

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 21 March 2017

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Education Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Approve the Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020 and Action Plan (Appendix 1).
 - ii. Authorise the publication and distribution of the Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020 to all Educational establishments in East Lothian.
 - iii. Authorise Education Service officers to review the Strategy and Action Plan on an annual basis.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 *The Education (Disabilities Strategies and Pupil's Educational Records)(Scotland) Act 2002* places a duty on local authorities to prepare and implement an Accessibility Strategy to cover consecutive 3 year periods.
- 3.2 This is East Lothian's fourth Accessibility Strategy, which will cover the three-year period from March 2017 to March 2020.
- 3.3 The authority, schools and nurseries must take the Accessibility Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning.
- 3.4 The purpose of this Accessibility Strategy is to ensure improvements in the following areas:

- **Curriculum** - increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum;
- **Physical Environment** - improve the physical environment of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided; and
- **Communication** - improve communication with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats and taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents that would be provided in writing to pupils who do not have a disability.

These are referred to as *planning duties* in associated legislation.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All current and future policies at Authority and school level will take account of the duties set down by this Accessibility Strategy, the Equality Act 2010, the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - Current policy on Accessibility requires the Authority to make reasonable adjustments where required to provide access for pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, built environment and communication. These adjustments will continue to be met from the Education budget.
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

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DATE	17 February 2017

Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020

Introduction

This is East Lothian's fourth Accessibility Strategy which will cover the three year period from March 2017 to March 2020. Schools and nurseries must take the Accessibility Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning.

Purpose

The purpose of this Accessibility Strategy is to ensure improvements in the following areas:

- **Curriculum** - increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum;
- **Physical Environment** - improve the physical environment of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided; and
- **Communication** - improve communication with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats and taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents that would be provided in writing to pupils who do not have a disability.

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Legislative and Policy Context

- *The Education (Disabilities Strategies and pupil records)(Scotland) Act 2002* places a duty on local authorities to prepare and implement an Accessibility Strategy to cover consecutive 3 year periods.
- *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009)* requires that education authorities make adequate and efficient provision for such additional support as is required by a child or young person.
- *The Equality Act 2010* restates the previously existing duty on an education authority to '*make reasonable adjustment*' for disabled persons in school and where an existing arrangement places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to persons who are not disabled, to remove that disadvantage.

The Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if (s)he '*has a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial or long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*'

Long term – last or likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the person's life

Substantial adverse effect – is neither minor nor trivial and affects one of the special capabilities of:

- mobility
 - manual dexterity
 - physical coordination
 - continence
 - ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
 - speech, hearing, eye sight
 - memory and ability to concentrate, learn or understand
 - autism spectrum disorder
-
- *The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. Local authorities have been working to implement the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach since 2010. Aspects of this approach have now been included in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act. Wellbeing is at the heart of the GIRFEC agenda and the Act defines Wellbeing under eight indicators – safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. The GIRFEC approach should support the aim of improving access to education and outcomes for disabled pupils.
 - *How good is our school? (4th Edition)*. How good is our school is the national guidance for school self evaluation. The quality indicators and supporting toolkit assist school in the process of achieving self-improvement. Quality Indicators 3.1 (Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion) and 3.2 (Raising attainment and achievement) provide schools with the means to engage in evidence – based analysis of what is working well and what needs to improve, including support for pupils with a disability.

Terminology

The Education (Disabilities Strategies and pupil records)(Scotland) Act 2002 uses the term 'pupils with a disability' therefore this is the terminology used in this document. A 'pupil' is a child or young person of any age for whom education is or is required to be provided. Provision can be made by a pre-school, primary, secondary or special school or independent or grant-aided school.

Developing our Accessibility Strategy

The Steering Group

A core Steering Group was established in June 2016 to review the previous Accessibility Strategy and develop the 2017-2020 Strategy.

