

Autism Accreditation

Specialist Award manual

2023-2026

Specialist educational, social care and health provisions

Name of service:

West Kirby School and College

To be completed by your consultant:

Reference no:

001474

Date of assessment:

2nd-4th Dec 2025

Lead assessor:

Jonny Knowles

External moderator:

Ursula Wheatly

Outcome of previous assessment:

Beacon

To be completed by the Quality Manager:

Committee decision:

Advanced

Date of committee decision:

12/12/2025



Your Autism Accreditation journey	
<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-assessment</p> <p>Carry out a comprehensive and detailed review of current practice using our self-audit tool.</p> <p>Implement an accreditation action plan based on the self-assessment.</p> <p>Optional sessions can be booked with your consultant to help you complete the self-audit and action plan, review documentation or observe and reflect on practice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment</p> <p>Assessment days include observation of practice, oversight of key person-centred documentation, and discussions with key people within the provision (including autistic people, where possible)</p> <p>Observations may also be undertaken by an independent moderator.</p> <p>Online accreditation survey is sent to autistic people and/or families/advocates.</p> <p>A report summary of assessment findings and areas of strength and development is produced by the consultant and sent to the Committee awarding body.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Committee decision</p> <p>The Accreditation Awarding Committee consider assessment report and decide if an Award can be given and at what level: Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced.</p> <p>Once a provision has achieved an Advanced Award, there is an option of applying for Beacon Status in recognition of the work they sharing expertise and knowledge of good practice in supporting autistic people.</p> <p>You can read the full criteria here.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Maintaining and progression</p> <p>Provisions are offered a new assessment plan if they wish to stay in the programme.</p> <p>They can continue to access consultant support and work on areas of development identified from their assessment. They also have the opportunity to request a further assessment to show they are maintaining the standards or have progressed to the next level.</p> <p>We recommend this occurs within three years to ensure that our Award can be considered a meaningful reflection of current practice.</p>

Section two

Completing your self-audit and action plan



The self-audit tool can be found in this manual. It is based on our [framework of best practice](#) and is divided into five topics.



Our standards were created using an evidence-informed approach. This can be defined as the blending together of research evidence alongside practitioner expertise and the lived experience of autistic people. To achieve this, we considered current research into the field of autism, with particular bias toward research that employed participatory methods. We consulted with professionals registered with the accreditation programme to gain their insight. We made a specific point of ensuring that the professionals we consulted with included autistic people.

Commitment and consultation

To complete this first topic, you will need to think about:

- What are the main specialist approaches used to support autistic people?
- What training/ongoing professional development do staff receive in these approaches?
- How are autistic people (and where appropriate families, carers or advocates) consulted about the support received?

Quartet of difference

Our next four standards are based on what we refer to as the *quartet of difference*. These relate to the core areas where autistic people most frequently experience differences when compared to **neurotypical** people.

These differences can present as a combination of skills and strengths as well as challenges, particularly where such differences are not accommodated.

Each of these standards is broken down into a series of indicators. For each of these indicators, you are required to say what you do to address it and to give a rating score.



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Rating criteria

Fully met	The service/school can provide clear evidence that this question is fully addressed consistently and to a high standard. There is no identified scope for improvement.
Partially met	The service/school can provide clear evidence that this question is addressed for each autistic person but there are clearly identified areas for improvement.
Not met	The service/school cannot provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this question is addressed for each autistic person and there is considerable scope for improvement.
N/A	The service/school do not feel that this question is of relevance to them. NB: you will need to be able to explain why this is the case.

Key points

- The self-audit is based on the same framework that we employ to assess provisions. It is therefore a good indicator of what areas will be considered when you are assessed.
- Feedback tells us that provisions find the self-audit provides an effective framework for development and the process of completing it encourages reflection and discussion.
- We believe that the self-audit process will only be useful to you if you complete it with honesty and self-reflection. Getting accredited will not depend on how well you complete the self-audit and there is no pass mark you need to achieve or any 'correct' responses.
- Some questions may be very challenging. This is intentional as we want the self-audit to be aspirational and thought provoking even for very good provisions.



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National
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Setting up a Quality Action Group

We recommend that you ask other staff members to join a Quality Action Group (QAG) to meet regularly to work on the self-audit and action plan.

The QAG should ideally include representation from different departments and levels of management and autistic people or other stakeholders.

You may have a core of regular members as well as those you ask to join you to discuss specific topics or issues. In some provisions, it may not be possible to set up a QAG and you may find yourself doing most of the work alone.

However, it is important that you find ways of consulting with and including others so the self-audit is truly representative of your provision and not just one person's perspective.

Involving others

Try to think of ways in which you can engage the whole staff in the process. For example, you may run a staff workshop where people are put in small groups to address specific areas using an appreciative feedback approach. This will provide insight into whether there is a shared understanding and where there may be gaps and inconsistencies.

Staff may also come up with examples of things that are happening in the provision that you may have overlooked or are unaware of.

When engaging autistic people and, where appropriate, their families, it may be best to think of key questions that relate to the self-audit and how you think these could be presented in a clear and accessible way. For example:

What activities do you like doing at the day centre? Are there other activities you would like us to offer? (For some autistic people, this could be asked using augmentative or alternative communication).

Do you think staff do enough to support your child's emotional wellbeing? Are there other things you would like them to do?



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Appreciative Enquiry Approach

We recommend you use an Appreciative Enquiry Approach to complete the self-audit. This is a strengths-based approach that focuses on what is already working and builds upon this rather than identifying problems and trying to fix them. As such, it has been found to be a more positive, constructive and empowering way of achieving change.

Discovery stage: The best of what is.	<i>Your QAG can take one of the indicators such as 'Each autistic person is supported to participate in rewarding social interactions (both spontaneous and structured) with staff, with each other and with members of their local community'. The QAG can then share all the good work you already do in supporting autistic people to take part in social activities, identifying what activities or events have worked really well and sharing success stories.</i>
Dream stage: What might be.	<i>QAG members can then imagine what it would be like if the positive features that were identified in the discovery stage were embedded as everyday practice, for example, if social events that worked really well could occur more often or involve more people.</i>
Design stage: How can it be.	<i>The participants work together and try to identify steps that can make the dream stage a reality.</i>
Delivery stage: What will be.	<i>The participants create and implement an action plan.</i>

If you want to find out more, there are a number of online resources. For example, you can view the [Appreciative Inquiry Resource pack](#) from the Scottish Social Services Council and NHS Education for Scotland.



