3 Internal environment

Everyone should be able to enter, use and leave a building easily, comfortably and independently and accessible internal spaces, services and equipment common to most schools should meet the general recommendations of BS 8300. There were several factors which could act as a barrier to access, which are detailed in the sections below.

During the site visit, it was noted that the arrangement of the interior and its entrance did not enable people to navigate and orientate themselves easily. For example, supportive measures for information and way-finding were not provided in a format that was accessible to people with sensory impairments.

In the areas that were visited on the site visit, it appeared that wheelchair users, people with ambulant mobility impairments and people with sight loss could not move easily, notably along corridors and through internal doors. In general terms, there were insufficient turning circles for wheelchair users and several trip hazards for people with ambulant mobility impairments or sight loss.

RECOMMENDATION:

Wherever possible, provide wayfinding information in different forms, visual and audible/tactile, in order to support people with sensory impairments and those who have different access requirements –

Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

3.5.4 Main entrance

On approach, the main entrance could be located, but the door handles did not provide visual contrast with the doors.

At the threshold there was step-free access, although the threshold was slightly raised on the right hand side.

The weather mat appeared to be of a firm durable material and was inset, so did not present a trip hazard.

BS 8300 specifies that entrance doors to a building should be usable by disabled people even though they might be designed to be held closed when not in use. Many people can find it difficult to open and close doors when door operation is not power-assisted, especially external doors subject to differential air pressures and inclement weather.

The main entrance consisted of two doorways, a set of two external doors and a further inner lobby door. Both the outer and inner doors were closed. Neither set of doors could be operated easily and it was not obvious what assistance was available if anyone found the entrance difficult.

The external doors to the entrance were not power assisted. They were not wide enough at each leaf for a wheelchair, mobility device or double buggy to pass through. As such, both of the two external doors need to be opened in order for a visitor with a mobility device (or pushchair) to enter the lobby.

The swing of the outer entrance doors extended outward into the access route. These doors were heavy and would not be easy to open for disabled people (for example, wheelchair users, people with ambulant mobility impairments, people with reduced arm and shoulder movement).

The outer doors and lobby door had upper viewing panels to alert people approaching the door to the presence of another person on the other side.

The entrance did not incorporate a form of weather protection, such as a canopy, to provide shelter for those having to pause before entering the school building, hence anyone waiting for the doors to be manually operated is exposed to the weather.

There was a small lobby area between the outer entrance doors and the inner lobby door. This lobby area was very cramped and had a protruding counter sill. The counter would not be easily identifiable from the building entrance by people who are blind or partially sighted.

Above the counter, there was a glass partition, but the office behind it was unstaffed and it was not apparent how assistance could be summoned, or how visitors could make their presence known.

I did not see a sign indicating that a system to assist hearing aid users (such as an induction loop) was available.

The inner door leading from the lobby to the inside of the school building opened outwards into the cramped lobby area, this door also had to be manually operated.

The lobby was too confined to provide any accessible seating, and I did not see any seating provided inside the main entrance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Unless suitably designed, the entrance to a building can be a critical barrier to access for disabled people. The preferred course of action, and the one that is the most inclusive, would be to install one set of automatic doors to the outer main entrance -

Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

A less inclusive alternative is to (i) make the existing external doors easier to open and (ii) provide shelter for those having to pause before entering the building i.e. weather protection, such as a canopy -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

However well designed, there remains the possibility that some form of management intervention might be necessary to assist someone experiencing difficulty in gaining access and visitors should be able to summon assistance if in difficulty. Although not an inclusive solution, an assistance bell / buzzer should be sited for approach and use by all users, including wheelchair users. It should contrast visually with the background against which it is seen, be clearly signed and easy to operate. It should be positioned within 200 mm of the door frame, at a height of between 900 mm and 1050 mm from the finished floor level -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.5.5 Internal signage

Factors which can help to minimize the need for assistance on entering a building includes the ease with which visitors can identify their intended destination once inside. For example, clear signs and information are essential for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing who might be unable to ask, or feel uncomfortable about asking, for directions.

The inner door from the lobby takes visitors directly into a corridor with several doors leading to different spaces, including the accessible toilet, staff office, resource room, main hall and head teachers' office. The different rooms and spaces leading from the corridor were not clearly identified by signage. Therefore it would be difficult for disabled visitors (and others) to find the room they required.

It is important that visitors to the building who might be unfamiliar with the layout are able to orient themselves, identify their desired destination and find the route to it. The ease of orientation in, and way-finding around a building should be supported by information systems and signage, but I was unable to locate a way-finding strategy at the school.

