



HANLEY CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



HANLEY CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2026

This is a live document. Progress against actions is monitored throughout the year and the plan may be updated to reflect changing needs, priorities and statutory requirements.

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1 Accessibility Audit and Improvement Plan

This document records the outcomes of the school's Accessibility Audit and sets out the actions that will be taken to improve accessibility over the life of the plan. The audit considers the accessibility of the physical environment, the curriculum and the information provided by the school, identifying both strengths and areas for further improvement.

Actions identified through the audit are incorporated into the Accessibility Improvement Plan, with responsibilities, timescales and success measures assigned as appropriate. The document should be reviewed annually and updated following consultation with pupils, parents/carers, staff and other relevant stakeholders to ensure accessibility remains a key consideration in decision-making, estate development and school improvement planning.

2 Accessibility Audit:

Audit carried out: [date] by [names and roles].

Status key: Yes = in place; Partial = partly in place, action needed; No = not in place, action needed.

Curriculum Accessibility Audit

Teaching and Learning						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Teachers adapt work and provide reasonable adjustments to meet a range of needs	Teachers	Yes	Class books Student observations Annual Reviews Learning walks/ Drop-Ins QA records Teacher CPD logs Access arrangement paperwork	Ongoing training, assessing and identification of need, purchasing of resources where needed	Ongoing	
Teachers use adaptive teaching strategies consistently	Teachers	Yes	Class books Student observations Annual Reviews Learning walks/ Drop-Ins QA records Teacher CPD logs Access arrangement paperwork	Ongoing training, assessing and identification of need, purchasing of resources where needed	Ongoing	
Visual supports (timetables, symbols) used where needed	Teachers	Yes	Class books Student observations Annual Reviews Learning walks/ Drop-Ins QA records Teacher CPD logs Access arrangement paperwork	Ongoing training, assessing and identification of need, purchasing of resources where needed	Ongoing	
Instructions given in multiple formats (verbal, visual, written)	Teachers	Yes	Class books Student observations Annual Reviews Learning walks/ Drop-Ins QA records Teacher CPD logs Access arrangement paperwork	Ongoing training, assessing and identification of need, training in	Ongoing	
LSA support is targeted and planned	SENDCO	Yes	LSAs are deployed in subject areas to build specialisms. Student needs are carefully considered in LSA deployment at all Key Stages.	Timetable planning. Use of student cluster profiles enables comprehensive support.	Ongoing	

Assistive Technology						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Devices support accessibility tools (e.g., Immersive Reader)	SENDSCO	Yes	Students have access to reader pens or computer reader software for classwork and assessments. Microsoft Immersive Reader Dictation software Speech-to-text Hearing assistive technology/ radio aids	Ongoing maintenance, charging and upkeep of technology resources. Further development of speech-to-text with highest need students to develop independence Increasing use of reader software as part of student normal working	Ongoing By September 2027 Ongoing	
Students have access to laptops/tablets where appropriate	SENDSCO	Yes	Aspire laptops are managed, charged and accessed readily by students	Ongoing maintenance, charging and upkeep of technology resources	Ongoing	
Staff trained in using AT effectively	SENDSCO	Yes	Teacher of the Deaf training for staff	Ongoing monitoring by SENDSCO to ensure appropriate use of/access to assistive technology (teachers and pupils)	Training completed: 03/09/2026 Observations : ongoing	
Software licences for AT are up to date	SENDSCO	Yes	Touch-typing provision, Computer reader software for exams	Licences purchased and maintained as required	Ongoing, review annually	
Interventions and specialist support						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Complete
Speech & language interventions available	SENDSCO	Yes	Regular visits and student reports Referrals where required	Facilitating visits Communicating with home Completing referrals	Ongoing	
Educational Psychology advice available	SENDSCO	Yes	Regular visits and student reports Referrals where required	Facilitating visits Communicating with home Completing referrals	Ongoing	
Complex Communication Needs interventions available	SENDSCO	Yes	Regular visits and student reports Referrals where required	Facilitating visits Communicating with home Completing referrals	Ongoing	
Specialist Teacher/Learning Support Teacher advice available	SENDSCO	Yes	In-house specialists available, additional external specialists facilitate access arrangements testing	Facilitating visits Communicating with home Completing referrals	Ongoing	
Occupational- and physio-therapy programmes delivered	SENDSCO	Yes	Students with provisions targeted in their EHCP are provided therapy under specialist guidance and training. Fine and gross motor skill development and provision is facilitated through curriculum subjects.	Facilitating training Communicating with home Completing referrals		
Hearing/vision support in place where needed	ToD/QTVI/ SENDSCO	Yes	Regular visits and student reports Referrals where required	Facilitating visits Communicating with home Completing referrals	Ongoing	
Staff can access external specialist advice	SENDSCO	Yes	In-house SEND team is well-resourced and experienced The school buys in external specialist support where needed	Maintaining contracts with LA specialists Reviewing student needs within the school to evaluate and forecast appropriate resourcing	Ongoing	

