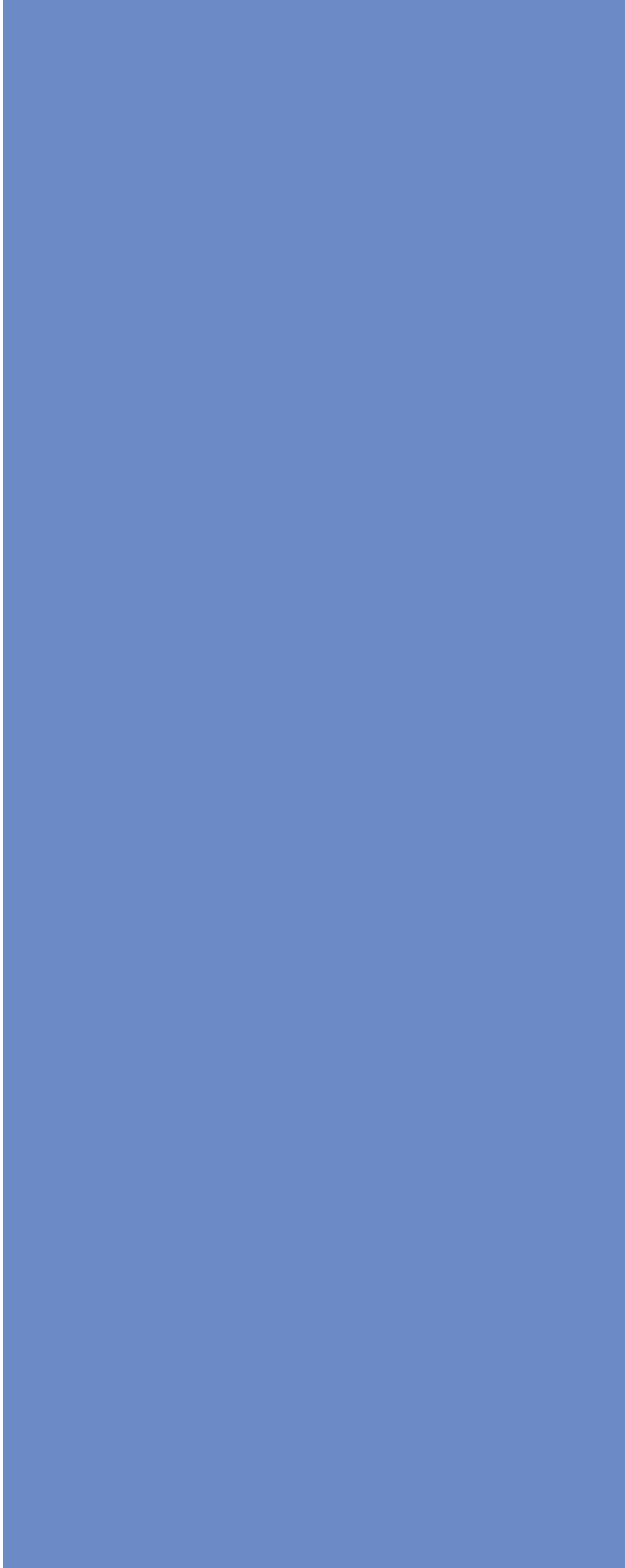




Improving Accessibility of Schools

2006





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INTRODUCTION

Education is important for everybody—this includes people with and without disabilities. Among other things, education gives us the opportunity to learn to read and write, it gives us the opportunity to make friends and socialise with other people, and it gives us the opportunity to learn new skills—skills that are important for employment in later life.

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) recognises the importance of education for social and economic development through the various educational initiatives it has taken. However, many children with disabilities overwhelmingly are not included in either mainstream or specialist schooling. While there are many barriers that still exist to ensuring equal access to education for people with disabilities, this booklet focuses on the issues of physical accessibility to the school facility.

More schools currently exist than are likely to be built in the near future. Thus, this booklet focuses on some of the main issues facing existing facilities. Existing buildings pose a particular challenge as there is a need to work within the existing structures. Full compliance with accessibility standards may not be possible or reasonable in many cases.

Site visits to many schools in urban and rural environments took place over

several months in 2005-2006 in order to identify areas of improvement to buildings that would assist in making schools more accessible. This booklet summarises some of the main issues and suggests some improvements that could be made. The major issues identified in this booklet are not necessarily the only issues for schools' accessibility. Factors such as lighting inside classrooms, classroom arrangement, access to sports and playgrounds, and wheelchair access to upper floors, for instance, are not addressed for various reasons. It would also be beneficial to consider these issues as part of an ongoing maintenance programme.

This document was written by Samantha Whybrow for John Grooms. We wish to thank all those involved in the production.

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Further information about accessibility can be obtained in Sri Lanka through:

Disability Organisations Joint Front

368 Galle Road, Ratmalana
Ph/Fax: +94 11 272 1383
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www.dojf.org

At the Ministry of Health, the Youth, Elderly, Disabled and Displaced Unit can also assist with inquiries.

YEDD Unit

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ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

As a minimum, the Ministry of Education stipulates that access to ground floor should be provided in all school buildings. Theoretically, this should provide students with access to all facilities that take place on the ground floor. Usually, this access is in the form of a 1:12 gradient ramp.