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Completing your self-audit and action plan



Creating an action plan

As you work your way through the self-audit, you are likely to identify lots of action points. We suggest you group these as:

- priorities- what must be done before the assessment
- back burner - Not essential but would be good if actioned
- quick wins - tasks that are relatively easy to carry out and can give a sense of progress.

In the self-audit tool, we include a simple **template** for an action plan but you may wish to create your own or incorporate it into an existing development plan.

Once your action plan is set up you should be able to predict how much time you will need to address all priority areas. You can go back to the original timescale you set yourself and decide if it needs to be revised.

It is unlikely that you **will** reach a point where you have completed all identified actions. However, when you feel reasonably confident that you can meet the criteria, you can think about booking an assessment. Remember, you need to give us at least **six** months notice so do allow for this in your plans.

You can continue to work on your action plan up to three weeks before your assessment, at which point you are required to send a final version of the self-audit and the action plan to your consultant.



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Completing your self-audit and action plan



Getting support

Our members area:

We have an Accreditation members area on the National Autistic Society website. These pages will provide you with resources that may help you in completing the self-audit and action plan.

General consultant support:

This is support that you can access at any point in the process without additional costs. You can access this support by emailing your consultant with a question. Maybe you don't know what to write for a particular indicator. Or maybe you are looking for some ideas around how you could address an issue highlighted in your self-audit.

Your consultant can advise you on the accreditation process and provide general advice about good autism practice. However, they are not able to give you specific advice on how best to support an autistic individual.

It is important that you take the initiative if you need such help. Your consultant knows you are busy and won't keep contacting you without a reason. If the consultant doesn't hear from you, they will assume you are making steady progress in working towards booking an assessment and that you don't need their help.

Your consultant may reply in an email or suggest a short phone or video call.

There is no additional cost for accessing general consultant support, providing the demands you are placing on the consultant in terms of time or resources do not become excessive. If the consultant believes this is the case, they will advise that you book in a consultant session.



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Getting support

Consultation session (on site):

You have the option of asking the consultant to carry out a consultant visit. To get the most out of the visit, you are strongly advised to plan what will happen on the day. The visit could involve one or more of the following activities:

- meeting to provide bespoke advice, review and feedback on the self-audit and action plan
- review and feedback on personal support plan documentation and assessment tools
- environmental audit or learning walk of your provision
- focused observations of current practice.

Please be aware of our safeguarding guidance which applies to any Autism Accreditation visit and can be found [here](#).

Consultation session (virtual)

If you **need** bespoke advice and guidance on the self-audit then you might prefer to ask your consultant to provide support via a virtual meeting. A benefit of this is that your consultant should be able to arrange this at an earlier date than a site visit.

Your consultant will be able to advise you on whether the virtual session will be covered by your assessment plan or whether you will be charged an additional cost. This will depend on the length of the session. As a rough guide, two virtual sessions both lasting more than two hours would be charged at an equivalent cost to an onsite consultation visit.



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Commitment and
consultation

Social communication,
interactions and relationships

Functional skills and
self-reliance

Sensory
experiences

Emotional
wellbeing





Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
C1	Staff are confident in using a range of communication approaches and systems relevant to the people they support.	CPD: staff are continually developing their skills through 7-minute briefings on topics including 'neuro affirming practice' and have access to a shared resource area that specifically covers 'communication' strategies. SaLT provide training on questioning and chunking.				3
C2	Each autistic person's preferences, skills and strengths in understanding and responding to others are recorded.	Information is taken from EHCPs to inform both IEPs and PBPs (Proactive Behaviour Plans). Autistic Voice: One page profiles and class profiles help to better understand pupils				3
C3	Each autistic person's challenges in understanding and responding to others are recorded.	Challenges are recorded and monitored through the Behaviour Watch and reviewed by SLT, the Panel (Clinical Services), which includes SaLT and OT. This team meets every two weeks to discuss students who are struggling, ensuring challenges are documented and support strategies are evaluated for effectiveness. SLT also meet weekly to discuss pupils that are struggling. Behavioural drop ins are also available.				3
C4	The environment is organised to encourage autistic people to socially engage with increasing self-reliance.	The Pupil Voice and Ambassador roles are deeply embedded, with pupils participating in significant events like the Headteacher interview process. Pupils have lots of opportunities for social engagement through lunch time and after school clubs as well as wellbeing.				3
C5	All staff consistently use the best way of communicating with each autistic person within different contexts, including when out in the community.	Embedding of visuals needed improvement for consistency across the school. The recent introduction of the staff shared resource area with a specific focus on 'communication' is the direct action taken to address this. This centralised resource ensures all staff have access to the same current best-practice methods, driving improved consistency in communication approaches across all contexts.				3



Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
C6	Each autistic person has access to tools, training and programmes which help them communicate and express themselves within different contexts, including when out in the community.	WKS maintains a robust Clinical Services team, including SaLT, OT, and PCT. They ensure direct access to personalised tools and training. The new shared resource area provides staff with materials on 'communication', which in turn supports them in delivering consistent strategies across all contexts, including community trips.				3
C7	Each autistic person is supported to participate in rewarding social interactions (both spontaneous and structured) with staff, with each other and with members of their local community.	Community Engagement: WKS actively organises rewarding interactions, such as Pupil Voice meeting with local MP and Metro Mayor and the Pupil Voice trip to Parliament. The school has managed the transition to an extended day provision, which often provides structured opportunities for positive peer and staff interactions outside of the main school day.				3
C8	Each autistic person is supported to develop skills in forming healthy relationships including friendships and intimate and sexual relationships.	Embedded through the Pastoral Team and the Clinical Services team (including SaLT and OT), which provide structured support and interventions. Curriculum Delivery: This content is typically covered through a tailored PSHE/RSE curriculum, informed by the students' specific EHCP and developmental needs. Brooke come in and deliver sessions. Safeguarding plans are created and delivered in response to CPOMs.				3
C9	Each autistic person is supported to deal with challenging or unwanted social interactions including abusive or unhealthy relationships.	WKS has achieved external recognition for its robust approach, specifically the Anti-bullying Silver Award Kitemark. Training and Intervention: Staff are trained in approaches like TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which promotes diffusion and de-escalation skills to manage challenging interactions.				3
C10	The strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in their communication and social interaction are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain effective and achieve optimum impact.	PBPs (Proactive Behaviour Plans) are regularly updated and monitored by key staff. The Panel (Clinical Services) meets every two weeks to discuss pupils who are struggling, ensuring that support strategies, including communication and social interventions, are actively evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted as needed.				3
C11	Positive outcomes that each autistic person makes in their communication, social interaction and relationships are identified, recorded, and celebrated with autistic people and their circle of support.	The school tracks and celebrates positive outcomes, as demonstrated by the high percentage of School Leavers moving onto higher/further education/Employment. Celebration: Specific successes, such as Pupil success at Art Dot award and the annual Talent Show, are highlighted and celebrated. Involvement: The strong Pupil Voice culture ensures that autistic people are actively involved in the p				3



Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
F1	Staff are confident in using a range of approaches and tools to encourage independence and reduce reliance on direct support, including supporting autistic people to make decisions and express opinions.	Staff confidence is built through compulsory training, 7-minute briefings on neuro-affirming practice, and a shared resource area providing tools for scaffolding and task breakdown. Autonomy: The highly effective Pupil Voice and Ambassador roles demonstrate active support for students to make decisions (e.g., involvement in Headteacher interviews) and express opinions.				3
F2	Each autistic person's strengths and challenges in functional life skills are recorded.	Integrated Planning: Strengths and challenges are formally recorded. Information from EHCPs is used to create IEPs (Individual Education Plans) and PBPs (Proactive Behaviour Plans). Clinical Review: The Panel (Clinical Services), which includes SaLT and OT, reviews struggling pupils every two weeks, ensuring challenges impacting functional skills are documented and addressed with targeted support.				3
F3	Staff organise the environment to support and encourage autistic people to function with increasing autonomy.	Previous areas for improvement, such as improving the use of visuals, adding clocks in rooms, and decluttering the layout of rooms, demonstrate a systematic, ongoing commitment to optimising the environment for autonomy. Specialist Provision: Plans to increase the bakery provision and hire a full-time baker expands an environment specifically designed for vocational and functional skills development.				3
F4	Staff understand and consistently follow the best way of breaking down, structuring and presenting tasks so that each autistic person is able to complete them with increasing confidence and self-reliance.	The school provides staff with a shared resource area containing materials on scaffolding and effective use of support staff, ensuring consistent application of task breakdown techniques. Learning walks are routinely conducted with a focus on adapted practice, which includes task structuring and presentation, confirming that best practices are being consistently followed by staff.				3
F5	Staff understand and consistently follow the best way of supporting each autistic person to understand and cope with transitions and changes in routine in different contexts and settings.	The school addresses transition anxiety head-on. Planned adaptations for the new Year 7 class, including teaching some learners in a base, are a specific strategy to manage the transition from Year 6/new settings. Previous Audit Focus: Acknowledging that transitions (break/lunch) could cause anxiety, the school's response involves proactive management to reduce the unpredictability of these times. The TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) training for staff equips staff with skills to manage de-escalation during challenging transitions.				3



Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
F6	Each autistic person is supported in developing skills in making choices and taking decisions.	The highly effective Pupil Voice and Ambassador roles are a core mechanism for supporting decision-making. Students are involved in significant school processes, such as the Headteacher interview process, providing real-world experience in influential choice-making. Individual Planning: Support for choice and decision-making is embedded within IEPs and monitored through the Panel (Clinical Services) to ensure individualised strategies are used effectively.				3
F7	Each autistic person is supported in developing daily functional life skills,	Functional life skills are a key focus, especially through the bakery provision. The plan to increase the bakery provision and hire a full-time baker will expand accredited, practical opportunities for students to learn catering, retail, and workplace functional skills. The extended day provision offers a scaffolded setting for developing routines, self-care, and organizational skills outside of the school setting.				3
F8	Each autistic person is supported to develop skills in staying safe and healthy in a range of contexts.	The school holds the Anti-bullying Silver Award Kitemark, demonstrating a commitment to supporting students in navigating challenging or unsafe social interactions. Staff are trained in approaches like TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which promotes skills in diffusion and de-escalation, contributing to a consistently safe environment. Staying safe on and off-line are taught through PSHE.				3
F9	The strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in becoming more independent (including making choices and expressing opinion) are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and achieve optimum impact.	PBP are routinely updated and monitored by the form team. Clinical Panel meets every two weeks to systematically review the effectiveness of support strategies for students who are struggling, ensuring that independence goals and choices/opinion support are relevant and impactful. Learning walks focused on adapted practice also provide direct observation for review.				3
F10	Positive outcomes that each autistic person makes in their self-reliance and functional life skills are identified, recorded and celebrated with autistic people and their circle of support.	Positive outcomes are formally tracked, evidenced by the high percentage of School Leavers moving onto higher/further education/Employment, which is the ultimate functional life skill outcome. WKS actively celebrates success through events like the Talent Show and acknowledging specific achievements like the Art Dot award, involving students in the celebration of their own progress and self-reliance milestones.				3



Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
S1	The provision ensures that staff are confident in using a range of approaches and tools to support autistic people in their regulation of sensory input.	Staff confidence is systematically built through access to the shared resource area which specifically includes materials on 'the environment' and related support strategies. The 7-minute briefings on topics like 'neuro affirming practice' reinforce the importance of sensory regulation in all interactions. The Clinical Services team (OT, SaLT) provides specialist training and resources on sensory approaches.				3
S2	Sensory experiences and activities which have a positive impact on each autistic person are identified and recorded, for example, those which help an individual feel calm and focused, or provide enjoyment and pleasure.	Positive sensory experiences (e.g. movement breaks, calming activities) are identified and recorded within personalised support plans, such as IEPs and PBPs. The Panel (Clinical Services), meeting every two weeks, reviews individual profiles, ensuring effective sensory supports are documented and utilised to achieve focus and calm.				3
S3	The challenges each autistic person may experience in regulating sensory experiences are identified and recorded.	Sensory challenges are formally identified during the assessment process and documented within EHCPs and PBPs. The use of Behaviour Watch and incident forms allows staff to record and track occurrences where sensory overload or discomfort leads to distress, providing data for the Clinical Panel to review. TCI training helps to inform debriefs with pupils.				3
S4	Staff organise the environment to support and encourage autistic people to self-regulate sensory input and avoid sensory overload.	The school has proactively addressed environmental factors by focusing on adding clocks in rooms, improving the use of visuals, and decluttering the layout of rooms. This ensures the environment is a tool for self-regulation. The shared resource area on 'the environment' ensures staff are equipped to organise spaces that promote autonomy and regulation. Completion of Triple A Training.				3
S5	Staff use proactive and preventative strategies (as best for the individual) to avoid sensory overload and discomfort which impacts on individual wellbeing.	PLeaning walks are consistently conducted with a focus on adapted practice, ensuring staff are actively and proactively implementing individualised sensory strategies. Transition Planning: Proactive management of high-risk times, such as the strategy to teach new Year 7 learners in a base, is used to prevent the sensory overload often caused by busy corridors during transitions. Implementation of Ready, Respectful, Safe behaviour curriculum; calmer corridors.				3