Wider school life						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Disabled students take part in trips, visits and residential	Trips Coordinator	Yes	Feedback from our parent survey to assess accessibility to trips was very positive, demonstrating that this is not an area of key development.	Monitor trip involvement. Improve risk assessments completed in a timely way.	Ongoing	
Disabled students take part in clubs and enrichment	SENDCO	Yes	All students are actively encouraged to take part in all clubs and enrichment activities, with adjustments made as required.	N/A	N/A	
PE and practical subjects (science, D&T, food) are adapted for disabled students	SENDCO	Yes	All subjects are adapted as required to meet specific requirements.	N/A	N/A	
Reasonable adjustments are made within behaviour and attendance procedures	SEND and Pastoral teams	Yes	Engagement Support Strategy plans are created for pupils who are at high risk of exclusion.		Ongoing	
Transition into Year 7, careers guidance and post-16 transition are planned for disabled students	Year 7 team and SEND team	Yes	Feedback from our Accessibility survey demonstrates that Y6 Transition was well received and pupils with SEND felt they transitioned well. Careers guidance is fully embedded into Year 11 annual reviews and post-16 checks in September 2026 show only 1 pupil with EHCP is NEET. The CAIEG monitors NEET rates.	Continued actions to maintain and refine Enhanced and Enhanced Plus transitions for Year 6 into 7. Reflection and development of post-16 and post-18 transition into next placements.	Ongoing	
Staff are trained in a range of disabilities and medical conditions	Medical Room Manager	Yes	First Aid training complete	N/A	N/A	

2.1 Physical Environment Audit

External Access						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Accessible parking spaces available	Ops Manager	Yes	Three designated accessible parking bays are provided. Their markings, signage, dimensions, location and access routes are checked through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Drop-off points allow safe access	Ops Manager	Yes	Confirmed through the accessibility site inspection. Condition subsequently monitored through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Ramps/paths are safe and well maintained	Ops Manager	Yes	Confirmed through the accessibility site inspection. Condition subsequently monitored through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection and following reported defects	
External signage clear and accessible	Ops Manager	Yes	Confirmed through the accessibility site inspection. Condition subsequently monitored through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	

Internal Movement & Access						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Step-free routes to key areas	Ops Manager	Yes	Confirmed through the accessibility site inspection. Condition subsequently monitored through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Lifts available and serviced	Ops Manager	Yes	Lift servicing records, statutory thorough-examination reports, maintenance records and recorded routine checks confirm that the lift remains available and operational.	Maintain current provision	In accordance with servicing and statutory examination schedules	
Corridor widths meet accessibility needs	Ops Manager	Partial	Main circulation routes are of sufficient width for their intended use. Any identified restricted routes or pinch points are recorded in the accessibility site audit, with an accessible alternative route or management arrangement provided where required.	Keep circulation routes clear and review identified restrictions when refurbishment or capital works are planned. Provide an accessible alternative route or management arrangement where required	Annual review and when refurbishment or capital works are planned	
Doors easy to open (force/handles/seals)	Ops Manager	Yes	Confirmed through the accessibility site inspection. Condition subsequently monitored through recorded termly site inspections.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection and following reported defects	
Classrooms accessible for wheelchair users	Ops Manager	Partial	Most curriculum areas are accessible by step-free routes. Where a room is not accessible, timetabling and room allocation are adjusted to provide an accessible teaching location.	Maintain current provision. Improvement action: see action plan P1	Annual review and following changes in student need or room use	
Accessible Toilets & Facilities						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Accessible toilet(s) provided	Ops Manager	Yes	The accessible toilet provides an approximately 1,500 mm turning space, appropriately positioned grab rails, an outward-opening door and an emergency assistance alarm	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Alarm pull-cords functioning correctly	Ops Manager	Yes	Planned Preventative Maintenance cycle	Maintain current provision	In accordance with the planned preventive maintenance schedule	
Turning space available (1500mm)	Ops Manager	Yes	The accessible toilet provides an approximately 1,500 mm turning space, confirmed through the accessibility site inspection.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Hygiene room/changing bench available	Ops Manager	Yes	A hygiene room with an appropriate changing bench is provided within Aspire. Its condition, availability and associated equipment are included in the planned inspection and maintenance regime.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection and planned maintenance schedule	