Common Issues:

- Step up into classroom from corridor with no ramped alternative
- Uncovered drains along length of building at entrance points [refer to section on drainage] that create a break in access to ground floor
- Ramps are not always provided to the ground floor of all buildings. For instance, there may be a ramp to a special needs unit building, but the other buildings in the school are not accessible. This means the disabled child cannot access other areas of the school and cannot be included in activities outside their own classroom.
- Ramps are built without raised curbs to protect the edges
- Ramps are too steep (note the Sri Lankan standards stipulate 1:15 grade for outdoor ramps)
- Ramps to main entrances are not covered
- Ramps surfaces are not made to be non-slip
- Ramps are built without handrails

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

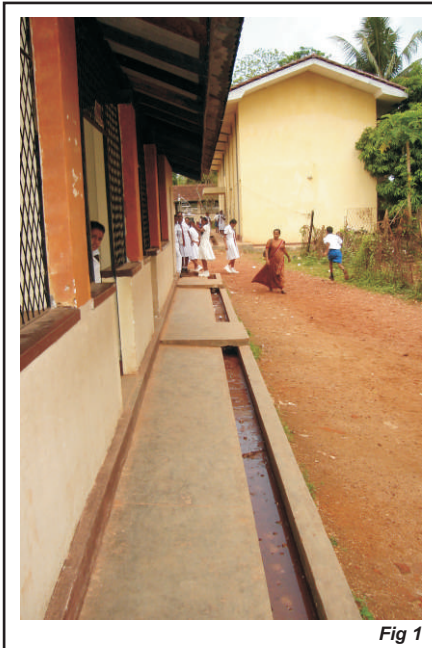


Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3

These classrooms are all ground floor but inaccessible because access to the ground floor is over a drain, then over a step onto the corridor, then another step into the classroom.

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

SOME IDEAS

Ramps should be provided at either end of a corridor/building. This is important along long corridors, especially, to avoid having to travel all the way along a corridor to the ramp in order to move to another building that might be at the 'non-ramp' end of the corridor.

Ramps should be 1:15 gradient to comply with recent changes in legislation.

Ramps should have curbs on unprotected edges to prevent falls off the ramp.

Handrails on either side of the ramps would assist those with difficulty walking up ramps.

Texture the surface of the ramp so that it does not become slippery—especially when wet.

Landings are at the top and bottom

Classrooms should lie level with the

corridor. Alternatively, a sloped surface set in the door frame could help overcome the step (this will only work for small steps). Portable ramps should be made available at a school to overcome those steps at classrooms that are too high.



Fig 4

A small slope has been set into the door to help overcome a small step.

Refer to the section on drains for ideas on overcoming problems with exposed drains

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

RAMPS



Fig 5

GOOD POINTS

Handrails both sides that are circular in shape and the correct height for children

Gentle slope

Non-slip surface (textured concrete)

COULD BE IMPROVED BY...

Covering a ramp that is to a main entrance or is a main access point

Providing a well-surfaced landing at the bottom

Providing a landing at the top so the person does not have to open the gate while resting on the sloped surface of the ramp

Ensuring that obstacles are not left in the way on the ramp or at the bottom, where they can be a hazard (in this case , a table).

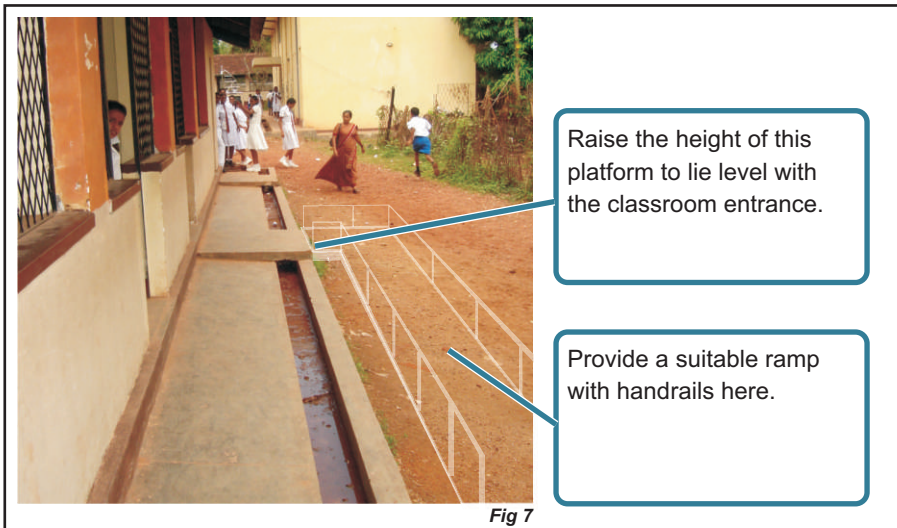


Fig 6

At one school a small ramp-bridge was constructed to overcome a step on a driveway to help VEHICLES. This is a simple idea and it can be applied to help people too!

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

Example of possible modification to improve ground floor access



This picture shows one of the common ways to enter classrooms on the ground floor. It is not accessible due to the steps and the open drain. There are many possible solutions. The picture shows how a ramp could be constructed to one of the classrooms to allow access to at least one classroom. This would require :

- Raising the height of the corridor directly outside the classroom entrance to be level with the classroom to create a level landing of at least 1500mm length and 1200mm width.
- Construct a ramp of 1:15 gradient

that is 1200mm wide to run parallel with the existing corridor

If it is absolutely necessary to have a height difference at the entrance to the classroom, set a small ramp into the doorframe as shown in figure 06, p. 07.

An alternative solution is to provide access to all classrooms by raising the height of the entire corridor and placing ramps at both ends of the corridor. Drains should not be left exposed—suitable grating or safety measures should be provided [refer to section on drainage].