Steering group membership:

Linda Gaughan (chair), Education Support Officer (ASN)
Andrew McCulloch, Business Support Officer
Judith Wood, Senior Safety Advisor
Angela Mcleman, Occupational Therapist
Hayley Welsh, Access Officer
Andrea Baillie, parent
Susan Major, parent
Louise MacDiarmid, parent
Rebecca Keegan, pupil
Sarah Ingham, Head Teacher
Alison Cameron, Deputy Head Teacher
Tricia Shepherd, Principal Teacher
Claire Graham, Head Teacher

Review of previous Accessibility Strategy

The Steering group reviewed the progress made in priority areas identified in the previous Accessibility Strategy.

Key actions and outcomes are summarised below:

Priority Area	Planning duty	Outcomes
Extracurricular activities and outdoor learning	Curriculum Environment	The Outdoor Learning Team now includes information and guidance on appropriate extracurricular and outdoor learning opportunities for disabled pupils in their training, 'Visit Leader Training'.
Anti-bullying Policy	Curriculum Environment Communication	Draft Anti Bullying Policy will be circulated for consultation by January 2017
Targeted services for visually impaired pupils	Curriculum Environment Communication	A new Service Level Agreement is in place with the provider (City of Edinburgh)
Arrangements for allocating resources for equipment and buildings adaptations to ensure access for disabled pupils	Curriculum Environment Communication	The process and documentation for allocating resources has been reviewed and is fit for purpose

Staff guidance and training on legislation	Curriculum Environment Communication	East Lothian Pro equal Opportunities training available to all staff National Guidance on Equalities has been circulated to schools Equality in Early Years Guidance (2012)
Accessible documentation	Communication	Centre and school staff are aware of East Lothian policy on Accessible Information. This is available on the councils intranet
Complaints procedures	Curriculum Environment Communication	School staff are aware of and utilising the most current Complaints Procedures. Information leaflets are readily available and Head Teachers have been briefed.

Information about children and young people with a disability in East Lothian

Through the Staged Assessment and Intervention process individual teachers and schools gather significant amounts of information and data on individual pupils and their additional support needs.

Centrally this information is collated in a format that can be compared to national data and can also be used to support planning and decision making locally.

The tables below summarise the rate of pupils with a disability in our schools (Sept 2016):

Rate assessed and/or declared as having a disability per 1,000 pupils					
All Sectors	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
East Lothian	14.3	14.1	12.8	15.1	14.4
National	22.6	22.8	22.2	23.2	23.8

Rate assessed and/or declared as having a disability per 1,000 pupils					
Primary Sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
East Lothian	8.8	8.5	7.5	12.6	11.8
National	13.7	12.8	12.1	12.6	13.0

Rate assessed and/or declared as having a disability per 1,000 pupils					
Secondary Sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
East Lothian	21.8	21.7	20.4	18.9	18.4
National	18.7	20.3	20.1	22.4	23.1

Consultation process

A range of tools and methods were used to consult with stakeholders on priorities for this Accessibility Strategy:

- Focus Group with Family Led Information Point Group (FLIP)
- Pupil questionnaire/interviews
- Parent / Carer questionnaire
- School staff questionnaire
- Partner agency questionnaires

Outcomes from the consultation process are summarised in Appendix 1

Key priorities for our Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020

From the information gathered through the consultation process, the following priorities have been identified for the new Accessibility Strategy:

- **Training for school staff on a wide range of issues relating to disability including legislative duties.**
- **Awareness and understanding of pupils regarding disability.**
- **Use and understanding of data to inform school and authority planning in the areas of:**
 - **Attainment**
 - **building adaptations**
 - **specialist equipment**
 - **use of ICT**
 - **assessment arrangements**
- **Inclusion of pupils with disability on school outings and trips.**
- **Differentiation of the curriculum to meet learners needs.**
- **Methodology for gathering and comparing views to inform Accessibility Strategies in the future.**

Below are areas highlighted through the consultation that are either outside the scope of the Accessibility Strategy or being addressed through other strategies, reviews etc:

- Staffing levels –the Additional Support Needs Review
- Dyslexia training for school staff – the Literacy Strategy
- Access to playgrounds and outdoor spaces in schools – the Play Strategy
- Access to sport activities – the Inclusion in Sport Strategy
- Joint working/meetings/SAI process – the Additional Support Needs Review