	Indicator	How we do this	Rating
S6	Each autistic person is supported in using sensory self-regulation strategies and tools with increasing autonomy.	The focus on decluttering rooms and improving visuals ensures the physical environment supports self-regulation strategies with increasing independence. The shared resource area on 'the environment' provides staff with tools and approaches to explicitly teach and scaffold the autonomous use of sensory strategies, moving students from reliance on staff to self-management.	3
S7	Each autistic person is supported to tolerate an increasing range of sensory experiences including when out in the community.	The school actively creates opportunities for students to encounter varied sensory experiences in controlled contexts, such as Pupil Voice trips to Parliament, Reading at the retirement homes, and the Art residential trip. This systematic exposure and positive scaffolding supports increased tolerance of unpredictable sensory input found in the community.	3
S8	Each autistic person is enabled to regularly access sensory input which they find rewarding, for example, which helps them relax or which they find enjoyable.	The school provides varied, appealing, and rewarding sensory input through activities like new animals in animal care and the Art residential trip. Positive sensory input (e.g., weighted blanket, preferred fidget) is identified, recorded in PBPs, and made regularly accessible through individualised planning and the use of the pastoral and clinical teams.	3
S9	The strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person to regulate sensory input and avoid sensory overload are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain effective and achieve optimum impact.	PBPs are routinely updated and monitored by form team. The Panel (Clinical Services) meets every two weeks to systematically review the effectiveness of sensory support strategies for students who are struggling, ensuring they remain relevant and achieve optimum impact in reducing overload and discomfort.	3
S10	Positive outcomes that each autistic person makes in their sensory self-regulation are identified, recorded and celebrated with autistic people and their circle of support.	Positive outcomes in self-regulation are tracked (e.g., reduction in incidents via Behaviour Watch). Successes are identified and celebrated, as evidenced by general student achievements like the Pupil success at Art Dot award and overall student engagement, which relies on successful sensory management to enable participation.	3



Rating

Not applicable = 0

Not met = 1

Partially met = 2

Fully met = 3

	Indicators	How we do this	Rating
E1	The provision ensures that staff are confident in using a range of approaches and tools to support autistic people in maintaining emotional wellbeing.	Staff are trained in approaches like TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which promotes de-escalation skills critical for maintaining emotional stability during distress. Clinical Expertise: The Clinical Services team (including Pastoral Team, SaLT, OT, and Educational Psychologist) provides structured support and interventions. Briefings: The introduction of 7-minute briefings on topics including 'neuro affirming practice' ensures staff are consistently updated on best practices for emotional wellbeing.	3
E2	Activities which each autistic person personally finds enjoyable, relaxing or which provide them with a sense of achievement and purpose are identified and recorded.	WKS provides a wide range of activities that foster achievement and enjoyment, such as the Art Dot award, the Talent Show, and the introduction of new animals in animal care. Individual Planning: These interests and positive activities are documented within personalised plans (IEPs/PBPs) and actively encouraged to promote wellbeing and purpose.	3
E3	Factors which may impact on each autistic person's emotional wellbeing (for example, which may cause them anxiety, stress or trauma) are identified and recorded.	Potential triggers for anxiety or stress are formally identified during assessment and captured in personalized documents like EHCPs and PBPs. Review Process: The Panel (Clinical Services) meets every two weeks to discuss pupils who are struggling, ensuring that triggers known to have a negative impact are recorded and addressed with targeted support strategies.	3
E4	The provision ensures that staff are knowledgeable and look out for mental health problems (especially those that are a particular risk for autistic people) as well as commonly co-occurring conditions. Staff are also aware of autism masking (especially but not exclusively in women and girls) and the impact this may have on emotional well-being.	We have a strong Clinical Services team which includes an Educational Psychologist whose workshops have helped to promote greater staff awareness of anxiety and complex behaviours. Training & Awareness: Staff training, including the recent focus on 'neuro affirming practice' in the 7-minute briefings, encompasses awareness of co-occurring conditions and the potential for masking, particularly as part of safeguarding. Pastoral Team: The large and active Pastoral Team is specifically tasked with monitoring student well-being and is trained to spot subtle signs of mental health distress or masking.	3



Rating

Not applicable = 0

Not met = 1

Partially met = 2

Fully met = 3

	Indicators	How we do this	Rating
E5	Staff organise the environment to support autistic people in their emotional wellbeing, to avoid anxiety and stress and to maximise participation and engagement.	The school has managed environment-related anxiety by planning a new Year 7 class structure, where some learners are taught in a base. This directly addresses previous concerns about the anxiety caused by busy corridors and transitions, maximizing engagement by reducing stress. Environmental Review: Previous focuses on adding clocks in rooms, improving the use of visuals, and decluttering rooms all contribute to a predictable, low-arousal environment that supports emotional regulation.	3
E6	Each autistic person is supported to understand and regulate their own emotions and recognise how they are expressed by others.	The Clinical Services team provides bespoke, structured support in this area, utilising tools like social stories and direct intervention from SaLT and the Pastoral Team to teach emotional literacy and self-regulation skills. Staff have access to the shared resource area and 7-minute briefings on neuro-affirming practice, reinforcing strategies for explicitly teaching emotion recognition and regulation tailored to autistic individuals.	3
E7	All staff understand and consistently follow proactive and preventative strategies to help each person to stay calm and in control, and to avoid stress, anxiety and upset. When necessary, they are confident in employing bespoke non-restrictive de-escalation techniques.	Staff receive mandatory, specialised training in TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which promotes diffusion and de-escalation skills that are non-restrictive and bespoke. PBPs (Proactive Behaviour Plans) are routinely monitored and updated by form team. The Panel (Clinical Services) review ensures that the most effective and proactive strategies are consistently followed and updated to avoid upset and maintain emotional control.	3