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

An alternative option would be to:

Provide ramped access to all classrooms by

- Raising the height of the entire corridor to be level with the classroom entrance. In this case, the minimum width of the corridors needs to be at least 1200mm. This may mean that part of the drain is covered so appropriate alterations to the drain need to be considered.
- Provide ramped access at both end of the building (refer to GoSL standards for specifications)
- Again, if it is necessary to have a level difference at the entrance points to classrooms, a small sloped surface should be set into the doorframe of the entrance
- Drains should not be left exposed—suitable grating should be provided. Please refer to section on drainage.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Slope—a gentle slope of 1:15 outdoors and 1:12 indoors

Width—at least 1200mm wide

Handrails—that are continuous on both sides ~900mm high and that continue onto the top and bottom landings for 300mm before finishing

Landings— at top and bottom and at every change of direction (minimum 1200mm x 1500mm long)

Surface—that is non-slip and well drained

Ground indicators— at top and bottom landings for people with difficulty seeing

Curbs—on exposed edges (50mm high)

Covering—if they are outdoors

ACCESS TO GROUND FLOOR

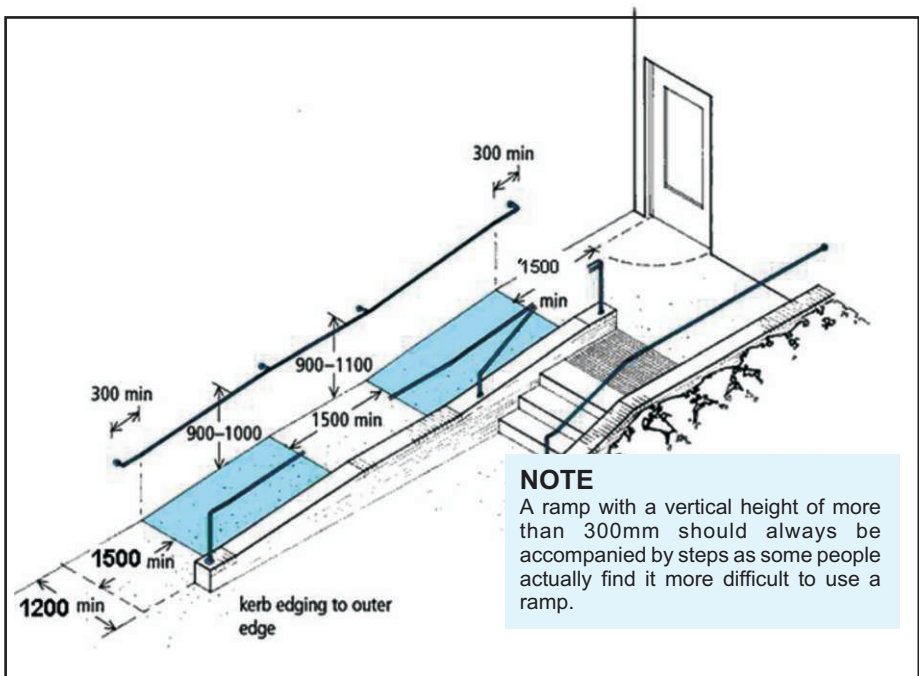


Fig 8

Ramp with gentle 1:15 slope. Note landings at top, bottom and mid-way. Observe that the top landing is measured from the top of the ramped surface to the edge of the door opening circle. Note also railings on both sides as well as curb on exposed edge of ramp (inset). Curbs help prevent people and mobility aids from falling off the ramp. Step access is also shown.

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

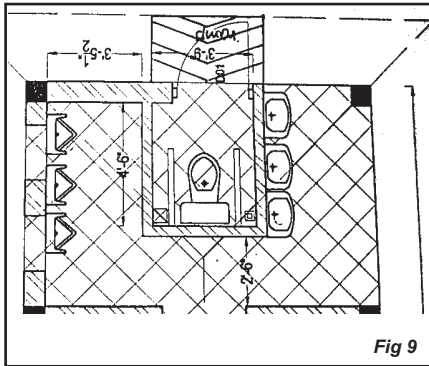


Fig 9

Proposed Disabled Toilet Facility

This toilet facility might be acceptable for disabled people who can walk. However, it makes more sense to provide a fully wheelchair accessible toilet facility because then the school has facilities for wheelchair users as well as ambulant (walking) disabled people. This is easy to do—the dimensions of the toilet need to be enlarged slightly and the position of the toilet and rails changed [see GoSL standards].

Common issues:

No disabled toilet facilities for students or teachers

Pathway leading to toilet facilities is not accessible

Architect's accessible design not implemented on-site

Accessibility standards not followed

A disabled toilet is located in a special unit only. Disabled students who are not educated in the special unit cannot access this toilet easily.

Disabled students may have to travel further to reach the disabled toilet because the path of travel has not been properly considered (e.g., the ramp is at the opposite end of the corridor to the toilet)

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

Existing schools have a designated number of toilet facilities according to the number of students. It is recommended that a proportional number of disabled toilet facilities should also be provided. At least one disabled toilet facility should be provided for students and one for staff.

In some cases, providing a disabled toilet facility for students may be achieved by combining two existing squatting-type toilets. However, this will only be useful if there is access to the existing toilet block itself.

Where a disabled toilet cannot be incorporated into the existing toilet block (one for boys and one for girls), then consideration should be given to constructing a new disabled toilet facility. This could be a unisex facility that boys and girls could use, as long as that is appropriate in that school environment.

Access to toilet blocks is an important consideration. The pathway leading to the toilet should be smooth, firm, and level, and should not be located further away from the school buildings than other toilets. That is, a disabled student should not have to travel further to get to the toilet than a non-disabled student. This means there needs to be careful

consideration of how students exit the school building. If there is only one ramp at the end of a long corridor and the toilets are in the opposite direction then the disabled student will have to travel at least twice as far! Needless to say, a disabled toilet facility should be located on the ground floor.

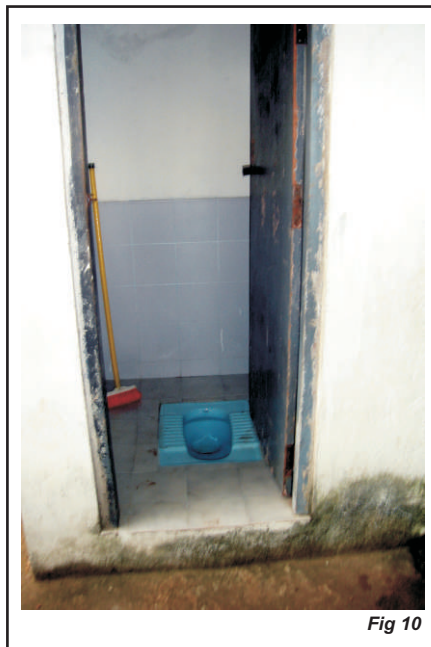


Fig 10

Most schools only have a squatting pan option. Space is usually limited. Doors often open across the toilet pans. There are step to overcome. These toilets are inaccessible.