Areas of good practice identified by stakeholders

Through our consultation process, we also asked stakeholders to identify areas of good practice in supporting pupils with a disability in East Lothian schools. Some key areas of good practice are listed below:

Curriculum:

- ✓ Comprehensive assessment arrangements e.g. scribes, digital exam papers
- ✓ Early planning for trips and outings (involving parents and pupils)
- ✓ Alternative outdoor activities e.g. Muirfield Riding Therapy, supported canoeing at the lagoons
- ✓ Flexible curriculum e.g. drumming, therapy dogs

Physical Environment:

- ✓ Equipment and furnishing to increase access e.g. accessible hobs, chairs, angle boards
- ✓ Adaptations to school buildings e.g. acoustics wall panels, ramps.
- ✓ Accessible and sensory play equipment in our Specialist provision playgrounds

Communication:

- ✓ Deaf awareness training available to all staff
- ✓ Whole school commitment to learning British Sign Language
- ✓ Using text to share information with pupils and parents
- ✓ Speaking app software

Others:

- ✓ Integration of pupils in our Specialist Provision into mainstream and vice versa (increases understanding and awareness)
- ✓ Sharing good practice through case conferences

Action Plan

The Steering Group developed the Action Plan based on key priorities identified through the consultation exercise.

See appendix 2.

Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Steering Group annually, over the 3 year period. As part of this process, we will continue to consult with children and young people regarding their educational experience. An interim report will be produced following each review.

Accessibility Strategy 2017-2020

How did we consult?

The consultation process

A wide range of stakeholders were consulted to inform the Strategy:

- Pupil surveys/interviews in 10 primary schools and two secondary schools. Pupils responding covered a number of stages and included both those identified as having a disability and those who did not.
- The Steering Group chair attended a session of the authority's Family Led Information Point (FLIP) and directly discussed the scope and aims of the Strategy and collated responses from the parents of children with a disability.
- A formal consultation ran via the Council's Consultation Hub for four weeks in September / October 2016.

The consultation recorded the views of parental, school staff, external professionals and pupils on how well the authority is meeting the needs of children and young people with a disability in our schools. It also recorded areas of best practice within our schools.

Response rate

Pupil interviews/questionnaires

33 responses were received from children in primary and secondary schools responded.

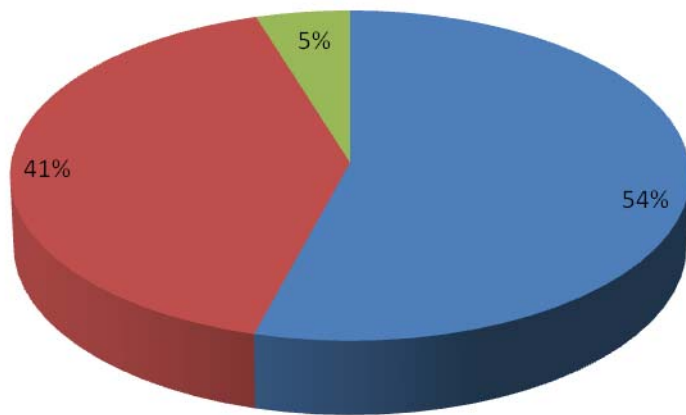
Formal Consultation through the Consultation Hub

This yielded 83 responses in total. The breakdown is as follows:

- The parent/carer of children and young people who attend a school or nursery managed by, or in partnership with, East Lothian Council – 45
- Members of staff in a school or nursery managed by, or in partnership with, East Lothian Council – 34
- Partners who works directly or indirectly with children and young people in East Lothian who have a disability - 4

