

Whitburn Church of England Academy

Access Audit – Main School



Whitburn Church of England Academy comprises of a three storey main building with wide corridors and several access points from outside. Our other building (Sixth Form Building) is also two storeys and can be accessed by a single access point. Many of the doors are automatic. Each floor of both buildings has at least two accessible toilets and two lifts provide access to the upper floors. An Evac chair is located in both of the school buildings on each stairwell. All of the accessible toilets are fitted with a handrail and a pull emergency cord. All classrooms have lower level work spaces.

At Whitburn Church of England Academy there is on-site car parking for staff and visitor which includes dedicated disabled parking bays. All entrances to the school are flat and all have wide doors fitted. The main entrance features a secure lobby and has been fitted with a low reception desk, this being fully accessible to wheelchair users.

The Academy building has specific design features to ensure access is facilitated for all students. These are listed below:

- The lay-by in Rackly Way for scholars' buses has raised kerbs for ease of access /egress from the bus
- There is a 3m wide footpath adjacent to the lay-by and dedicated pedestrian footways onto the school site
- There is no point on the pedestrian access when motorised vehicles and pedestrians mix
- The footpaths on the site are 4m wide and are marked for cycle and pedestrian access
- The access from both north and south is a graded access and is fully accessible for wheelchair users
- All pedestrian approaches are in full compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations and the DDA
- All pedestrian entrances to the building are designated a level approach
- All footpaths are tarmac or concrete blocks and include tactile paving and dropped kerbs at uncontrolled crossings
- The location of external doors will be highlighted by suitable barrier protection, audible and visual warnings
- All pedestrian routes are well illuminated and signposted
- No gradient is in excess of 1:20 and therefore no ramped access is required
- 4 clearly marked disabled car park spaces are situated near the Main entrance to the building
- Each disabled parking space is 3600mm wide x 4800mm long (with a further 1200mm accessibility zone at one end of the bay) with dropped kerbs to give access onto the main pedestrian footpaths
- There is also a clearly defined, and signed, setting down point located close to the main entrance with its surface at the same level as the adjacent roadway and footpath to allow convenient access to and egress from the entrance for people with walking difficulties or people using wheelchairs

- All surfaces of roads, footpaths and other accessible zones will be in tarmacadam finish (ie a durable slip resistant material), apart from the area below the entrance canopy which will be constructed in concrete blockwork
- Signage is in accordance with BS 8300 (inclusive mobility) and the Sign Design Guide
- The “principal entrance” external doors are sliding automatic opening and are operated by PIR sensors picking up people entering and leaving the principal entrance. The opening and operation of both the external and internal sliding glazed automatic lobby doors are compliant with Part M1/M2 in all respects
- The principal entrance has a security lobby which also doubles up as a comfort lobby. At 12m² the lobby is large enough to readily accommodate wheelchair users (and companions) passing other users of the building. Floor surfaces include foot and wheel cleaning carpets (no matwells) and provides a safe level platform without creating trip hazards
- All other entrances for students, staff and visitors into the school have manually operated non powered entrance doors and closers which comply with the requirements of Part M in all respects
- Inside the entrance is a reception counter immediately identifiable which is set, at both sides, at a suitable height for a wheelchair user, or a seated person
- Lighting to this area is also such that reflected light sources do not compromise the ability of a person with a hearing impairment to either lip read or follow sign language, whilst the entrance itself is located away from any risk of external noise
- The reception point is provided with an induction loop/enhancement system and will accommodate both standing and seated visitors and operatives
- On leaving the building the inner lobby doors are operated by a push button located at a height and in a position readily accessible to both wheelchair and able-bodied users
- This door will open automatically if the fire bell activates to allow easy egress of the building
- Most of the Fire doors in the building are the full width of the corridor and are recessed into the side walls to ensure that the partially sighted do not inadvertently bump into them
- These doors are **held open** by means of electrically operated magnets (maglocks), which are automatically released when the fire alarm activates
- Doors G105, G40 and G43 across the corridor are not fitted with such hold open devices since these doors are kept closed to reduce noise in the rest of the building (Music corridor and changing rooms) – they are fitted with a self closing device requiring no more than 30N force at the leading edge
- The provision of self-activating fire doors across the corridor allows classroom doors, and some other non fire doors, to be free from any self-closing device or intumescent fire seals - this omission of the door closer and seals makes the door more easily operated for those less physically able
- In other locations fire doors are essential e.g. doors to stair wells and these also have self closing devices requiring no more than 30N force at the leading edge to open

The following additional conditions apply to all general access doors, likely to be accessible to wheelchair users:-