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

Inaccessible path to toilet block



Fig 11

This toilet block contains 6 squatting type toilets. There is enough space to combine two of the toilets into an accessible toilet BUT the path of travel to this toilet block is entirely inaccessible. It is situated down a steep slope, across an open drain, along an uneven path, and there is a step into the block. Unless all of those problems could be overcome, this is not a situation where converting an existing facility would be recommended.

Communication of accessible design to all involved.



Fig 12

This toilet was designed to be wheelchair accessible. However, the construction site workers did not follow the architect's plan and positioned the toilet and rails incorrectly. Now the toilet is too far from the rails so the rails cannot be used. Also, the toilet should be close to a side wall so the wheelchair can approach from the side. The bidet hose is too far from the toilet to be reached while seated.

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

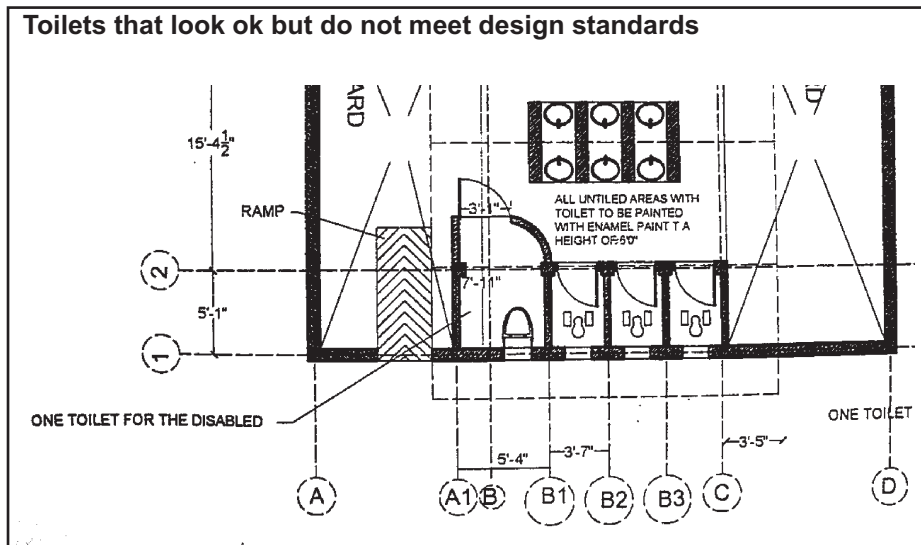


Fig 13

FIG 13: This toilet block was designed with a disabled toilet in mind. The toilet is not accessible. It does have ramped access, a wide door, and solid walls so that rails can be attached. However,

- The overall dimensions in the plan are not satisfactory. The width is too narrow. While the overall length could have been satisfactory, it is narrowed at the entrance by the curvature of the wall.
- The positioning of the columns mid-way along the wall on either side further narrows the space and makes it insufficient to perform a 180 degree wheelchair turn.
- There is no access to the wash hand basins for wheelchairs.
- As the width of the room is so narrow, there is not sufficient space to transfer onto the toilet from a wheelchair using the various different methods

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

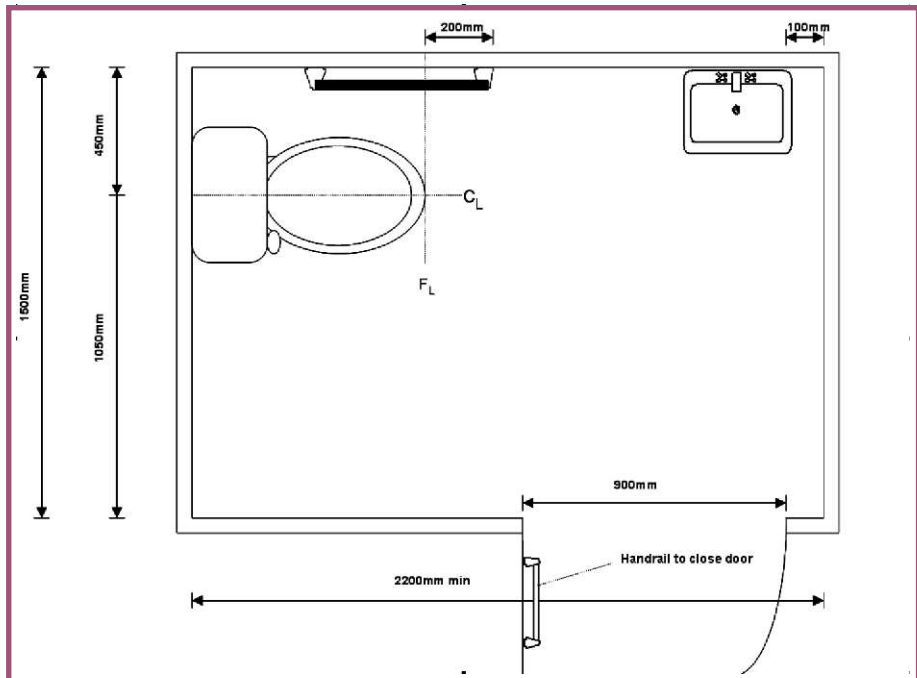


Fig 14: Example accessible toilet—top view

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme, access to toilets for staff and students should be checked. In most cases a new toilet will need to be constructed as no standard squatting toilet will meet accessibility standards. The main considerations will be:

Space

- In some cases there may be space inside the existing toilet block to construct an accessible toilet. This might be by combining two squatting toilets. It might be by using 'empty space' inside the block that is not being used for anything else.
- In other cases a new toilet might need to be constructed separate of the existing block.
- Space of 1500mm x 2200mm is required.