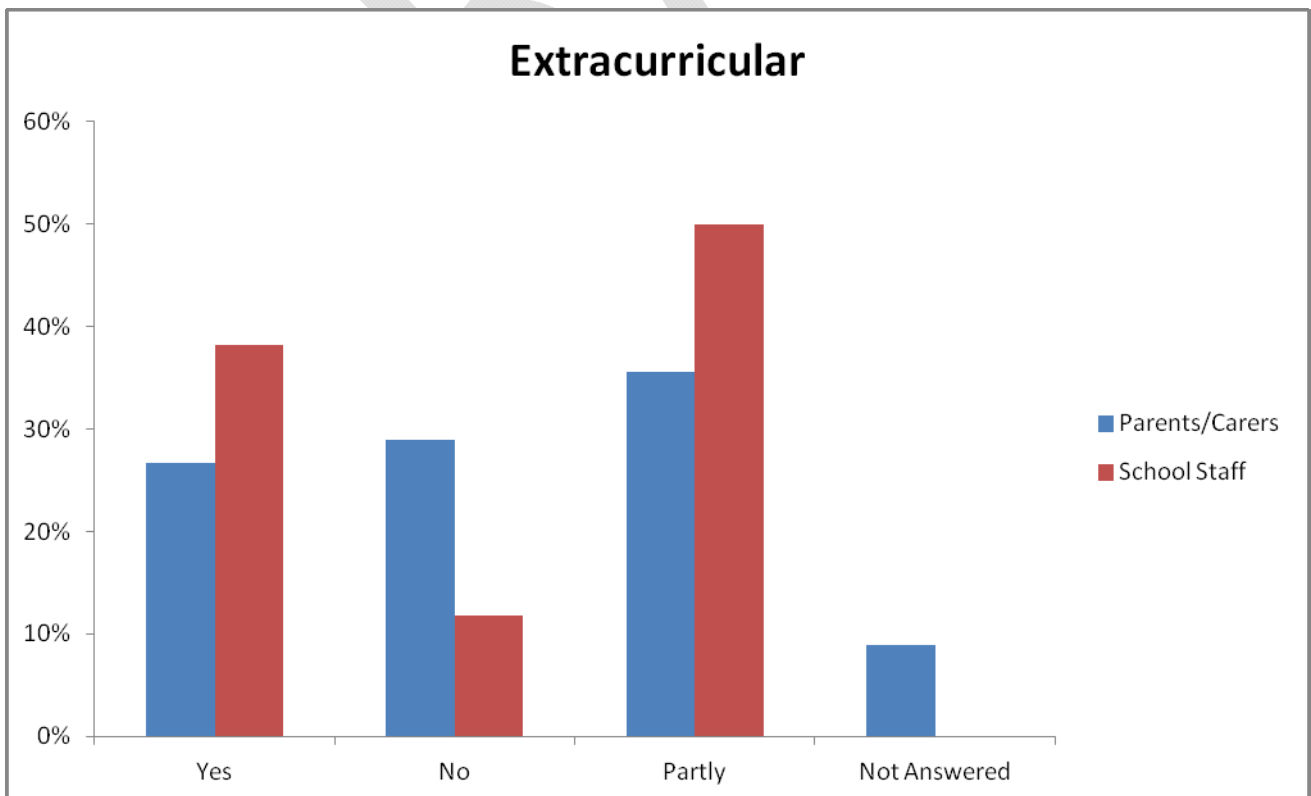
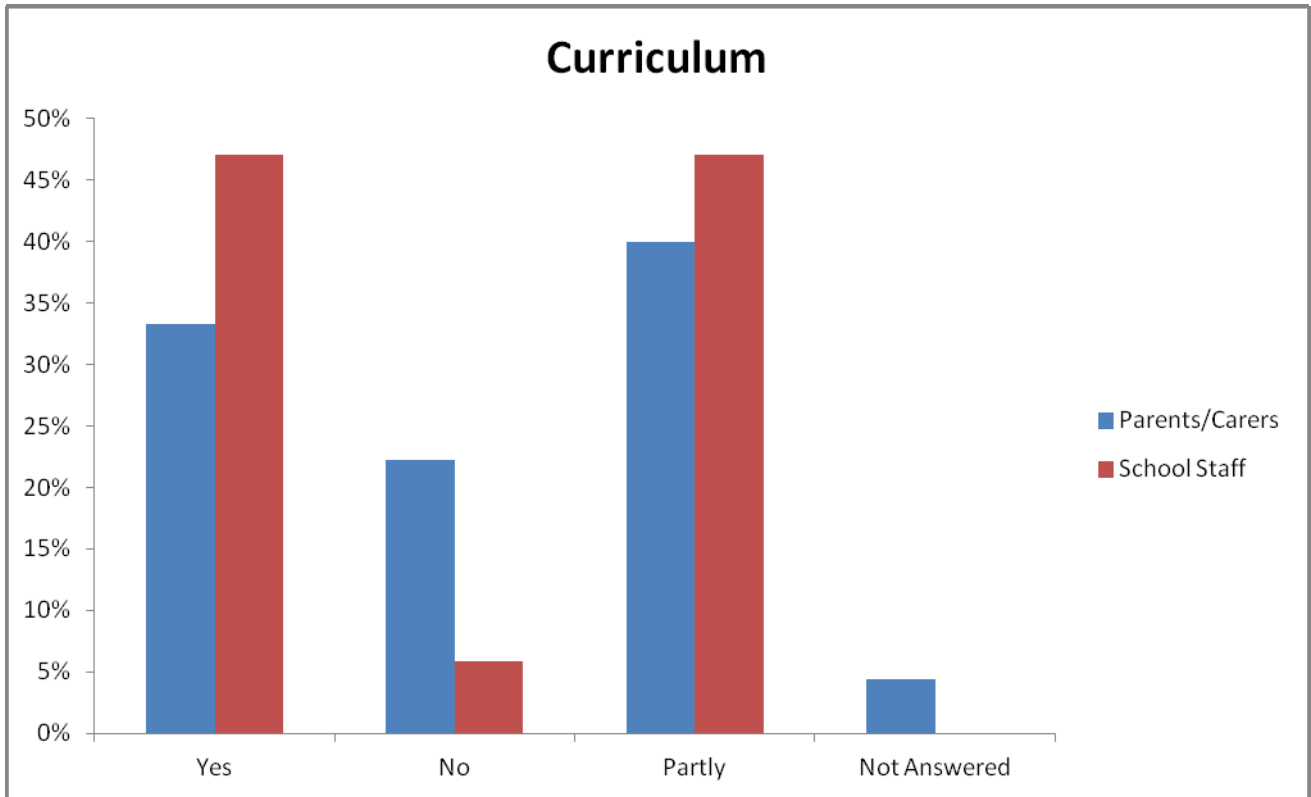
Responses to the formal consultation (parents/carers, school staff and partners)

