**PINS Environmental Audit Tool**

**Visual Audit (VI focus)**

**Lighting/glare**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Where are natural sources of light (and when is sunlight strongest in the room)? |  |  |
| Are there blinds or curtains (preferably plain) which work and can control potential glare and control overall lighting levels? |  |  |
| Are there any areas of shadow or darkness which might cause a difficulty? |  |  |
| Does overhead lighting appear adequate for the task? If not, is there provision for task lighting? |  |  |
| Are there areas of glare from work surfaces, mirrors or gloss finishes? |  |  |

**Decor**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Are work surfaces plain, and do they give good contrast? |  |  |
| Is there colour contrast between• walls – skirting – floor?• walls – door frames – doors?• walls – handles – light switches? |  |  |
| Are there areas that can provide clear contrast as necessary? |  |  |
| Does furniture contrast with floor? |  |  |
| Does the flooring cause glare? |  |  |
| Are there clearly defined changes in surface or levels? |  |  |

**Furniture / storage / layout**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Are whiteboards / portable writing boards/ interactive whiteboards positioned away from glare (and not backing onto windows)? |  |  |
| Are there clearly defined areas/ layouts for furniture (with suitable room for movement in-between)? |  |  |
| Are there designated and defined areas for different activities? |  |  |
| Is equipment clearly labelled so that the vision impaired pupil can collect and store equipment independently? |  |  |
| Are there power points available in suitable places for any specialist equipment / task lighting? |  |  |
| Are displays clearly labelled and at a suitable level? |  |  |
| Are information labels clear and well-contrasted? |  |  |

**Corridors / indoor passageways**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Are the walkways clear of coats, bags and other temporary obstructions? |  |  |
| Does lighting appear adequate for ‘the task’? (or is it too much?) |  |  |
| Is there glare or direct sunlight, and does this cause a potential problem for this pupil (can they avoid it)? |  |  |
| Is there a need for lighting control in any of these areas? |  |  |

**Steps / stairs (indoor and out)**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Are steps and stair edges sufficiently contrasted? (E.g. outdoor concrete steps should be edged as they are particularly difficult.) |  |  |
| Are there handrails in place which extend beyond the steps / stairs? |  |  |
| Do the stairs have open undercarriage which might cause a hazard? |  |  |

**Outdoor areas**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Are pathways (and edges) clearly defined? |  |  |
| Are there tactile/visual clues to mark indoor/outdoor boundaries (e.g. metal grids, doormats, ramps)?  |  |  |
| Does playground equipment stand out from the surface or background? |  |  |
| Are doorways easy to see? |  |  |
| Are supporting posts, pillars and door retainers sufficiently contrasted from the background? |  |  |
| Does furniture (such as benches and ‘bins’) contrast with surroundings? |  |  |
| Are signs and signposts sufficiently clear for pupils to read? |  |  |
| Look at markings on playing fields / sports courts etc. for clear contrast. (Also, look at access to these areas.) |  |  |

**Visual Audit (autism and neurodiversity focus):**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Classroom illumination is suitable for pupils with autism.• Fluorescent lights are regularly checked and changed. (Flickering lights can be very disturbing.)• The effects of light coming into the room through blinds and creating distracting patterns are minimised• Light reflecting on objects such as metal or shiny surfaces in the classroom is minimised |  |  |
| The classroom is orderly and not cluttered so that pupils can make sense of the environment.• The impact of wall displays is considered. (Busy and cluttered wall displays can be distracting).• Designated areas for specific activities to give clarity to the classroom organisation.• Pupils have the opportunity to work at a workstation to focus their attention, if necessary |  |  |

**Noise Audit:**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Sounds from classroom equipment are kept to a minimum.• Televisions, videos, audio systems, lights and computers are switched off when not in use to avoid a mains hum. |  |  |
| There are strategies in place to reduce noise when rooms are in use.• Classrooms are carpeted to lessen noise created by the movement of people, chairs and desks.• The acoustics of the gym, dining hall and hall are checked and modified to lessen echo• Hallways are carpeted to lessen the noise created by movement through the corridors |  |  |
| Sounds from outside the classroom do not cause problems within classrooms.• Windows are suitably soundproofed so that the noise of passing traffic is not a nuisance |  |  |
| There are agreed strategies in place when noise becomes too much for individual pupils.There is a quiet room available which provides a calm place for pupils to relax. |  |  |
| Pupils are warned if a loud noise or bell is going to sound.• Strategies are put in place to support pupils who find loud noises or fire bells very difficult to tolerate. |  |  |