Level access

- In most cases, existing toilet blocks have steps to get up to the block so any alterations would need to include ramps as well.
- Some toilet cubicles have steps to them. These should be removed as well to create level access (an option is to set a ramp into the doorframe).

Accessible path to toilet

- The pathway leading to the toilet block would need to be assessed to ensure it has no breaks and is accessible. A smooth, firm, even path with a gradient of less than 1:15 and at least 1000mm wide would need to lead to the toilet block.

Other

- In some cases a unisex facility could be constructed at a suitable location if no adaptations to existing toilet facilities are possible. This might be the case, for example, if the existing toilet block is very far away or is down a very steep hill.

DISABLED TOILET FACILITIES

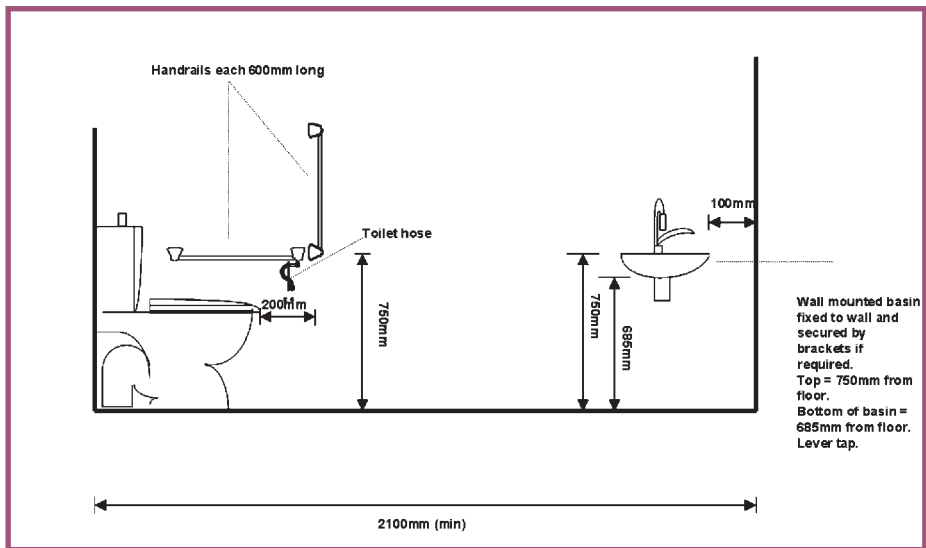


Fig 15: Example accessible toilet—side view

DRAINAGE

Good drainage is important to ensure easy access and reduce the likelihood of slipping when water pools on certain surfaces.

Open drains at a school site are not uncommon. This is a problem when open drains are situated across a path of travel (e.g., you have to step over the drain to continue going where you are going), or when the open drain is directly beside a path of travel so that you may be in danger of slipping into it.

Different solutions need to be considered to reduce the dangers of open drains—dangerous for all but especially for those who cannot see well or cannot recover their balance well—and to improve the accessibility for those who cannot step over a drain at all or without difficulty.

Drainpipes sometimes empty onto pathways so that water collects in areas where it might present a difficulty or safety hazard for someone moving across. Careful attention should be paid to ensure any drainwater is not directed onto pathways.



Fig 16

Open Drains

It would be virtually impossible for a wheelchair user to get onto the platform and would be difficult for a person using crutches, with poor balance, with difficulty seeing, or with some other types of mobility impairment.

DRAINAGE



Fig 17 - Open drain too close to pathway



Fig 18 - Open drain blocks pathway and needs to be stepped across to reach destination



Fig 19 - Open drain directly below exposed edge of corridor

COMMON ISSUES

- Open drains create a hazard, especially for those who don't see well or who cannot step across them
- Open drains block the path of travel
- Open drains are too close to the path of travel
- Open drains directly below exposed edge of a corridor
- Drainpipes opening directly onto steps or pathways



Fig 20 - Drainpipe opens to steps

DRAINAGE

SOME IDEAS

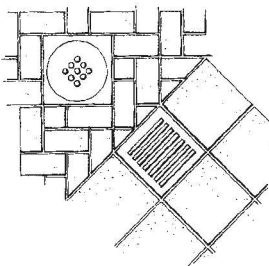
As part of a regular maintenance programme drains should be checked to assess those that lie over a pathway or at the entrance to a building. Some simple improvements might be through the use of grating and bridging.

Grating

Install appropriate grating over drains. The direction of the grate should be perpendicular (right angles) to the main direction of travel. The slots should not be more than 13mm wide.

Drainage channels

circulation holes in gratings should be not more than 18mm diameter



From - CAE (2004)
Two example of Drainage slots.

Fig 21



Fig 22

In this school, grating was placed over an open drain along a corridor. This is a good example of access as:

The holes of the grate are small enough so that a wheelchair wheel or a crutch would not get caught in them.

The grate lies level with the corridor

In the bottom of the picture the open drain was partially covered by a concrete slab.

The concrete slab lies level with the corridor

BUT, unfortunately the slab only covers part of the open drain—half of it is still exposed!

DRAINAGE

Bridging

Bridging across the drain is one way to overcome the safety and access problems. However, it needs to be done correctly so the bridge itself is accessible and does not cause additional safety problems. Level (no step) access is essential.



Fig 23



Fig 24

Figures 23 and 24 show some form of 'bridging' across an open drain. This is a good potential solution. However, Fig 23 shows large gaps in the MIDDLE of the pathway. Also, the bridge does not lie level with the rest of the path.