People need clear information about the purpose and layout of spaces if they are to maintain a clear sense of direction and independent use of a building, however there did not appear to be a map showing the layout within the building, including access information, at the entrance or elsewhere.

There were no signs indicating where the key areas were located, such as the main hall or the toilets. Signs to rooms should generally not be placed on doors but on the wall to the leading edge side of the door, as the sign might not be visible when the door is open. However, there are some situations where a sign needs to be placed on a door, for example signs to toilets.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
To assist with easy navigation around the building without confusion, a way-finding and signage policy should be developed that clearly identifies different areas of the school –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

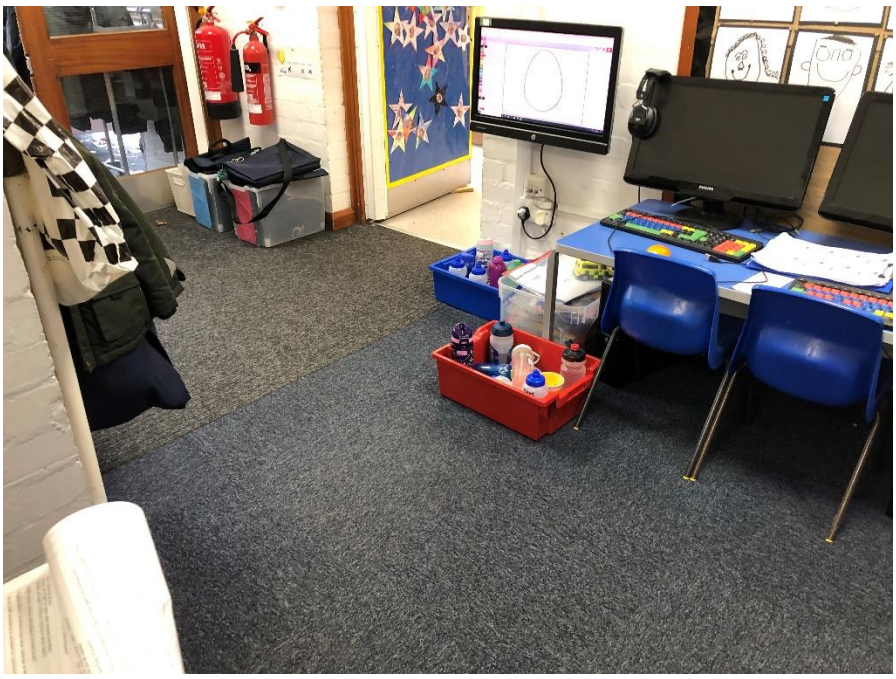
Information and direction signs should be provided at each point where they are required, e.g. at junctions of circulation routes, and at key locations such as doorways and at facilities such as toilets. It is advantageous if the colour, design and typeface of signs are consistent throughout the school -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Use good colour contrast of letters against the sign and the sign against the background. If possible, include symbols or pictograms inclusive to all, (children, visitors for whom English is not their first language) along with wording -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

3.5.6 Corridors

In order for disabled people to use the school building independently, circulation routes need to allow easy movement and have sufficient space to provide convenient access to rooms and, if necessary, to turn through 180°.

The corridor ran along the length of the school through a right-hand turn and two left hand turns. The passageway would present barriers to disabled people who would not find their way unimpeded. Obstructions, such as bookcases, boxes and trolleys were located along the route, which are particularly hazardous for a person who is blind or partially sighted, even when using a cane. Furthermore, there needs to be sufficient space to provide room for efficient wheelchair turning (1500 × 1500 mm) and to provide convenient access to rooms.



There were some moveable items in areas where they could impede access and circulation (particularly those that were close to classroom entrances). These would be particularly hazardous for a person who is blind or partially sighted, even when using a cane, although relocating these items would benefit everyone.

In particular, locating items away from internal corners avoids congestion and provides a more attractive and usable space for all.

It is appreciated that in an old building it is difficult to create the space that is required for ease of access. However, improving access is something that should always be included when other improvements or building works are being carried out within the school.

With the exception of the obstructions located along the corridor in certain areas, the corridor had an appropriate surface width. The floors within the corridor appeared to be level.

The lighting along the corridor appeared to be even, diffused and without glare, reflections or shadows. The corridor had both natural and artificial lighting.