Grab rails secure and at correct heights	Ops Manager	Yes	Grab rails are included in the planned inspection regime and checked for security, condition and appropriate positioning.	Maintain current provision	Termly site inspection	
Sensory & Acoustic Environment						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Acoustic treatment in classrooms	Ops Manager	Partial	Adjustments are considered according to identified student need and specialist advice.	Review provision in response to identified student needs, specialist advice, room-use changes and planned refurbishment. Implement reasonable interim adjustments where required.	Ongoing, reviewed annually and when a relevant need is identified	
Lighting is non-flickering and can be adjusted where required	Ops Manager	Partial	LED lighting is provided throughout the site. Individual adjustments, task lighting, blinds or alternative rooms are made available where required following assessment of student need.	Review provision following identification of student need, specialist advice, room-use changes or planned refurbishment. Provide reasonable interim adjustments where required.	Ongoing, reviewed annually and when a relevant need is identified	
Quiet spaces available for regulation	SEND CO	Yes	Quiet regulation spaces available in Aspire, Library and outdoors. Low-arousal areas. Visual clutter minimised where appropriate. Flexible seating available.	Ongoing maintenance and development of quiet and sensory spaces for regulation	Formally reviewed by September 2027 and annually thereafter	
Safety & Evacuation						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Evac chairs maintained and inspected	Facilities Manager	Yes	Evacuation chairs are subject to recorded routine inspections and periodic servicing in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements. Defects are reported and addressed through the maintenance system.	Maintain current provision	In accordance with the manufacturer's inspection and servicing requirements	
Evacuation routes accessible	Facilities Manager	Yes	Evacuation routes are inspected routinely, kept clear and assessed against the needs identified in individual PEEPs. Arrangements are tested through scheduled evacuation drills.	Maintain clear evacuation routes and review arrangements following drills, changes to student need, building alterations or changes in room allocation.	Termly and following drills or relevant changes	
Staff trained in assisted evacuation	Headteacher/ SEND CO/Facilities Manager	Yes	Relevant students have current PEEPs. Named staff have received assisted-evacuation and evacuation-chair training. Training records are maintained and arrangements are tested through drills or practical exercises.	Review each PEEP termly and following any change in student need, room allocation or evacuation arrangements. Maintain sufficient numbers of trained staff.	Termly and following any relevant change	
Additional site items						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Hearing loops at reception and in the main hall	Ops Manager	No	N/A	Quotes required to install	Feb 27	
Visual or vibrating fire alarms for students with hearing impairment	Ops Manager	Yes	VADS L1 fire alarm system in place throughout site	N/A	N/A	

Colour contrast on doors, stair nosings and signage	Ops Manager	Partial	Not all doors or threshold contrast	Remedy as part of ongoing painting programme	Sept 2029	
Handrails on both sides of stairs	Ops Manager	Yes	Listed buildings with narrow stairwells and wattle & daub walls are not suitable for handrails on both sides	Ensure that if these stairwells prevent access, that alternate arrangements (location) is made available for those who need it.	Ongoing	
Outdoor areas, field and sports facilities accessible	Ops Manager	Yes	There are no external areas of the site which are not fully accessible.	N/A	N/A	
Dining hall and library accessible	Ops Manager	Yes	All doors into these areas exceed DDA requirements and have flat thresholds.	N/A	N/A	
Height-adjustable benches in science and D&T rooms	SENDSCO	No	No Current requirement – will be monitored and addressed as needed	N/A	Ongoing	