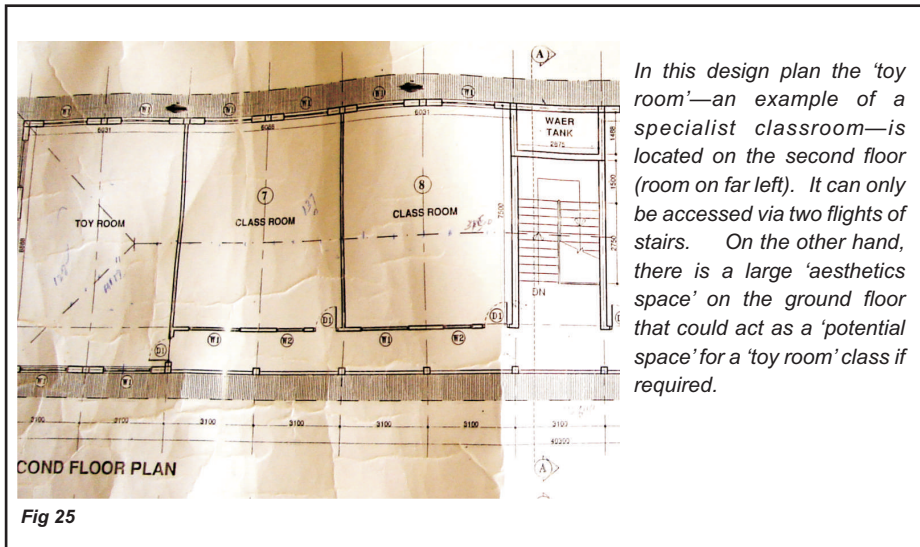
Figure 24 shows bridges to classrooms over drains but the bridges are not at every doorway. Also, they should be much wider (at least 1200mm) and more clearly indicated. A curb on the exposed edge would be safer. It is good that these bridges are level with the surrounding pathways.

COMMON AREAS & SPECIALIST CLASSROOMS

Places of worship, libraries, auditoriums, playgrounds. These are all examples of 'common areas'; areas where it is intended that all children will gather at one point or another during the usual course of their school day. All common areas should be made accessible.

Specialist classrooms are classrooms such as science laboratories, home economics classrooms or computer laboratories. They are classrooms where special facilities are required for learning. It may not be necessary to make all specialist classrooms accessible. Provision should be made

so that at least one of each type of class is at an accessible location. Creative thinking can help here. For existing buildings, this classroom does not necessarily need to be an actual space if it is not required at the present time. However, a 'potential' space should be available and waiting should the need arise. That is, an area that can be converted easily and at relatively low cost that is situated in an accessible location. For new buildings it would seem less costly to create at least one of each type of specialist facility in an accessible location.



COMMON AREAS & SPECIALIST CLASSROOMS



Fig 27

This computer classroom is one of two at the site. The other is on the second floor of the building. The entrance to this classroom could be modified to provide at least one accessible facility.



Fig 28

This home economics classroom is only accessed by steps. It is the only such facility on the school grounds so should be made accessible.

COMMON ISSUES:

Specialist classrooms and common areas:

- Accessed by steps only
- Not available on ground floor
- located far from main building
- no accessible pathway

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme the location and access to specialist classrooms and common facilities should be checked.

- A strategy should be discussed with staff at the school for including children with disabilities if and when this might be required.
- Ensure level access to all ground floor facilities.

STAIRWAYS

Stairways are impossible for wheelchairs to negotiate and other solutions must be found to ensure appropriate access to facilities that might take usually take place above ground level (see section on 'Common areas and specialist facilities', also 'Access to ground floor' in this booklet).

Stairways can be inaccessible, unsafe or difficult for other people too. Many older teachers will be quick to tell you how it gets more difficult to climb the stairs to classes! Climbing stairs is particularly difficult for people with mobility impairments who find it difficult to lift and bend their legs (e.g., people with polio, arthritis, spasticity, hemiplegia, weakness), or people with visual impairments who are at a greater risk of falling on staircases, or people who get tired quickly due to cardiac problems, age, or neuromusculoskeletal problems (ie., many people who have difficulty walking will also get tired more quickly because they have to put more effort into taking each step). Therefore, good design of stairways must be carefully considered.

COMMON ISSUES

- No handrails at all to provide support.
- A banister on one side that does not provide an appropriate supporting surface so cannot be considered an adequate substitute for a handrail.
- Narrow stairways in some instances.
- No colour contrast strip on the edge (nosing) of steps to provide guidance for people with difficulty seeing.
- Low lighting on staircases.
- Sometimes steps are sloping.
- Sometimes steps are too short.
- Broken, crumbling steps.



Fig 26: These steps are wearing away fast, creating a trip hazard.

STAIRWAYS

GOOD POINTS

- Steps are appropriate height and depth
- Surface of steps is protected from the elements
- Steps appear to be unpolished so are less slippery
- There is a landing at an appropriate interval

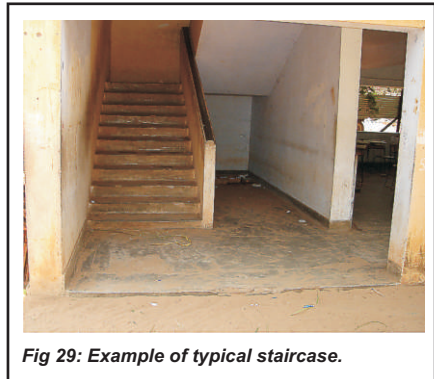


Fig 29: Example of typical staircase.

THINGS TO IMPROVE ON...