The doors across the corridor, which were fire-resisting doors, had viewing panels, but did not have a significant level of visual contrast. They were not fitted with door closers and some were held open manually.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
School furniture, equipment and trolleys etc., should be located such that they do not reduce corridor widths or circulation space when in use. People with pushchairs, and people using mobility aids or assistance dogs, all require extra space. The corridor area should be planned to allow easy of circulation around them, ensuring that wherever possible that aisle widths are 1.2m and free of obstructions –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

When choosing floor, wall and ceiling materials ensure that they contrast visually with adjacent surfaces as this will benefit people who are blind or partially sighted and people with sensory/neurological processing difficulties -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Fixed obstructions along the route should be avoided wherever possible but, where unavoidable, they need to be guarded, or have some form of hazard protection -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

3.5.7 School hall

After entering the school through the main entrance, the hall is located through a set of double doors on the left hand side of the corridor. Each door leaf measured 760 mm, which is below the required minimum effective clear width, meaning that both doors would have to be opened in order to facilitate wheelchair access.

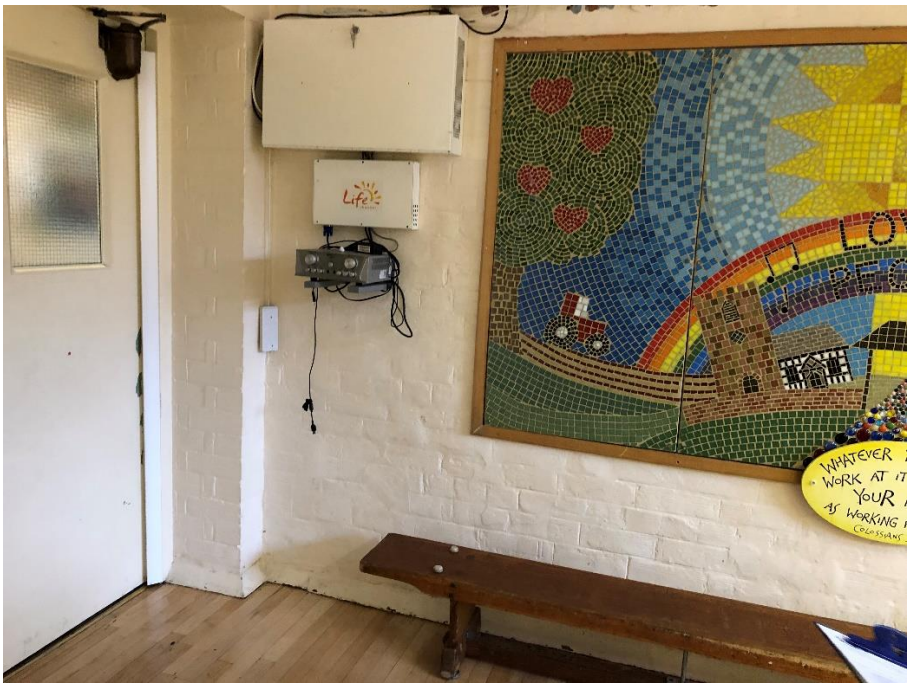
The hall doors open towards a frequently used corridor, but were not located in a recess (which should be at least as deep as the width of the door leaf).

The doorway was not easily identifiable when the doors were in the closed position. Visual contrast was not provided to the identifying features against the wall surfaces surrounding the doorway. Furthermore, the leading edge of both door leafs when held open did not contrast visually with the remaining surfaces of the door and its surroundings to help identification by people who are blind or partially sighted.

Each door leaf had a single viewing panel, made of opaque glass. This did not meet the minimum zone of visibility in accordance with BS 8300.

The door handles were located at 1000 mm from the floor and would not be easy to operate or grip by a wheelchair user or a person with an ambulant mobility impairment. There was a lack of visual clarity between the door handles and the door.

At the time of the site visit, the hall was not set up for dining, so I was unable to ascertain if access was ensured between moveable tables in the refreshment area. As the hall was not in use, the level of background noise could not be determined. When in use, the background noise in the hall could cause difficulties for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, people with sensory/neurological processing difficulties and people with heightened sensitivity to noise.