Percentage of Respondents

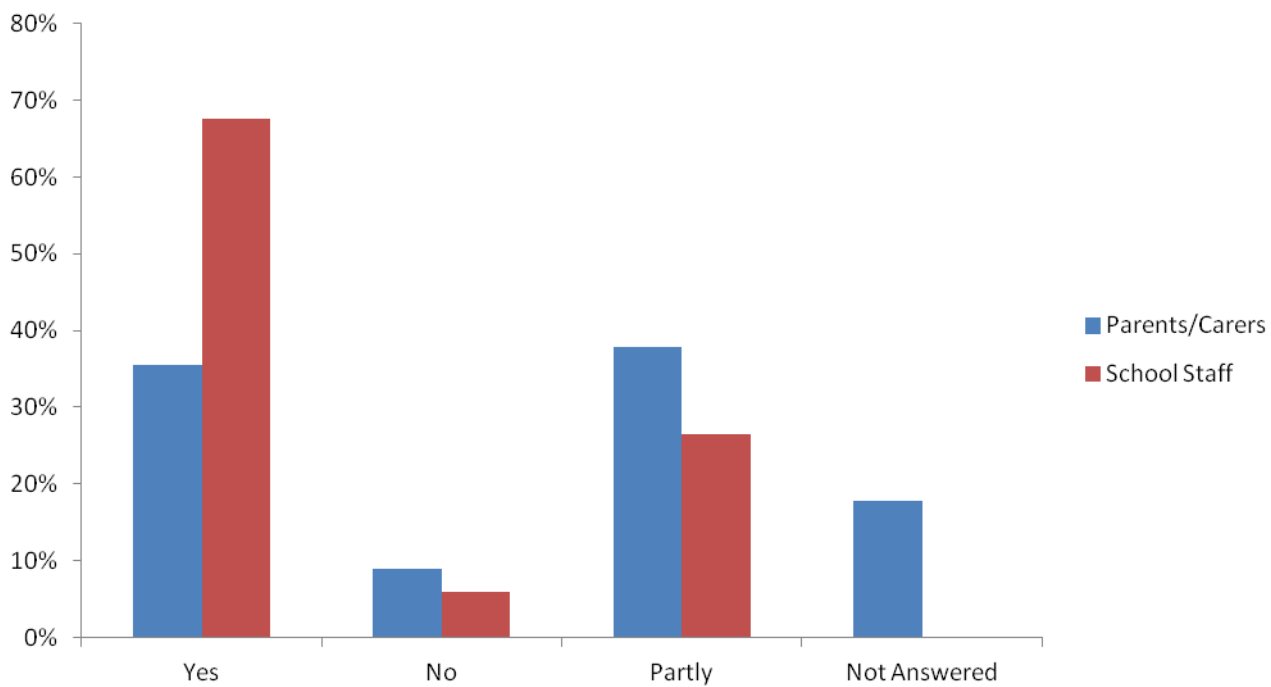


- The parent/carer of children and young people who attend a school or nursery managed by, or in partnership with, East Lothian Council?
- A member of staff in a school or nursery managed by, or in partnership with, East Lothian Council?
- A partner who works directly or indirectly with children and young people in East Lothian who have a disability?

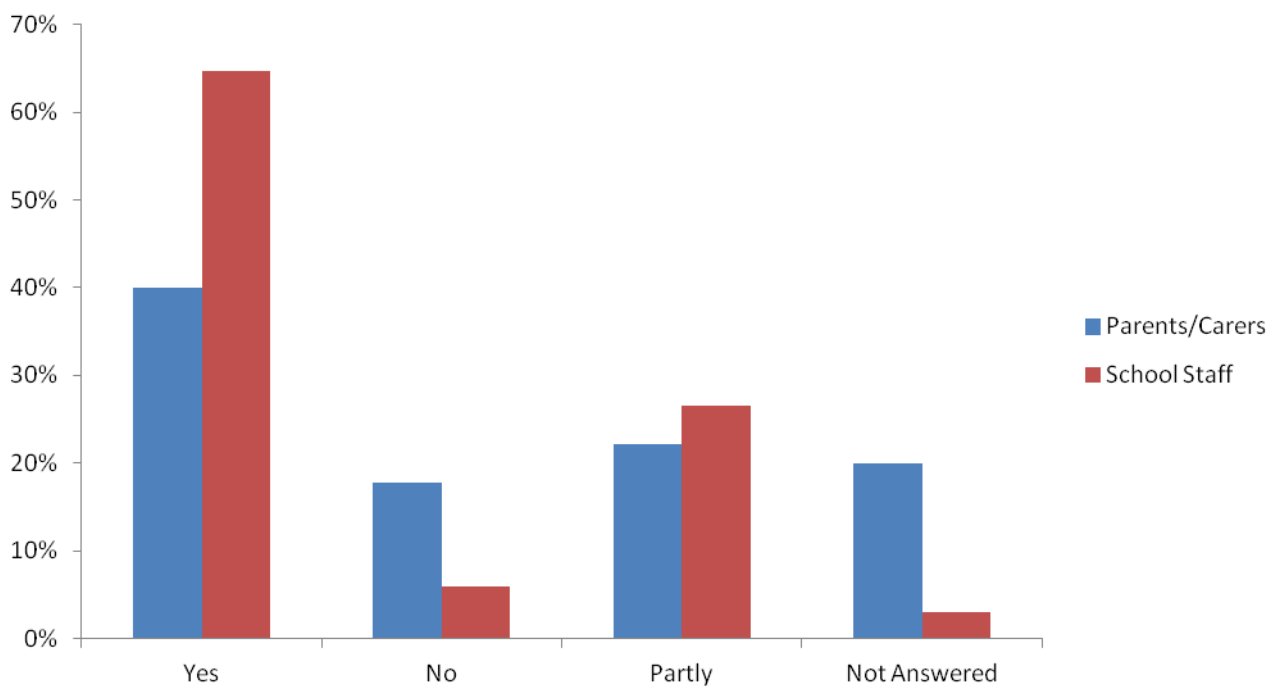
Response to question – How well are we meeting the needs of children and young people with a disability in the following areas?