Rating		Not applicable = 0	Not met = 1	Partially met = 2	Fully met = 3	
Indicator	How we do this				Rating	
E8	Policy and practice is informed by an understanding that autistic people are at high risk of developing long-term psychological harm from being exposed to restrictive practices. The provision is committed to ensuring that restrictive practices are not regularly or routinely employed and that they are only ever used in an emergency as a means to avert immediate harm. Their use is followed by a robust investigation to identify lessons learnt.	Staff receive mandatory training in PRICE and additional TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention), which is specifically focused on diffusion and de-escalation skills to prevent the need for physical intervention. The school tracks the use of any Restrictive Physical Interventions (RPIs) with a focus on reduction of RPIs and robust internal review processes to ensure they are only used in an emergency and never routinely, reflecting a strong commitment to psychological safety.				3
E9	Each autistic person is enabled to access a range of activities which they personally find enjoyable and rewarding, including recreational and leisure activities.	WKS offers a wide range of rewarding activities, evidenced by its engagement in things like the Talent Show, new animals in animal care, the Art residential trip, and the Extended Day Provision. This range ensures varied opportunities for recreation and leisure that cater to diverse interests. There are also a range of lunch time, after school and well being options that pupils can take part in.				3
E10	Each autistic person is supported to learn new skills, try out new experiences and challenge themselves.	Student challenge and achievement are celebrated, as evidenced by the Pupil success at Art Dot award and the high percentage of School Leavers moving onto higher/further education/Employment. Community Engagement: Students participate in challenging new experiences, such as the Pupil Voice trip to Parliament and the Stone Age Cave experience day, which push them out of their comfort zone in a supported way.				3
E11	Each autistic person is supported to be socially included within (and contribute to) their community and to make meaningful connections.	Students are actively supported in contributing to the community through activities like Reading at the retirement homes and engaging with local political figures (local MP Matthew Patrick and Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham). Voice and Inclusion: The Pupil Voice culture ensures that students are central to the school community and actively involved in its operations, promoting a strong sense of belonging and inclusion.				3

Section four

The Autism Accreditation assessment



National
Autistic
Society

Social communication, interactions and relationships

Functional skills and self-reliance

Sensory experiences

Emotional wellbeing

Feedback from autistic people

Feedback from families, carers and/or advocates

Summary of the assessment





Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Each autistic person's personal preferences, skills and strengths in communicating and socially interacting with others are routinely recorded on their individual plans. Plans include Proactive Behaviour Plans (PBP), Clinical profiles and One Page Profiles. Plans also reference the individual challenges that each autistic person may experience in communicating and socially interacting, alongside practical strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in their communication and social interaction.

Each student has a Clinical Profile which is developed collaboratively by members of the Clinical Support Team during a student's 10-week induction period. The document collates information from formal assessments, informal assessments and observations, and highlights students' key areas of need and key strategies in a user friendly, easily accessible, RAG rated format. In interviews, staff described how the profiles aim to share specific strategies and not just good autism practice. SALT described how they use a TALC assessment to screen and baseline all new students during their transition, with further assessments being completed as and when required. The assessment informs school, class and individual focuses and is used to strategically plan individual, class and whole school support.

The support provided to each autistic person, in communicating and socially interacting with others, is regularly reviewed with the autistic person and their circle of support so that any changes can be made, if necessary, and positive outcomes celebrated. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which contains targets based around the 4 key EHCP outcomes. Communication and interaction targets are set and reviewed in collaboration with SALT each term.

Staff are confident in talking about how they support autistic individuals in their communication and social interaction and what progress has been made.

SALT described a current focus being on neuro-affirming practice through a range of projects, which includes joint target and goal setting to involve young people more in their decisions. Staff describe plans to normalise the EHCP process, making student's more familiar with the information written about them in the document.

The school's Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) team, comprising of a SALT and an assistant, operates a wave model focused on universal support embedded in teaching practice. Universal strategies include a responsive CPD programme, consistent use of visual supports, and language that promotes clarity, such as replacing appropriate/not appropriate with expected/unexpected. Targeted interventions are delivered collaboratively by teachers and support staff, while specialist provision includes 1:1 SALT sessions, in-class support, and joint SALT and OT sessions. The SALT team prioritises addressing communication breakdowns, fostering self-advocacy, and applying the Double Empathy model. Staff complete detailed reports after each intervention, ensuring that the lessons learned are shared with the staff team and families. The SALT described how their provision is flexible, with the SALT office strategically located on the main corridor to allow them to offer reactive support. SALT described a growing number of students with selective mutism, and how further training is planned to develop effective strategies, both in the classroom and around school.

Some form classes have SALT lessons, where an additional need has been identified. The SALT described working with form groups around key areas of need e.g. friendships. Staff also described the benefits of modelling approaches within classes, with therapists learning from class staff and class staff learning from therapists. 8 staff have been trained in ELSA, and staff described how this programme of support is being used to support students navigate and learn social skills in a person-centred way.

Case studies describe personalised approaches to support individuals in their communication and interaction and identify outcomes achieved from this support. One individual case study describes how the school have supported one individual to be able to communicate their emotions, generalising skills learnt in PCT sessions.



Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Each autistic student is supported to understand what is being communicated to them by staff adapting their spoken language. Teaching staff modify both their language and teaching approaches to meet individual needs, ensuring lessons remain accessible to the wider class. In interviews, staff described using scripts (informed by Paul Dix) to ensure that their verbal communication, used around expected and unexpected behaviour, is consistent. Although scripts were observed being used by staff, these were not always implemented consistently across the school or in classrooms. While it is appreciated that staff adopt a person-centred approach to addressing behaviour at different times, using TCI and Paul Dix principles, staff should ensure that social expectations are made explicit.

In some classes, visual supports were used to aid comprehension, as well as signage across the school. Additional visual resources were implemented where identified as a need through SALT assessments. For example, in a primary class, visual systems were used to provide a clear breakdown of the timetable. To build on this practice, and in line with recent SALT training on the use of visual supports, staff should continue to explore how visuals can be further utilised to support communication during lessons. Visual systems could also be used to communicate expectations, such as the 'calmer corridor' principles.

Students appeared confident in expressing their views, feelings and preferences. Observations showed students using spoken language to communicate with staff, with no students observed using tailored resources or alternative communication tools. During observations, students were seen confidently making requests to staff, with staff always responding to students, acknowledging them appropriately. Older students, including those in Year 11 and Sixth Form, were confident to share their aspirations and planned next steps during spontaneous conversations with the assessment team.