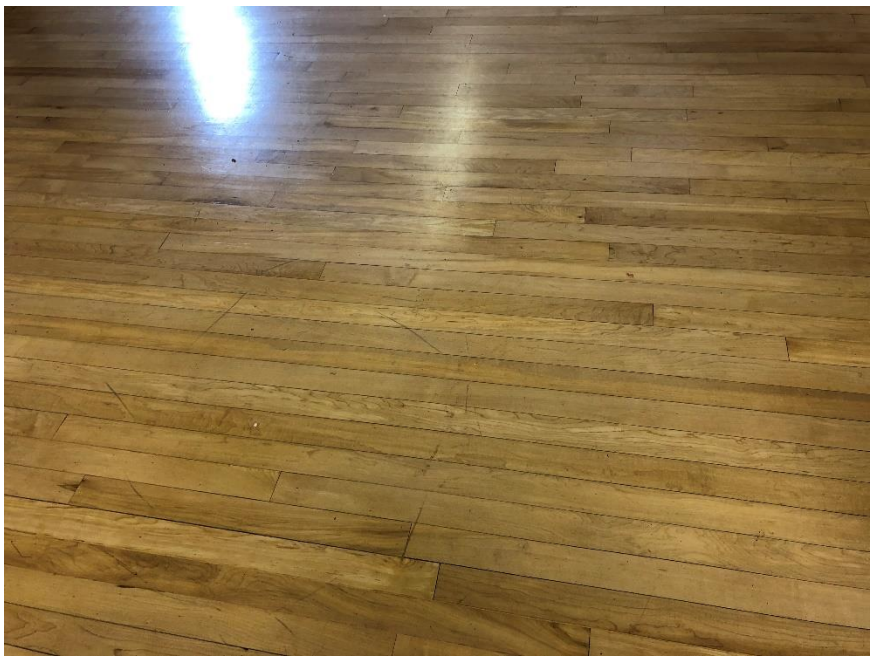


In the corner of the hall there is a shelf with a laptop portal (and two further fixed white boxes above) which projects into the space. Items such a projecting shelves, particularly if they have sharp edges, can cause injury. There is no clear visual contrast against the background to guide people who are blind or partially sighted around.

In general terms there was a lack of visual contrast between the internal doors, the flooring and the surrounding surfaces.

I was advised that the hall flooring had recently been renovated. It is important to note that wear, usage, potential contamination, cleaning and maintenance regimes, will all have an impact on the floor surface, in terms of slip resistance. The hall floor appeared to have reasonably firm surface and allowed for easy manoeuvre of a wheelchair.

The floor surface had a very shiny finish, which could cause problems with glare and the fact that it is perceived as being slippery even if the flooring has a slip-resistant surface.



RECOMMENDATIONS:
Ensure that at least one of the doors leading to the hall has a minimum effective clear width of 1000 mm. A lesser effective clear width of 800 mm can result in people with poor manoeuvring ability or with large wheelchairs not being able to pass through without damage to themselves or the door or frame. Use of the 1000 mm effective clear width more easily accommodates electric mobility scooters, powered wheelchairs, double pushchairs, people with assistance dogs and where there is heavy foot traffic, such as a school hall. If a building is used by the general public, BS 8300 states that the greater effective clear width is likely to be best achieved using power-assisted doors -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Provide visual contrast to the identifying features of the doors against the wall surfaces surrounding the doorway and to the leading edge of both door leafs when held open to help identification by people who are blind or partially sighted -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that the minimum zone of visibility on the doors is between 500 mm and 1500 mm from the floor and is not interrupted by opaque areas. Vision panels should be positioned centrally on the door or offset towards its leading edge. Each individual viewing panel should be not less than 100 mm in width –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that the door handles are easy operate or grip by a wheelchair user or a person with an ambulant mobility impairment, and that they contrast visually with the door -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

To assist people in navigating and negotiating the school hall, ensure that there are sufficient levels of visual clarity in terms of colour and contrast. All internal doors should be identifiable and contrast visually with the surrounding wall and floor finishes - **Priority 4:** Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Select hall flooring that ensures, as far as is possible, that traction beneath the foot can be maintained under conditions of use. Floor surfaces should offer a level of slip resistance that provides a firm foothold and good wheel grip under normal conditions of use -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

If projections into the space are unavoidable, provide a guard rail or other hazard protection that contrasts visually against the background to guide people who are blind or partially sighted around these types of projection –
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

3.5.8 Classrooms and staff room

According to Code of Practice BS 8300, all common rooms, refreshment rooms, recreation rooms and offices associated with educational buildings should be accessible.

The classrooms were all occupied during the site visit, as teaching was in progress. I was not able to view them internally.

The route from Year 5 classroom through to the playground area was not an accessible, step-free route. At the doorway (fire exit) there was a step down of 65 mm.

The route from Year 4 classroom through to the playground area was not an accessible, step-free route. At the doorway (fire exit) there was a step down of 160 mm.

Sudden changes in level at doorways should be avoided as, even when highlighted using visual contrast, they present a significant trip hazard. People who are blind or partially sighted risk tripping or losing their balance if unaware of steps. As the step in both cases led to the external environment, there was further risk due to exposure conditions and the lack of weather protection. Thus, where there is a change in level less than 300 mm, the change should be accommodated by a ramp.

Whether a ramp is provided or not, the presence of handrails for support is essential. As this was an access route from the classroom out to the playground area, all users should at least have access to a handrail when going up or down the step. Some people with an ambulant mobility impairment might be weaker on one side and, therefore, a handrail on each side of the step is crucial for support when ascending and descending.