Information Audit

Communication with Parents						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
School communications available in multiple formats	Office Manager	Yes	Translation requests fulfilled. Interpreter access. Screen-reader compatible documents. Parent communication platforms. Alternative formats on request.	N/A	Ongoing	
Website information clear & readable	DHT Curriculum; AHT Teaching & Learning	Partial	New website under construction	Launch of new website	tbc	
Translation offered where required	Office Manager	Yes	All requests fulfilled when requested	N/A	Ongoing	
Large print documents available	Office Manager	Yes	All requests fulfilled when requested	N/A	Ongoing	
Website & Digital Content						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Website meets WCAG accessibility standards	Deputy Head	Partial	New website under construction	Launch of new website	tbc	
ALT text used on all images	Deputy Head	Partial	New website under construction	Launch of new website	tbc	
PDFs accessible/screen-reader compatible	Deputy Head	Partial	New website under construction	Launch of new website	tbc	
Keyboard navigation works	Deputy Head	Partial	New website under construction	Launch of new website	tbc	
Student Facing Information						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Visual timetables used consistently	Teachers	Partial	Students engaging in lessons Task boards and timetables available to those who need it	Ongoing training and example task boards, where needed	September 2027	

Symbols/pictures used where needed	Teachers	Partial	Widgit software and icons used Dual-coding increasing practice	Subscription to Widgit Software Training raising the importance of dual coding	July 2026 September 2026 Ongoing	
Class materials available in large print	SEND/CO/Teachers	Yes	Classbooks, exam papers	Sharing of VI specialist reports and updates on students who need personalised provision.	Ongoing	
Assessment materials accessible	Teachers/ SEND/CO/Exams Officer	Where required	EAA applications JCQ inspection	EAA needs assessed and applications processed in a timely way.	Ongoing	
Additional information items						
Item	Owner	Yes/No/Partial	Evidence	Action Required	Target Date	Comments
Alternative formats available to students (audio, easy-read, symbol-supported, Braille)	SENCO	Yes	Provided upon request	N/A	Ongoing	
Videos used in lessons are captioned	SENCO	Yes	Provided upon request	N/A	Ongoing	
Student-facing platforms (Teams, Arbor, ePraise) work with screen readers	SENCO	Yes			N/A	
Website accessibility statement published	SENCO	Yes			N/A	

3 Accessibility Improvement Plan 2026–2029

This improvement plan covers September 2026 to August 2029. It sets out the objectives that will increase and improve access over that period. Items that only maintain current provision are recorded in the audit.

Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Cost / funding
C1	Increase independent use of assistive technology by students with the highest needs	Develop speech-to-text use with highest-need students. Make reader software part of students' normal way of working, including in assessments. Train staff to support its use.	SENDCO	September 2027	57% of eligible students use assistive technology for exams and are able to borrow technology as part of their normal way of working in lessons and assessments. Students report that it helps them and post-exam pupil voice shows engagement with provisions.	Upkeep of technology – reader pens and laptops (SEND and exams)
C2	Ensure disabled students can take a full part in trips, visits, clubs and enrichment	Record the participation of disabled students in trips and clubs. Include an accessibility check in every educational visit risk assessment. Plan adjustments with students and parents before each residential.	Educational Visits Coordinator / SENDCO	July 2027	Participation of disabled students in trips, visits and extracurricular activities is comparable to that of their peers, with barriers to participation identified and addressed through reasonable adjustments.	As required, using additional funding where eligibility permits
C3	Widen staff knowledge of disability beyond hearing impairment	Deliver an annual training programme covering autism, ADHD, epilepsy, diabetes, visual impairment, mental health and other medical conditions. Include disability awareness in induction for new staff.	SENDCO / AHT Teaching and Learning	From 2026–27, annually	Training records show all staff complete the programme. Learning walks show consistent, and improving, adaptive teaching and use of reasonable adjustments.	CPD and Staffing costs
C4	Use visual supports and dual coding consistently across subjects	Share example task boards and visual timetables. Include visual supports as part of quality assurance processes.	AHT Teaching and Learning / SENDCO	September 2027	Learning walks show visual supports used where needed in all subjects. Audit items move from 'Partial' to 'Yes'.	Staffing costs
C5	Make reasonable adjustments within behaviour and attendance systems	Review behaviour and attendance procedures for disabled students. Record agreed adjustments in student profiles. Monitor suspension, detention and attendance data for disabled students.	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) / SENDCO	July 2027	Patterns of attendance, behaviour and suspension involving disabled students are reviewed termly. Where trends or concerns are identified, colleagues evaluate provision and implement appropriate reasonable adjustments and support plans to improve access, engagement and participation in education.	Staffing costs
C6	Support disabled students at points of transition	Share information early with feeder schools for incoming Year 7 students. Provide enhanced transition visits. Include accessibility in careers guidance and post-16 transition planning.	SENDCO / Head of Year 7 / Careers Leader	Each summer term	The needs of incoming disabled students are identified and planned for before they start. Transition arrangements at key stages are personalised to individual need, enabling students to access the next stage of their education successfully.	Staffing costs