Social interaction with staff and, where appropriate, members of the public is embedded throughout the school day. Staff and students were observed regularly engaging in social games, as well as socially with staff outside of the school building, in specialist spaces and in the welcoming library environment. Staff were observed adapting their language to foster positive relationships, often engaging in conversations linked to students' interests. This was particularly evident during lunchtime clubs, where staff and students interacted socially around preferred activities. Lunch was observed to be a positive social experience, with staff eating alongside students in a family-style dining arrangement. Although most social interactions between staff and students were appropriate, when they were not, there were missed opportunities for staff to challenge this or support students in understanding why it was unexpected.

Community engagement was evident through the school's onsite café/bakery, which was busy during the assessment and provided authentic opportunities for students to interact with members of the public and practise communication skills. The school also runs a community reading project at a local dementia home, where students act as reading buddies. This relationship has been strengthened by inviting residents to school performances and events. External professionals also deliver specialist PE sessions, promoting positive relationships through shared activities.

Autistic students are supported to interact socially with peers during both naturally occurring and structured social skills activities. The school offers a range of lunchtime clubs informed by pupil voice, enabling students to choose activities such as music, ICT, art and Dungeons & Dragons. Collaborative opportunities are embedded within PE lessons to encourage teamwork. During a discussion, one Year 11 student described frequent opportunities built into their timetable to support younger students in KS2, highlighting this as a positive experience linked to their future aspirations. Staff ensure that social activities are meaningful, inclusive and enjoyable, creating experiences that students find rewarding and relaxing. In addition to clubs, students have opportunities to access 'Wellbeing Friday', which includes community-based activities and clubs. Some of these have led to students continuing participation outside school hours, such as boxing and boating.



Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Each autistic person's personal preferences, skills and strengths in functional life skills and independence are recorded on their Proactive Behaviour Plans (PBP), Clinical profiles and One Page Profiles. Plans also reference any challenges that each autistic person may experience in functioning life skills and independence alongside practical strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in becoming more independent and developing daily life skills. Transitions into the service are individualised, based on students' needs. When joining the service, students are enrolled into a 10-week induction period. During the induction period the Clinical team collects evidence and completes a range of assessments so that they can create a Clinical Profile. In interviews, staff described how they have previously adapted the transition process to support students to make successful transitions, including reduced timetables and personalised timetables with a small staff team.

The support provided to each autistic person, supporting them in becoming more independent and developing daily life skills, is regularly reviewed with the autistic person and their circle of support so that any changes can be made, if necessary, and positive outcomes celebrated. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which contains targets based around the 4 key EHCP outcomes. Cognition and learning targets are assigned by class-based staff. Edulink is used by all pupil facing staff to log and monitor academic engagement, closely linking with the school's behaviour policy. Reflective practice meetings are hosted each Monday. Classes or pupils can be referred at the meeting, with the meetings led by a clinical psychologist to inform support and suggested approaches. The meetings provide opportunities for staff to identify what is working well, as well as how support could be further developed or trialled with classes or individuals. Personal development portfolios are captured through Evidence for Learning, an online evidence capturing app. The school's personal development curriculum aims to provide opportunities for students to develop character through cultural and social experiences which promote equality and inclusivity. The curriculum allows staff to strategically plan personal development opportunities based on the framework, with staff describing how they also use the data collected to identify whole school and individual gaps.

Staff are confident in talking about how they support autistic individuals in becoming more independent and developing daily life skills and what progress has been made. Adaptive teaching approaches have been introduced with the aim of setting clear expectations and approaches in lessons. Staff explained that areas for development are identified through observations and learning walks, with findings reviewed by the leadership team to address gaps. Recent training delivered by the Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) focused on using visuals to promote independence and support communication. Staff emphasised their commitment to inclusion by fostering a 'culture of belonging', adapting practice, and understanding each child's needs. All pupils are screened to identify gaps in functional reading skills, with targeted interventions delivered based on individual needs and interests (e.g. football-themed reading activities). Staff described how the programme aims to support the development of functional reading skills and described the positive outcomes achieved through the programme, with students making progress and developing a more positive attitude to reading.

The school described themselves as being destination focused, supporting students to develop skills in preparation for adulthood. The school's preparation for adulthood's curriculum, which is explicitly taught from primary, focuses on developing key life skills in school and the community. This approach is particularly evident in Sixth Form, where the curriculum places an emphasis on experiential learning opportunities alongside independence skills and academic opportunities. The school have an onsite community bakery which is open daily to members of the public and run by students from the school. As part of the programme, students have the opportunity to work in the bakery/cafe, developing a range of transferable and industry guided qualifications. As part of food technology lessons, students also participate in the baking of produce for the shop. During interviews with students, students described how the café has supported to develop confidence, work ready skills and communication. Initiative case study two also describes a range of positive outcomes achieved by the initiative.





Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Students are supported to understand what is happening now, and what is expected of them next by activities being presented within a structured framework, reinforced by visual prompts. Lesson expectation boards were observed in most classrooms, displaying the learning objective alongside a six-step breakdown of the lesson. Updated boards have been developed to further enhance this approach and are due to be introduced across classrooms. In some lessons, printed versions of these expectations were included in students' books, providing an additional reference point. To further strengthen practice, staff should embed consistent routines for sharing lesson expectations at the start, during, and end of lessons, as the new system was not always explicitly referenced. Establishing this routine would enhance predictability, support engagement and reducing anxiety. In some observations, students entered classrooms without clear guidance, which occasionally led to reduced engagement or increased unexpected behaviour. To build on practice in this area, staff should explore how they can make the start of lessons predictable, whilst keeping elements of the soft start.

Students have access to non-verbal prompts and reminders to support task completion and promote autonomy. Staff used a range of writing frames and lesson breakdowns to structure learning and encourage independent working. For example, in animal care lessons, students used a feed list for animals, providing a clear and structured opportunity to complete feeding tasks. Changes boards were observed across the school, providing information about alterations to the day or week and including pictures of visitors to the school.

Classroom environments are thoughtfully organised to enable students to carry out tasks independently. In primary settings, individual trays supported personal organisation, and classrooms were divided into distinct areas for regulation, play and learning activities. These areas were well resourced, and students were observed engaging with a variety of materials and approaches. During lunch, independence was promoted through consistent visual systems, including large visual menus, behaviour expectation displays and clear routines for tidying up and returning cutlery.

Staff provided graduated levels of support to enable students to experience success while developing skills of self-reliance and resilience. Staff frequently engaged in activities alongside students, which encouraged participation and motivation. Particularly good practice was observed in a practical sixth form food technology lesson where staff used effective questioning to support students in developing problem-solving skills in relation to practical tasks. While opportunities for independent work were offered, in some lessons, additional time for students to attempt tasks before support was introduced could further strengthen confidence and resilience.