**Smell Audit:**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Smells within the classroom are kept to a minimum.• The smell of paints, glue, clay and cleaning fluids is minimal.• Staff are aware that the smell of perfumes and deodorants may be distressing.• Staff are aware that pupils may react to the smell of others. |  |  |
| Smells from outside the classroom are monitored and reduced, where possible• Alternative toileting arrangements are allowed (e.g. possible use of staff or disabled toilets).• The smell of cooking from the cafeteria or food technology rooms is reduced. |  |  |

**Touch and Feel Audit:**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Uncomfortable clothing (seams, inflexible or itchy fabrics) is avoided, where possible, unless there are safety issues• Variations of the school uniform offer enough flexibility to enable pupils to be able to wear clothing they find comfortable.• Willingness of the school to adapt the school uniform (e.g. wear a sweatshirt, a necktie loosely or one that pins on). |  |  |
| Alternative arrangements are made for pupils who find writing to be physically painful or difficult.• Willingness of the school to allow some work or homework to be typed. • Possible use of an ‘Alpha Smart’, IPad or laptop for written work |  |  |
| Seating is comfortable.• Padding is used to make hard chairs more comfortable.• Pupils are allowed to sit on carpet squares if the floor is not carpeted. |  |  |

**General sensory issues**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Pupils are encouraged to let others know if they are finding a sensory aspect of the environment distressing.• Pupils know that they can speak to someone about concerns. • Pupils have a designated person or mentor to talk to. |  |  |
| Pupils are relaxed when moving through corridors. (Pupils can become anxious in busy corridors due to noise, dislike of crowds and worry about being touched).• Pupils are allowed to leave the classroom slightly earlier or later than peers to avoid noisy corridors/crowds. |  |  |
| Classroom organisation takes into account the individual needs of pupils.• Classroom organisation and individual seating plan takes into consideration individual sensory concerns (e.g. A pupil with a fascination with light reflection does not sit by the window).• Pupils who become anxious by the close proximity of others are allowed ample space around their seat |  |  |
| Dinner halls and queuing systems do not cause distress (due to the noise levels, smells and crowds).• Pupils are allowed to enter the dinner hall before or after peers to avoid queuing and crowds.• An adult or buddy may escort a pupil to and within the dinner hall |  |  |
| A system of support is available for pupils experiencing sensory overload.• Learning breaks are allowed when necessary• There is a designated place and a clear system/routine for pupils to follow if they feel they need to withdraw due to sensory overload to ‘chill out. |  |  |

**Acoustics and noise audit (HI focus)**

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|  | Current Situation | Possible action (if needed) |
| Can noise be reduced from outside the school, for example, by closing windows |  |  |
| Is noise reduced from elsewhere in the school, for example, by closing the doors |  |  |
| Reduced unnecessary noise within the classroom, for example, turning off noisy projectors and making sure ventilation systems are regularly serviced |  |  |
| Reduced noise from other pupils, for example, making sure that pupils move quietly through school corridors during lesson times |  |  |
| Made improvements to the quality of sound within the classroom, for example, sticking soft pads on the bottom of chairs and table legs, using fabrics to reduce hard surfaces, and installing improved ceiling tiles or acoustic clouds |  |  |
| Is the child seated near to and with a good view of you |  |  |
| Is the child seated as far as possible from any external noises (e.g. a playing field, road, building works, etc.)? |  |  |
| Have you reviewed the timetable to make sure you can manage noise effectively? (For example, by not timetabling design and technology or music lessons in a classroom where a deaf child is learning literacy.) |  |  |
| Are you delivering lessons with high language content in rooms with the best acoustics, and are the rooms easy to identify for staff? |  |  |
| Are you aware of the challenges that a deaf child might face in the classroom and how you can help to mitigate them? (For example, using radio aids and Soundfield systems properly, using visual cues, and ensuring other pupils are deaf aware.) |  |  |

Based on An Environmental Audit (VITAL) RNIB 1998 and Eye contact supplement ‘An Environmental Audit’ and and Sensory Audit for Schools and Classrooms (AET with support of DfE), and acoustic audit materials from the National Deaf Children’s Society.