Access to the physical environment

Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Cost / funding
P1	Reduce the number of rooms and routes that are not fully accessible to wheelchair users	List each restricted room and pinch point from the site audit. Agree a timetabling and room allocation protocol. Include priority works in the Trust's estates and capital plan and in funding bids.	Ops Manager / CFOO	Protocol by December 2026; works by August 2029	Every disabled student is taught in accessible rooms. Inaccessible teaching rooms reduced from [x] to [x].	[TBC]
P2	Improve the acoustic environment for students with hearing impairment	Commission an acoustic assessment of priority rooms, with Teacher of the Deaf advice. Treat the rooms most used by students with hearing impairment. Include acoustic standards in refurbishment specifications.	Ops Manager / SENDCO	Assessment by July 2027; works by August 2028	Priority rooms meet recommended acoustic standards. Students with hearing impairment report better access to teaching.	[TBC]
P3	Provide hearing loops at key points	Install and test hearing loops at main reception and in the main hall. Display signage.	Ops Manager	March 2027	Loops are installed, signed and checked termly.	[TBC]
P4	Make sure deaf and hearing-impaired students are alerted in an emergency	Review fire alarm arrangements for students with hearing impairment. Provide visual beacons or vibrating pagers where needed. Update the relevant PEEPs.	Ops Manager / SENDCO	December 2026	Every student with a hearing impairment has an alerting arrangement in their PEEP. Drills confirm it works.	[TBC]
P5	Improve lighting and visual contrast for students with visual impairment or sensory needs	Review lighting controls, task lighting and blinds in priority rooms. Improve colour contrast on stair nosings, doors and signage.	Ops Manager / SENDCO	July 2028	Audit items for lighting and signage move from 'Partial' to 'Yes'.	[TBC]
P6	Colour contrast on doors, stair nosings and signage	To be completed as part of the ongoing painting programme	Facilities Manager	Sept 29	All doors and nosings contrasting	[TBC]

Access to information

Ref	Objective	Actions	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Cost / funding
I1	Complete the information audit and set a baseline	Complete the blank items in the Information Audit (Annex A). Test key documents and platforms with students and parents who use alternative formats.	[Owner TBC]	December 2026	The audit is complete, with evidence for every item.	None
I2	Provide information to disabled students in the format they need	Record each student's preferred format in their student profile. Provide large print, modified enlarged papers, audio, easy-read, symbol-supported text and Braille (through specialist services).	SENDCO	From September 2026	Students who need alternative formats receive them at the same time as their peers.	[TBC]
I3	Make the school website and published documents accessible	Audit the website against WCAG 2.2 AA. Add alt text to images and make PDFs screen-reader compatible. Publish an accessibility statement.	[Owner TBC]	July 2027	Audit issues are fixed. An accessibility statement is published.	[TBC]
I4	Make student-facing digital platforms accessible	Check that platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Arbor and ePraise work with screen readers and magnification. Add captions to videos used in lessons.	[Owner TBC] / Network Manager	July 2027	Students who use assistive technology can use all core platforms independently.	[TBC]