Physical Environment



Communication



Outcome of the Consultation

Following collation of the data gathered from the pupil responses and the formal consultation with parents/carers, staff and partners, the Steering Group analysed the responses and identified the following priorities for action:

- **Training for school staff on a wide range of issues relating to disability including legislative duties**
- **Awareness and understanding of pupils regarding disability**
- **Use and understanding of data to inform school and authority planning in the areas of:**
 - **Attainment**
 - **building adaptations**
 - **specialist equipment**
 - **use of ICT**
 - **assessment arrangements**
- **Inclusion of pupils with disability on school outings and trips**
- **Differentiation of the curriculum to meet learners needs**
- **Methodology for gathering and comparing views to inform Accessibility Strategies in the future. The views of staff and parents differed on a number of issues.**

disabilities**Areas for development within the scope of this strategy are:****A – Curriculum****B – Extra-curricular****C – Physical environment****D - Communication**

Agreed actions	Area	Lead person(s)	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Timescales	Performance measure
2.1 Review and improve systems and procedures for data gathering and analysis at school and authority level relating to the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment (SQA and non SQA) • Buildings adaptations and specialist equipment • Specialist ICT for pupils with disability • Assessments Arrangements 	ABC	Business Support Officer (Andrew McCulloch)	Management Information System Education and school data systems Access Officer Education Support Officer (ICT) SQA data	June 2018 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of data on identified areas • Improved use of data to inform practice and other strategies
2.2 Develop systems to monitor participation of pupils with disabilities on outings and trips	AB	Senior Safety Advisor (Judith Wood)	Evolve process Outdoor Learning	August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System and procedure in place to monitor participation • Data available on interventions in place to support inclusion on outings and trips • Data available on reasons for any non inclusion on outings and trips

Priority 3: Ensure that all children and young people with a disability are supported to access the curriculum inside and outside the classroom.

Areas for development within the scope of this strategy are:

A – Curriculum

B – Extra-curricular

C – Physical environment

D - Communication

Agreed Actions	Area	Lead Person(s)	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Timescales	Performance indicator
3.1 Sessions to share best practice regarding inclusion of pupils with disabilities in offsite/outdoor opportunities.	ABC	Senior Safety Advisor (Judith Wood)	DHT/HT/SfL//Support staff conferences Twightlights/Fri pm Staff Development Team Input from Outdoor Education, Ross High Base, Campie Primary School Schools etc	Session 17-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in number of pupils NOT included on trips and outings over the 3 year period of this Strategy • Increase in the number of trips and outing offered by Specialist Provisions over the 3 year period of this Strategy
3.2 A session to share best practice regarding inclusion of pupils with disabilities in classroom based curricular opportunities e.g. differentiation, flexible curriculum, national 1& 2 for pupils with disabilities	AC	Education Support Officer (Linda Gaughan) plus PT Inclusion North Berwick High School (Tricia Shepherd)	SfL//Support staff conferences Twilights Staff Development Team Input from SSERC, Education Scotland, schools, Access Officer etc Liaise with key partners – CL&D, East Lothian Works etc	Session 17-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement reflected in end of Strategy survey

Priority 4:To collect and utilise accurate data to inform future Accessibility Strategies

Areas for development within the scope of this strategy are:

A – Curriculum

B – Extra-curricular

C – Physical environment

D - Communication

Agreed Actions	Area	Lead Person(s)	Resources (physical/financial/staffing)	Timescales	Performance measure
4.1 Review methodology for gathering views to inform the development of future Accessibility Strategies with particular reference to the voice of children, young people, parents and carers.	ABCD	Education Psychologist – Lois Wilson	Development time Links with stakeholders Link with Transformational Change team (Paulo Vestri) Admin support Advice from Consumer Involvement teams within the council	August 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in number of stakeholders responses to consultations• Increase in the variety of methods used to gather views• Increase in range of stakeholders consulted