The horizontal extension of a handrail beyond the step allows an individual to steady or to brace themselves before ascending or descending. For a person who is blind or partially sighted, the change in slope of the handrail and its return into a wall signals the start or finish of the flight.

In external locations such as this, the handrail could be subject to extremely cold or hot temperatures. Therefore handrails should not become excessively cold or hot to touch, while being of a material that, if necessary, is sufficiently robust to resist vandalism or misuse.

As a provider, Lower Peover primary school needs to achieve an accessible and inclusive environment and to anticipate and overcome any restrictions and barriers that exist. This anticipatory duty includes the location and layout of the staff room, even if this area is only used by staff.

The entrance to the staff room from the corridor was narrow, with a width of 640 mm and I was unable to enter the room in my wheelchair.

The location of the fridge on the left hand side of the doorway on entry impeded access further.

The staff room contained a kitchen area, a seating area and a conference table. All areas would be very difficult for disabled people to use. The height, depth and extent of the clear space below the kitchen work surface would have a major impact on how easily a wheelchair user can use this area. The kitchen area contained a variety of electrical appliances, which would be problematic to operate for wheelchair users and people with limited dexterity or reach.

The confined space, poor visibility and obstructions are other key factors within the staff room that would act as barriers to disabled people, particularly people with mobility impairments, or who are blind or partially sighted.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Install ramps at the two classrooms which have stepped access to/from the playground area –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Fit handrails to each of the ramps (or steps if a ramp is not provided), ensuring that the top surface handrails are between 900 mm and 1100 mm from the landing –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Any handrail that is fitted should be finished so as to provide visual contrast with the surroundings against which it is seen; It should be easy and comfortable to grip with no sharp edges, but able to provide adequate resistance to hand slippage; and continuously graspable along its entire length.
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Widen the doorway at the entrance to the staff room so that the minimum effective clear width is 800 mm.
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that the approach to the edge of the kitchen counter and the seating area in the staff room are unobstructed -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that all electrical socket outlets contrast visually with the background against which they are seen and indicate clearly whether they are switched on or off (the switches should be positioned on the outside of the socket outlet) -
Priority 3: Plan adaptation work to be implemented to suit identified users requiring adaptations to be made.

Bringing food preparation, cooking areas and appliances within the reach of most people with restricted movement is the key factor to consider in the arrangement of kitchen area and its fittings, although it is acknowledged that it is particularly difficult to cater for users with a wide range of requirements in these areas –
Priority 3: Plan adaptation work to be implemented to suit identified users requiring adaptations to be made.

3.6 Internal doors and fittings

The internal doors varied in design, colour and type of vision panel used. Not all internal doors had vision panels extending to a lower level.

The widths of the internal doors were not consistent, and several were less than the minimum width stated by BS 8300. The different widths ranged from 670 mm to 770 mm, whereas the minimum effective clear widths of doors should be 800 mm to 850 mm, depending on the width of the access route on approach.

One internal door opened outwards on to the corridor by the main entrance to the school.

Not all internal doors were easy and light to open and some required a degree of strength, which can cause significant difficulties for a wide range of people, including children. It is extremely difficult for wheelchair users, and for people who use walking aids or assistance dogs, or who have limited strength or poor standing tolerance, to manoeuvre through the force exerted by the door.

If the force required to open doors is greater than people can manage, they will be unable to continue their journeys independently. Furthermore, if the force of the door is too great, people risk being pushed off balance.

In terms of door fittings, door opening furniture that is easily reached, and which provides a secure grip, is of critical importance to many disabled people, including disabled children.

Where door entry systems were installed, either security key pads or ones operated by employees passing a key fob across a pad, they were located above the recommended height and many people would not be able to access them (for example, wheelchair users, people of short stature or with reduced arm and shoulder movement).

During the site visit it was noted that many of the doors did not provide visual contrast to identify features against the wall surfaces surrounding the doorway.

The ability of fire-resisting doors to perform their designated function depends on their being fully closed at the time of fire. To ensure closure, it is necessary for them to be fitted with a controlled door closing device, irrespective of whether the door is latched or unlatched.