- a) Doors have a clear opening of 900mm with an unobstructed space of at least 300mm between the leading edge of the door and any return wall
 - b) Suitable size, type and colour of ironmongery to be operable by one hand
 - c) The leading edge of any non self-closing door will contrast visually with other door surfaces.
 - d) Vision panels, glazed doors and side screens will comply with Part M requirements for glass type, manifestation, sizes etc
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- Most corridors are a clear 2500mm in width, and have good visual contrast and good acoustic design in order to achieve a visual and acoustic environment suitable for visually impaired and hard of hearing occupants
 - The Academy has under floor heating, which removes radiator obstacles
 - The presence of a sprinkler system removes the requirement for fire hoses etc. though a reduced number of fire extinguishers are still required these are located so as not to impede the passage/travel of building occupants generally
 - On each floor there are no changes of level throughout the area of that floor therefore there is no requirement for any internal access ramps
 - All corridor floors are carpeted to provide slip resistant surfaces
 - At staircases the flooring materials changes to ensure that their location is highlighted
 - There are only few internal lobbies but where essential, ie at the main entrance, adjacent to fire escapes/staircases and into female student toilets, these are designed in accordance with provision 3.16 of Part M
 - There are 2 No. passenger lifts linking the ground, first and second floors. Both of these lifts comply fully with the requirements of provisions 3.25 to 3.34 of Part M of the Building Regulations
 - There is also a platform lift to provide access from ground floor level up to the height of the stage within the main hall (approx. 700mm). Again this platform lift is fully compliant with provisions 3.35 to 3.43 of Part M
 - Both standard lifts and the platform lift are available to wheelchair users and those with impaired mobility **at all times**
 - There are 3 No. communal access staircases each located within a vertical circulation shaft. The staircases comply in all respects with provision 3.51 of Part M and include the enhanced provisions that Part M imposes on schools with regard to the rise and going of steps etc
 - There are refuge points at each floor level to allow for wheelchair users to await assistance
 - EVAC chairs used for staircase evacuation are provided and located at each upper floor level on each staircase

- Staff are trained in the use of these chairs and a protocol is available for their use. Staff are updated daily with the names of those students who may require evacuation using the EVAC chair
- The rear escape to the stage is via a small flight of steps. In order to provide a means of escape from this level a special zip escape chair, suitable for use on staircases is provided
- Handrail design is fully compliant with provisions 1.37 to 1.39 of Part M of the Building Regulations in all respects
- All specialist classrooms include areas of fitted/adjustable furniture designed specifically for wheelchair users and those less physically able. This includes more accessible science benches, technology tables. The Library/Resource/ICT area has automatic sliding doors operated by low level push button controls, accessible to a wheelchair user, both within the room and in the corridor itself
- All classrooms and other teaching and meeting areas include a hearing enhancement system in accordance with provision 4.36 of Part M of the Building Regulations
- Specialist classrooms the external wall generally has openable windows which might be difficult for disabled users to operate as they will be set above 900mm high cupboard units. It should be noted that all specialist classrooms (ie Science labs and Technology rooms) are air conditioned thus negating the requirements for these windows to open, however, if required these windows can be readily operated by able bodied students and staff, in comfort
- Floor, wall and ceiling surface materials and finishes help the visually impaired appreciate the physical boundaries, identify access routes and receive information
- The type of suspended ceilings improve the acoustic environment, thus ensuring that audible information can be heard more clearly
- The type and quality of the public address system, hearing enhancement, and telephone systems are easy to use, and improve intelligibility for those who are hard of hearing
- There is artificial lighting designed to illuminate the face of a person speaking (in order to make lip reading and sign language recognition earlier), with good colour rendering of all surfaces and no pools of bright light, glare or strong shadows
- The main hall, sports hall, dining area and activity area are all equipped with appropriate hearing enhancement systems (*induction loop or infra/radio systems*). These are all permanent systems but other smaller areas are accommodated by the use of portable induction systems set on different frequencies to ensure no overlap
- Wheelchair users who transfer to toilet facilities on either the left or the right are accommodated on each floor of the school. Wheelchair users can be moved from a wheelchair onto sanitary fittings etc by means of both mobile and fixed hoists within the larger of the wheelchair changing rooms
- Signage includes pictograms and symbols in place of the written word
- Room signs are set at heights suitable for both able bodied and wheelchair users

Approved by the Governing Body on 10th November 2020

- On the ground, first and second floors there are fully equipped disabled toilets at no more than 40m apart
- Toilet provision in the three storey element of the school is located in the same area to make it easier for the visually impaired and people with learning disabilities to locate these facilities easily
- All sanitary accommodation within the school is in accordance with provisions 5.4 to 5.21 of Part M of the Building Regulations. This includes specific disabled toilets for wheelchair users (unisex), ambulant disabled toilets in separate sex washrooms and wheelchair accessible changing and shower facilities
- Staff training in disability awareness, the testing and use of specialist equipment (ie induction loops, personalised lighting and communication equipment) is to be regularly undertaken as part of the schools development programme

The building has been designed to ensure full compliance of the Building Regulations 2000, Approved Document M, Access to and use of Buildings. The Academy and Diocese are committed to undertaking a structured programme of regular reviews of procedure, new technologies, construction developments and training to ensure that the obligations, both present and ongoing, of the DDA are met.

Appendix 3 - Accessibility Plan		
Linked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility Plan • Appendix 1 – Access Audit Main School • Appendix 2 - Access Audit 6th Form 	
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23 rd January 2018	1.0	Re-approved by the Governing Body
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10 th November 2020	2.0	Approved by the Governing Body