- There is a banister on one side that is not effective for gripping or providing support. It ends before the bottom step. Circular handrails should be provided both sides that are continuous and extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom steps
- A colour contrast strip should be provided on the nosing of the steps
- Lighting could be improved—especially towards the top of the steps

STAIRWAYS

SOME IDEAS

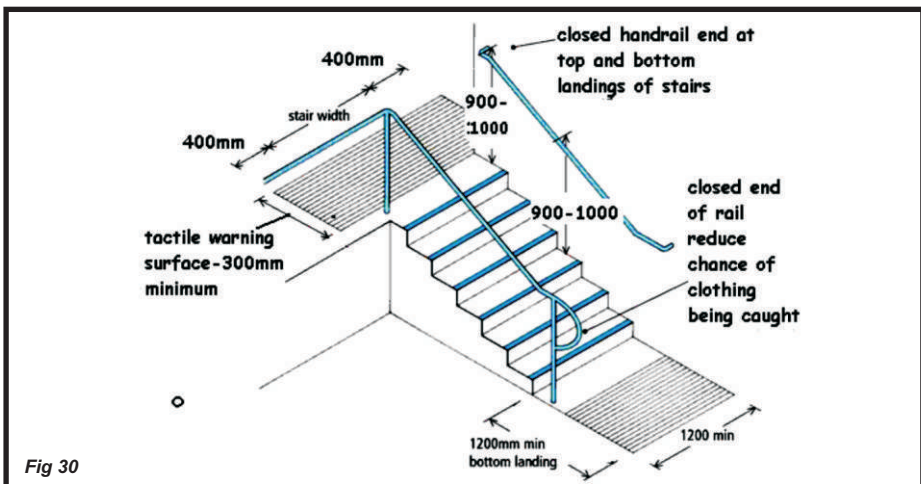
As part of a regular maintenance programme, stairs should be checked. In most schools the most simple improvements to include would be to:

- install appropriate handrails on either side of the steps.
- repair broken steps
- paint a colour contrast strip on the nosing of the steps

Good stair design includes:

- Steps 300mm long and 150mm high with at least 1200mm wide between the railings
- Circular handrails on both sides—if the school has children of primary school age then a second, lower, rail might be considered at a height of 700mm (there should always be a gap of at least 200mm between two rails so children's heads cannot be trapped between the two railings).
- Landings at top and bottom—with tactile indicators
- Colour contrast strips on the nosing of steps
- Well lit

Figure 30, below, shows an example of good stair design.



PATHWAYS & CORRIDORS

PATHWAYS & CORRIDORS

Getting from one building to another as safely, quickly and easily as possible requires a good pathway. Ideally, pathways are paved, level, smooth, wide and well-drained. While it is not always possible to provide paved pathways, which are very expensive, they should be considered between the regularly used areas.

It is very important that there is an accessible path of travel to the toilets in the school and careful consideration should be made to providing a good surface to travel along at least this one area.

Corridors inside and outside buildings should be wide, level, smooth and non-slip. They should be free of obstacles such as plants, bags, shoes, cupboards etc. Corridors outside buildings should additionally have some warning signal if the corridor drops off to a step or has an exposed edge (e.g., provide a colour contrast strip or a raised curb).

Drains are a major issue along pathways—please refer to the section on drainage in this booklet for more information.

COMMON ISSUES

- Obstacles such as plants, bags, shoes, positioned along the corridor that make it too narrow or potentially hazardous.
- Exposed edges of external corridors that drop off onto open drains or to high steps.
- Areas of water pooling along pathways where the drainage is not adequate
- Open drains along pathways.
- Uneven and rough path of travel.
- Steps in the path of travel with no ramped alternative.



Fig 31: Steps along this path of travel make it inaccessible. The ground is relatively hard and tough..

PATHWAYS & CORRIDORS



Fig 32: The buildings on this site have been constructed with no paths linking them. The space between these two buildings is so narrow two people could not pass.



Fig 33: There are no pathways connecting the buildings across this sandy ground.

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme:

- Existing pathways should be checked for damage and repaired
- Pathways should be constructed to important facilities where they do not exist (especially to toilets).
- Consider use of other materials if concrete pathways are too expensive. Pathways have been made out of timber to lie over sand, for example. Or brick paths have been constructed to lie over compacted earth. These provide better surfaces to move across in areas where there is frequent rain causing the ground to become soggy and muddy.

SIGNAGE

SIGNAGE

Good signs provide a clear and recognizable message to all people about how to get to a place as well as informing people what place they are at. Such signs are particularly important for visitors, people who cannot communicate well such as those with speaking and hearing impairments (e.g., might find it difficult to ask for directions). People who cannot see well also benefit from clear signs to show them the way and people who cannot see at all benefit from signs they can feel the way and so they can also know more about where they are and how to get where they are going. People with intellectual difficulties or difficulties in thinking/thought processes also benefit from clear signs that have symbols that are easy to identify (such as the universal symbol for disabled access).

COMMON ISSUES

- Signs that have trees or branches hanging over them so you cannot read them
- Signs with letters that are too small to read well
- Signs that you cannot stand close enough to be able to read because there are plants or rubbish bins or benches in front of them
- The colour of the letters on the sign is too similar to the colour of the background
Too many signs in the one place that create confusion
- Glare on the sign due to the material the sign is made from reflecting too much light
- No sign!
- Sign is positioned too high for seated users to read
- Sign is positioned on a door rather than beside the door (you cannot read signs when the door is open if they are on the door)

SIGNAGE



Fig 34

Too much glare

Fig 34: The letters reflect glare and can be cast in shadow so are difficult to read

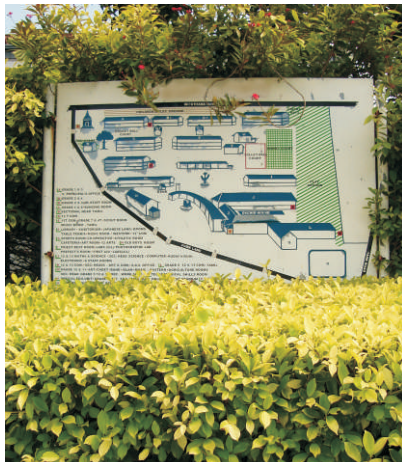


Fig 35



Fig 36

Too many signs

In Figure 36 there are too many signs and the area is confusing. There are road signs and directional signs in this picture—too much information to give a clear message about how to get somewhere. The road signs are inappropriately placed here.

Signs obstructed by trees

In Figure 35 the bush at the front of the sign prevents a person from being able to get close enough to read the sign. Reading is even more difficult as the letters are very small. The use of diagrams is good as they are realistic.