Where the force required to open a fire-resisting door on a circulation route is too strong, an electrically powered hold-open device, either stand-alone or integral in the body of the closer, should be installed. It would be beneficial if the fire-resisting doors across the corridor were capable of being held open, and close automatically.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Where possible, fit door closers to corridor doors that are located across the corridor. These can be fitted to fire doors (the door is held open, but closes when the fire alarm sounds and the door closer releases the door) –
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that all internal doors have vision panels extending to a lower level; or if glass doors, ensure that these have clear markings at two height levels -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

To assist people in navigating and negotiating an environment, sufficient levels of visual contrast at doorways should be achieved.
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

The location and design of lever furniture and pull handles for internal doors should be, as far as practicable, consistent throughout the building and contrast visually with the door -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

3.7 Accessible Toilets

Disabled people ought to be able to find and use suitable toilet accommodation no less easily than non-disabled people. The space requirements for suitable toilet accommodation are generally driven by the requirements of wheelchair users, although the facilities might also be used by people with other access requirements.

At the school, the accessible toilet accommodation was a single enlarged unisex toilet with a peninsular WC. Where space is limited, the provision of this type of accessible toilet caters for more needs with less demand on space.

However, unisex accessible toilets with a peninsular WC are intended for use by people who require assistance, but do not need a changing bench and/or hoist. As such, this type of accessible toilet provision is likely to be beneficial only in a limited number of circumstances.

BS 8300 states that this type of peninsular WC layout is appropriate only when an assistant is available, because drop-down support rails are not considered to give sufficient support for independent transfer and it is not possible to rinse hands when seated on the WC. Furthermore, the absence of a side wall can give rise to feelings of insecurity.

It is recommended that a single unisex accessible toilet with a peninsular WC layout for assisted use should not be provided as a substitute for separate unisex accessible toilets with handed corner layouts, or for a Changing Places toilet. If such a toilet layout is provided, it should be as an additional facility, not the sole facility.

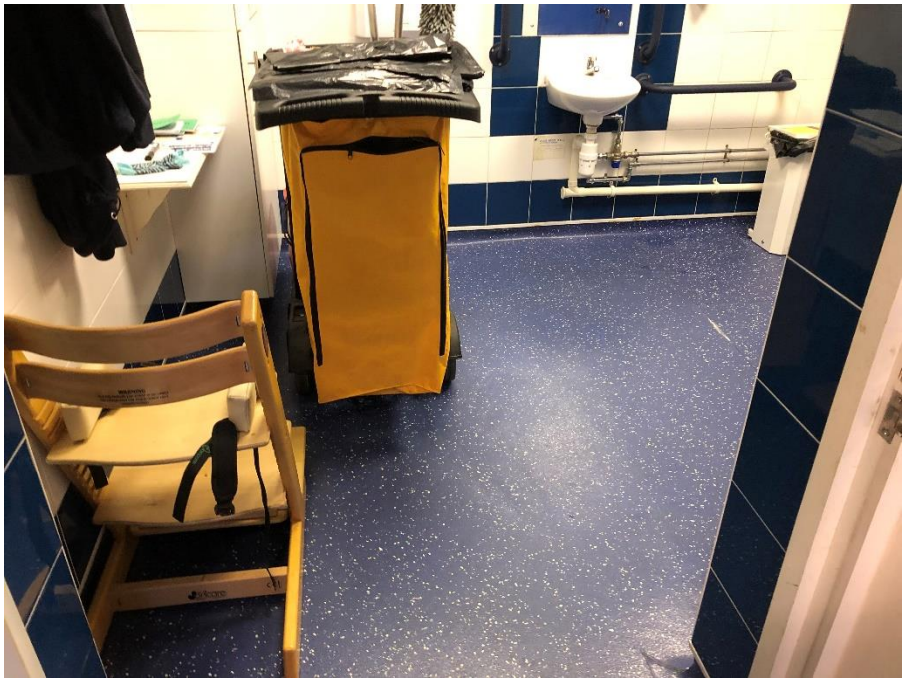
The alarm was not tested during the site visit. It was not clear if the alarm was tested regularly as part of ongoing maintenance.

The toilet was located close to the main entrance at one end of the school. It is worth noting that a disabled employee should not have to travel more than 40 m on the same floor from their workstation to an accessible toilet. This should be borne in mind when accommodating disabled people, including wheelchair users or people with ambulant mobility impairments. The time taken to reach this toilet from the classrooms or the staff room is an essential element to be taken into account in siting toilet accommodation.

The door to the accessible toilet opened outwards into the main entrance area.

The toilet met the minimum clear overall dimensions for unisex accessible toilets with peninsular WC (2400 mm x 2200 mm), but did not have clear wheelchair turning space (1500 × 1500) mm due to the storage of several items.

The toilet contained a wooden chair and cleaning equipment on a large trolley, which hindered manoeuvring in and out of the toilet and restricted movement and access.



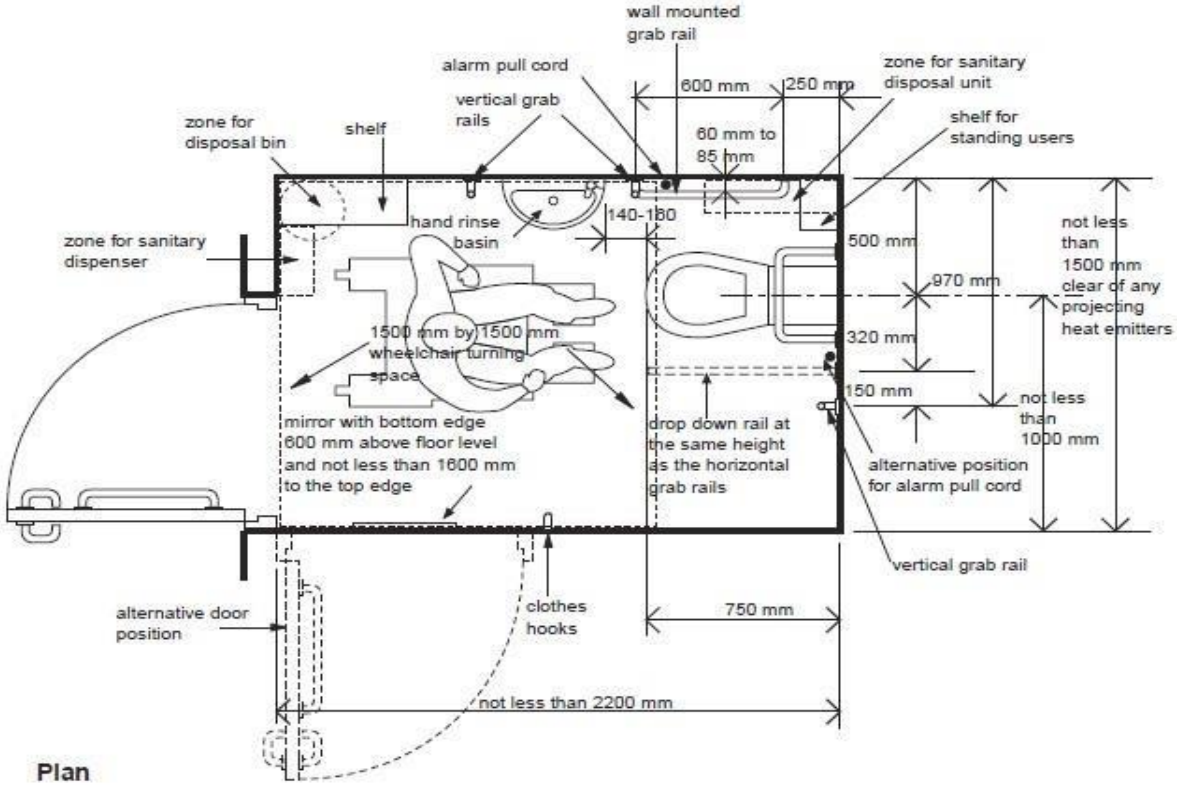
Cleaning staff and other employees did not appear to be aware of common issues, such as keeping the entry to the toilet free and storing cleaning equipment elsewhere.

BS 8300 advises that toilet accessories, such as dispensers for soap, toilet paper and paper towels, should be suitable for single-handed use and for use by people with weak arm movements. However, due to the layout of the toilet, these items were not readily accessible to a person in a wheelchair or seated on the WC.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Provide signage to clearly identify the location of the accessible toilet -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Consider installing another wheelchair-accessible toilet facility at the other end of the corridor that is intended for independent use. It should be a unisex type, preferably designed for right-hand transfer, and available for use by disabled staff, parents and visitors. See *Figure 3*, below for specification –
To meet BS 8300, ensure that there is:
An outward-opening door and a lock that is easy to use;
A single mixer tap that is operable from the WC pan;
A paper towel or hand dryer within reach of the pan;
A flush handle fitted on the open side;
A full length mirror;
The correct grab rails in place;
Necessary fittings that are not higher than 1000 mm from the floor;
Good lighting and colour contrast between key fixtures and fittings;
Light switches that are easy to identify and reach;
A single sheet toilet paper dispenser;
Low-level coat hooks (1.1m and 1.4m); and
Height adjustable or adequately low shelf for a wheelchair user (760-850 mm).
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Figure 3: Wheelchair accessible unisex toilet



3.8 Providing a safe and comfortable environment

During the site visit, I did not see any assistive listening systems available in the building to assist those with hearing loss. Assistive listening systems enable sound signals to be transmitted to people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, without interference from background noise or reverberation.

People who are hard of hearing can benefit from an assistive listening system (which provides sound signals transmitted directly to the person's ear by their hearing device such as a hearing aid, cochlear implant, bone anchor hearing aid or by the use of separate headsets).

The acoustics in some areas were good, but I did not see any soft surfaces provided to absorb sound.

The school's SEN Information Report 2019-20 states that Reflective areas are available in each classroom, the library area is a 'quiet zone' and there is a reflective/quiet area available on the playground. However, these areas were not pointed out to me during the site visit, so I could not ascertain if quiet and noisy areas were separated by a buffer zone.

There were no strong contrasts or pools of light and dark, which would aid those with sight loss. In some areas there was reasonable visual contrast of walls, floors, ceilings, doors and fittings, but not all areas.

Some of the floor surfaces had loose mats, which could be unsafe for disabled people.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
An assistive listening system, using induction loop, infrared or radio transmission, should be installed in rooms and spaces used for meetings, classes, performances, or reception counters where the background noise level is not low or where glazed screens are used -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Once an assistive listening system is installed, ensure there is signage to identify this service at reception areas and around the school -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Ensure that this equipment routinely tested -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Ensure that floor surfaces are fitted that offer a level of slip resistance that provides a firm foothold and good wheel grip under normal conditions of use -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Avoid using loose matting, particularly at entrances, wherever possible -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that the lighting is good in reception areas, so that the face is clearly defined to help lip readers –
Priority 5: Arrange for assistance to be readily available where appropriate.

The latest version of BS 8300 (2018) recommends that Changing Places (CP) toilets should be provided in buildings such as educational establishments. The CP toilet should be in addition to, not instead of, the provision of standard and accessible toilets. Such a facility includes a changing bench for the benefit of people with complex or multiple impairments and their assistants. It would be beneficial to provide a Changing

Places (CP) toilet with a peninsular WC layout in the school, whilst it is recognised that both space and funding may be an issue -
Priority 5: Arrange for assistance to be readily available where appropriate.

3.9 Operations/facilities management

Cleaning staff and other employees did not appear to be aware of common issues, such as keeping access routes and toilets free and storing cleaning equipment safely.

Fire exits were clearly signed in all areas, but it was not clear if all fire exits were accessible, that is, they had step-free access. In two of the classrooms the fire exit doors had steps out to the external area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Ensure that cleaning staff and other employees are aware of common management issues in accessible toilets including, providing clear side transfer space by the WC pan and keeping the area free from cleaning equipment -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that storage, bins, fixed and unfixed furniture, etc. do not obstruct clear widths in circulation spaces or accessible toilets -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Staff should be made aware of other issues, such as:
Refilling paper dispensers in accessible toilets properly;
Ensuring emergency alarm cords in accessible toilets are not tied up;
Reporting any breakages or maintenance issues immediately;
Checking lighting is adequate; and
The response process to the emergency alarms in accessible toilets -
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

Regularly carry out fire risk assessments that specifically assesses risks to disabled people and ensure that there is a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) completed for anyone who requires assistance and cannot exit independently -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Ensure that all fire exits have level egress. Until this is provided, ensure that all fire exits clearly indicate if they are accessible -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

Obtain advice from the local Fire Officer with regard to reviewing and improving evacuation procedures for disabled people. *See Guidance Note below* –
Priority 4: Implement as part of specific regular maintenance/renewal.

GUIDANCE NOTE: BS 9999:2017 (Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings. Code of practice) recommends a minimum effective clear doorway width of 850 mm where unassisted wheelchair access is necessary for the purposes of fire evacuation.

3.10 Disability Equality Training

It was not clear if staff and volunteers at Lower Peover primary school had undertaken Disability Equality Training (DET). Disability Equality Training courses have been developed by disabled people to address the need for information about the reality of disability.

RECOMMENDATION:
Ensure that all school staff and volunteers attend a Disability Equality Training (DET) course -
Priority 2: Implement as soon as possible to improve access.

4. Closing remarks

This report has summarised the accessibility appraisal carried out at Lower Peover Church of England primary school during the 70-minute site visit on 4 November 2019. The report has been prepared to assist the school in considering the barriers that could prevent disabled people from having access to and around the school building and its grounds.

The school's SEN Information Report 2019-20 contends that the building is fully wheelchair accessible, but I did not find this to be the case during the site visit. Whilst I am sure that classroom adaptions and reasonable adjustments are made to meet the needs of children, there are wider issues of access at the school that need to be addressed.

I would advise that a programme of quality improvement works are planned, based upon the above recommendations, along with a clear action plan and timetable for improvement

If you have any queries or would like further advice, then please feel free to contact me.

November 2019
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