Students are supported to express preferences, make choices, and take decisions. Staff regularly gather information about individual interests and use this to inform curriculum planning, particularly in creative subjects. During lessons, students regularly had choices around how they wanted to complete the work, for example on paper or on their Chromebook. Choice is also offered daily in the extended day provision, where staff facilitate options for the young people each day.

Students are provided with meaningful opportunities to consolidate and develop daily functional skills. Examples include hospitality and barista qualifications in the school's bakery, providing paid employment for sixth form students. Enterprise projects during Christmas and summer also provide opportunities for students to practise and develop functional life skills, including budgeting, money handling, confidence, independence and other transferable skills. Within Sixth Form, staff make good use of the communal kitchen area, both as part of planned lessons and to provide opportunities for independence during break and lunch.



Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Sensory experiences and activities which have a positive impact on each autistic person are identified and recorded, for example, those which help an individual feel calm and focussed or provide enjoyment and pleasure. As well as the previously noted person-centred plans, some students also have a sensory ladder, completed in collaboration with the Occupational Therapy (OT) team, to identify regulation tools and activities, strengths and any challenges that each autistic person may experience in sensory processing. During interviews, members of the OT team described how they work in a neuro-affirming way, particularly when informing the language and scales used on the student's individual sensory ladder. Sensory ladder documents are created for some students, either in collaboration with staff or the OT, which links emotions to preferred characters and sensory activities.

Plans include personalised practical strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in regulating sensory input. Each class also has a class profile, which contains key information and strategies which should be implemented to support regulation. For example, one class profile identified that one student would benefit from having access to crunchy food, whilst another student would benefit from access to yoga bands around their chair.

All Universal, Targeted and Specialist approaches are delivered and informed by the OT. The OT team use the EHCP document and referrals to identify priority students or more strategic areas of need. As many students come with a recent OT assessment, the OT described how they use the information, as well as observations and staff feedback, to inform the clinical Profile which is developed collaboratively by members of the Clinical Support Team during a student's 10-week induction period. Members of the OT team described the development of the sensory ladder programme, and how the team are working in a neuro-affirming way, particularly when informing the language and scales used on the ladder.

The support provided to each autistic person to help them regulate sensory input is reviewed with the autistic person and their circle of support so that any changes can be made, if necessary, and positive outcomes celebrated. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which contains targets based around the 4 key EHCP outcomes. Sensory and physical targets are set and reviewed in collaboration with OT. Where students have been working with an OT, on specific programmes, staff have supported students to create sensory ladder PowerPoints.

In interviews, staff described how they support autistic individuals to regulate sensory input and what progress has been made. The OT described how training has been delivered to staff in sensory circuits, particularly around the theory. Staff described the importance of sharing the reason behind activities, rather than just giving staff and the young people a list of activities.

Staff described how the sensory link bridge is used for OT sessions and as part of regulation sessions. The bridge contains a wide variety of resources for students to access, including a range of climbing, balancing and other proprioceptive and vestibular activities. The school also has a well-resourced sensory integration suite, sensory and quiet rooms across the site, which are used for planned and reactive regulation sessions.

Staff described how they have previously conducted environment walks, although this isn't done regularly, ensuring that the environment is low arousal and visually structured; however, the OT conducts more frequent environmental walks with students, providing opportunities for students to identify hot spots and practise techniques and sensory regulation activities which are available to them in these spaces.

Case studies describe personalised approaches to support individuals in helping them to regulate sensory input and identify outcomes achieved from this support. One individual case study (two) describes the work done in supporting an individual to explore their sensory preferences and how this has supported them to be ready to learn and able to self-regulate throu



Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Autistic students are provided with access to sensory activities that they find enjoyable and calming. Classroom observations showed students using personal regulation tools, such as ear defenders, crunchy snacks, fidgets and yoga bands for feet. While the majority of students were observed accessing these tools independently, staff could explore additional strategies to help students recognise their emotions and communicate when they need a break. Bringing together the sensory ladder and the ELSA work, which currently operate in isolation, could create a more cohesive approach to emotional regulation alongside a universal language to support students and staff to discuss this.

The school environment is well resourced with sensory activities and designated spaces. In the primary setting particularly, staff have created a range of distinct areas that students can access for group work, regulation, and sensory exploration. Sensory and small spaces are used effectively in Primary; for example, students in the Primary Navigators area were observed using breakout spaces for activities such as den building, Lego, and computer time. Although primary students have access to a sensory bridge containing a range of regulation activities, the area is currently used more as a play space rather than a designated regulation area. To further strengthen this provision, on top of the recently introduced visuals, the occupational therapist could develop a more structured programme to support students to explore their sensory preferences within this space, enabling them to build a deeper understanding of their sensory needs and advocate these for themselves.

Autistic students are supported to manage sensory experiences that may interfere with their activities or cause them discomfort. Strategies observed include the use of ear defenders, requests for time out, access to individual workstations, and the implementation of low-arousal approaches. The school adopts a flexible approach to uniform, which was evident during observations. Expectations around uniform are communicated through visual prompts and supports, ensuring clarity for both staff and students, with the aim of ensuring that students feel comfortable. During an interview, staff described how they are further researching clothing to offer lightweight material, highlighted as a preference by some students. The library is recognised by students as a safe space for regulation, and some choose to use it during lessons or in free time after exams. In interviews, staff described how they have adapted the library to create more calming and quiet areas within the room, ensuring these spaces remain accessible to students who need them.

The physical environment is adapted to support self-regulation and reduce sensory overload. Careful consideration has been given to the colours and signage used across the site, ensuring that it is low arousal and visually structured. Staff described how transitions and corridors were identified as particularly challenging due to their size and the unpredictable behaviour of some students. In response, staff have introduced calmer corridor strategies, which include guidance on expected behaviours and their purpose. These adaptations aim to make corridors safe, comfortable, and conducive to learning, ensuring that students feel supported and ready to engage in classroom activities. To further strengthen the implementation of the 'calmer corridors' strategy, staff could explore ways to present the rules visually within corridors and ensure a more consistent use of scripts around expected and unexpected behaviours.