SIGNAGE

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme, signage should be checked. Signs that are difficult to read due to size, position, glare, colour etc should be replaced and positioned appropriately. [please refer to Design Considerations for Accessibility guidelines on signage]



Fig 37

The sign is covered with a reflective material so there is too much glare to read the sign. Also, handwritten signs can be difficult to read.

TEACHERS' FACILITIES

TEACHERS' FACILITIES

Teachers may also have a disability. Many teachers continue to teach in their older years, which means they may experience difficulties in moving associated with aging. Works to improve access for students described earlier will also assist such teachers who need to move around the school.

Special teachers' areas such as the staffroom and teachers' toilets should also be made accessible. This can be done using the guidelines described in the rest of this document.



Fig 38: Teachers' staffroom up steps

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme it is recommended that:

- Teachers be asked how they are managing accessing the various areas of the school. If they are having difficulties with stairclimbing, for example, improvements to stairs such as installing handrails may assist, otherwise relocation of their classrooms to a suitable area might be appropriate.
- Teachers' staffroom and toilets be assessed and appropriate improvements made to increase their accessibility.

CANTEEN

CANTEEN

The canteen is a common space and access should be provided as for other common facilities. Canteens usually have a serving area, which needs slightly different consideration for access. The approach to the serving counter and the serving counter should be accessible.

COMMON ISSUES

- Steps up to canteen
- Narrow bars that encourage students to form a queue are too narrow for wheelchair access
- Serving counter may too high for younger children and wheelchair users
- Lighting not adequate to properly see money
- Space in room cluttered and narrowed by arrangement of furniture (e.g., tables and chairs).



Fig 39 shows steps to the canteen.

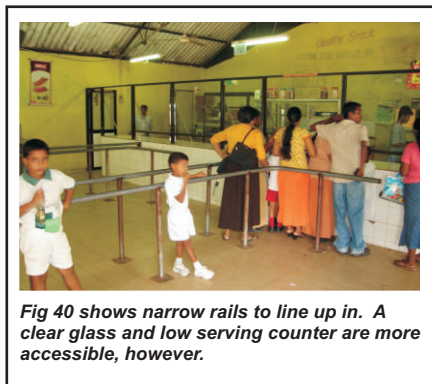


Fig 40 shows narrow rails to line up in. A clear glass and low serving counter are more accessible, however.

CANTEEN

SOME IDEAS

As part of a regular maintenance programme the access to and within the canteen should be checked.



Fig 41 shows steps and an open drain to access this canteen. It is dark. The service window is just low enough for this young child.

- Ensure level access (no steps or drains)
- Widen railing for lining up to 900mm wide. The railing should end at least 1200mm before the service counter so that a wheelchair user could turn and exit
- Provide at least one section of a service counter that is 700mm from floor level
- Provide lighting above service counter

CAR PARKING

CAR PARKING

Where a child, teacher, parent, or visitor is not able to walk or arrive at school by bus, an accessible car parking space that is close to the entrance should be provided. Some people with disabilities will only be able to arrive by vehicle and a suitable area should be provided. Trishaws may be a possible form of transport for wheelchair users.

It is best if the vehicle can park close to the entrance. Also, if possible, cover the space to protect it from rain. This is helpful when unloading a wheelchair from a vehicle, which might take a few minutes, and will prevent the chair and people from getting wet.

Level and firm ground is required so a wheelchair can rest without tipping over. The space should be large enough for a vehicle and the wheelchair to be positioned beside the vehicle.

Importantly, there should be level and firm pathway from the car parking space to the building entrance so the person can move easily from the vehicle to the building.

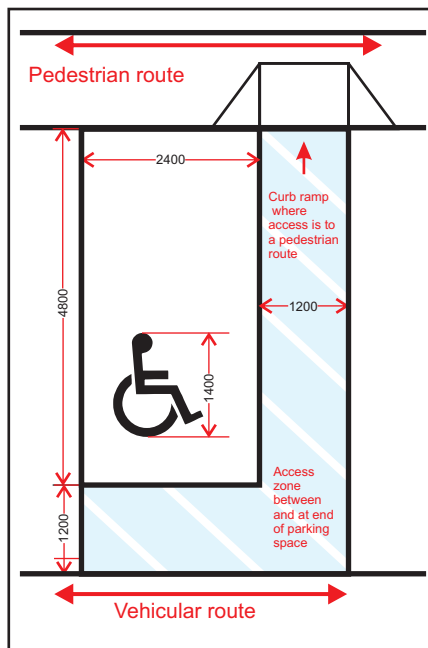


Fig 42: Minimum dimensions for accessible car parking

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

As part of a regular programme of works and maintenance, the following areas should be closely considered:

Access to ground floor classrooms

- Provide ramped alternatives to ground floor
- Provide level access to classrooms

Toilets

- Provide disabled access facilities – construct new or incorporate into existing
- Provide accessible pathway to toilet

Pathways & Corridors

- Ensure buildings are connected by accessible pathways
- Ensure no breaks in path of travel (steps or drains)

Drainage

- Cover drains that lie adjacent to pathways or corridors
- Cover drains that cross the path of travel
- Grates or bridges over drains should be accessible

Common areas and specialist classrooms

- Common areas and specialist classrooms should have ground floor access
- Provision for converting space to a specialist classroom if required should be made

Stairways

- Provide accessible handrails on both sides
- Repair broken steps
- Provide adequate lighting

Signage

- Ensure signs are readable
- Use non-reflective and colour contrasting materials
- Remove unnecessary or confusing signs

Teachers' facilities

- Provide accessible toilet for teachers
- Provide level access to teachers' staffroom (no steps)

Canteen

- Provide level access to canteen (no steps)
- Ensure railing in side is 900mm wide
- Ensure serving counter is available at 700mm height from floor level
- Ensure adequate lighting over serving counter
- Ensure furniture in room leaves clear space for easy passing (900mm wide)

Car parking

- Provide accessible car parking space close to entrance

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