Assessment findings - completed by the assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Support plans, including IEPs and PBP (Positive Behaviour Plans) focus on the wellbeing and quality of life of each autistic person and actively reflect their likes, dislikes and what matters to them. Support plans also identify factors that might cause each autistic person to become anxious, stressed or upset. Practical strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in maintaining their emotional well-being, self-esteem and safety are identified through the initial induction process and through observations, which is recorded on their individual clinical profile. The support provided to each autistic person, to help them maintain their emotional well-being and to be engaged in a range of rewarding and meaningful activities, are reviewed with the autistic person and their circle of support so that any changes can be made, if necessary, and positive outcomes celebrated. All students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which contains targets based around their 4 key EHCP outcomes. Social Emotional Mental Health targets are assigned by class-based staff. The school has recently introduced PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Valued Assessment and Targeted Learning) as a tool to track social, emotional and mental health progress for students across school. Behaviour watch is used alongside CPOMs (an online data collection programme) to track, record and monitor incidents and behaviour. SLT shares important information from behaviour watch with all staff via morning briefings. Additionally, to this, behaviour consultations are led by the school's behaviour team. The team offer support for individuals as well as looking at the bigger picture to share good practice and successful strategies and approaches which could be generalised. There is an in-house panel every other Tuesday with the SENCO, PCT, Safeguarding, Health and Therapists. The panel strategically plan support for students by reviewing any referrals made from staff, as well as reviewing any ongoing support/interventions. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) uses a Vulnerable Children Tracker to plan support strategically, considering factors that may increase a child's vulnerability.

The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) supports around 48 pupils through 60 weekly sessions, including reactive support tailored to individual needs. All new students complete an 8-week induction with PCT, which includes weekly check-ins to build relationships with the PCT staff. Referrals for additional PCT support are reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel, and staff-pupil matching considers shared interests. The PCT hub offers a safe space during breaks and lunch, and the team are afforded the flexibility to include students' interests in the delivery of sessions. The team use a range of evidence-based approaches to inform the delivery of their sessions, including ELSA. Earlier this academic year the team was nominated for a National Association of Special Schools Impact Award.

Staff are confident in talking about how they support autistic individuals to maintain their emotional well-being and self-esteem and to take part in a range of rewarding and meaningful activities including those that develop their social inclusion. The school has developed a comprehensive behaviour curriculum that promotes the ethos of being ready, respectful and safe, with a strong focus on relational practice. Staff aim to explicitly teach social rules and model expected behaviours, using positive language and structured scripts to support calm and respectful interactions, including initiatives such as "calmer corridors" for both staff and students. The curriculum is linked to protected characteristics, fundamental British values and school values, with termly themes reinforced through assemblies. Behaviour data is reviewed strategically to identify patterns and 'hot spots', enabling proactive interventions. Daily reviews of behaviour records inform dynamic planning. Additional initiatives include a 'soft landing' approach to support transitions, resolution sessions held at lunchtime to encourage reflection and problem-solving, and a resolution club offering a quiet space for students to share concerns. These strategies collectively foster a positive, inclusive environment where students are supported to develop self-regulation and social understanding.

Wellbeing and life adventure sessions offer weekly opportunities for students to experience and trial wellbeing activities. The school review the activities on offer each year through surveys and engagement level data.

Case studies describe personalised approaches implemented to support individuals to maintain their emotional well-being and self-esteem and the impact this has had on their quality of life. Staff described how they use family voice and Safeguarding information to identify modules for the RSE curriculum, which is delivered in collaboration with external services to ensure that it is engaging and appropriate. Individual case studies also evidence the increase in self-esteem and quality of life, particularly as a result of the targeted work done by PCT.



SECTION Five

- [Committee decision](#) – to be completed by the Quality Manager
- [Next steps](#)

Section five

Committee decision and next steps -

Completed by the quality manager on behalf of the committee



National
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Committee decision:

Advanced

Date of committee decision:

12/12/2025

Comment:

The Committee found that the report shows that staff at the school have a comprehensive understanding of evidence-informed approaches associated with good autism practice. These specialist approaches are adapted to ensure support is person-centred and tailored to individual abilities, interests, preferences, and challenges. The school shows strong practice in several key areas. Staff work strategically to promote universal approaches to social communication, with Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) input embedded across the site. Observations highlighted staff adapting their language to foster positive relationships and engaging students in meaningful, inclusive social activities. Students were confident in expressing their views and preferences, supported by initiatives such as 'Have My Say' presentations and ambassador roles that promote student voice and leadership.

Functional skills development is another strength. The school's bakery and café projects, alongside its preparation for adulthood curriculum, provide authentic opportunities for students to develop independence, budgeting, and transferable skills. Sensory regulation is well supported through a thoughtfully adapted environment and accessible regulation tools, while wellbeing sessions and a comprehensive behaviour curriculum reinforce emotional resilience and relational practice.

Case studies submitted by the school illustrate creative initiatives such as the development of a School Bakery, the delivery of specialist SEND webinars, and the employment of a clinical psychologist to support families, demonstrating the school's commitment to innovation, community engagement, and holistic support that strengthens students' confidence, independence, communication, and wellbeing. The individual case studies provide compelling evidence of how bespoke programmes of support lead to meaningful progress in communication, social interaction, confidence, and academic engagement. Feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive, praising the school's understanding of individual needs and its transformative effect on students' wellbeing and self-esteem.

The Committee reviewed the areas highlighted in the report, including the need for greater consistency in implementing scripts and making social expectations explicit. Staff should continue embedding visual supports following recent SALT training and explore ways to integrate sensory and emotional regulation strategies into a cohesive universal approach. Strengthening routines at the start and end of lessons will enhance predictability and reduce anxiety. Additionally, the school should review feedback from student and family surveys to address concerns around consistency of support and advice-sharing.

The report shows that the criteria for Accredited are comprehensively met, with strong elements of Advanced practice evident. Whilst the Committee would expect to see greater consistency across all areas of practice, it has concluded that an Advanced Award can be given in recognition of the school's strong commitment to continuous improvement and to embedding and sustaining high-quality practice.



National
Autistic
Society

About the National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society is here to transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people.

We transform lives by providing support, guidance and practical advice for the 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK, as well as their three million family members and carers. Since 1962, autistic people have turned to us at key moments or challenging times in their lives, be it getting a diagnosis, going to school or finding work.

We change attitudes by improving public understanding of autism and the difficulties many autistic people face. We also work closely with businesses, local authorities and government to help them provide more autism-friendly spaces, deliver better services and improve laws.

We have come a long way but it is not good enough. There is still so much to do to increase opportunities, reduce social isolation and build a brighter future for people on the spectrum. With your help, we can make it happen.

The National Autistic Society is a charity registered in England and Wales (269425) and in Scotland (SC039427) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No.1205298), registered office 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG.