

Autism Accreditation

Specialist Award Manual

2023-2026

Specialist Educational, Social Care and Health Provisions

Name of service:

Lakeside School

To be completed by your consultant:**Reference no:**

002683

Date of Assessment:

9 June 2025

Lead assessor:

Hannelore Bout

External moderator:

Nicola Kennedy

Outcome of previous assessment:

Advanced

To be completed by the Quality Manager:**Committee decision:**

Advanced

Date of committee decision:

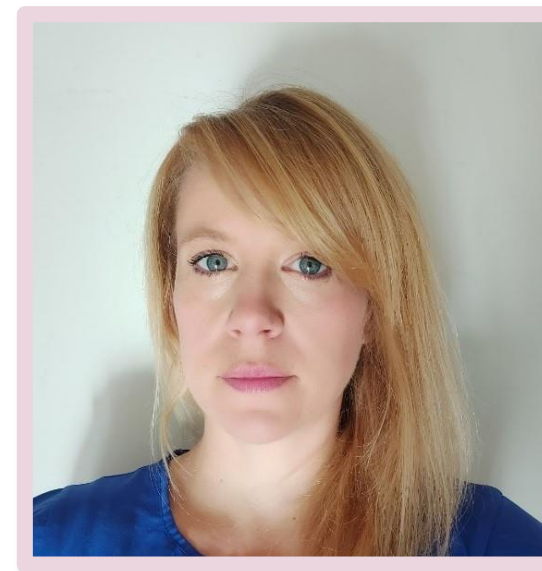
04/07/2025

Foreword

Autism Accreditation commenced in 1992 with the overall aim to improve autism practice across both social care, health and education. Since that time, we have worked with over 1000 different service providers and at present our work is impacting on over 35,000 autistic people's lives.

Whether you are new to accreditation or working toward re-accreditation this manual will guide you through your accreditation journey. Once you have filled in the self-audit, action plan and case-studies you can submit this document to your consultant who will complete the assessment and hand the report on to the accreditation awards committee. The committee decision will be included in the report and the now fully completed manual will be returned to you. Throughout the **manual** you will find advice and information to help you on your way.

The Accreditation team welcome the opportunity to continue working with you to achieve the highest standards of good practice in supporting autistic people.



Christine Flintoft-Smith

Christine Flintoft-Smith
Head of Autism Accreditation



Foreword



Autism Accreditation Mission

We work to ensure that society works for autistic people.

We set the standard for best autism practice and provide frameworks across all sectors to develop supportive environments and cultures that produce positive quality of life outcomes for autistic people.

We are seen as the experts of autism practice and our kite mark acts to reassure autistic people and families of the standard of support they should expect to receive from providers.

Our aims

Set the standard for best autism practice:

Working with autistic people, families and professionals and we use the latest research to inform the standards set.

Sustainable:

We provide a programme of development and resources that can be maintained and built upon year after year.

International kite mark:

Our kite mark is recognised as a sign of best autism practice by autistic people, families and professionals. Offering assurance that the services provided by the organisation are of the highest quality.

Reach:

To ensure that all sectors are targeted to provide best practice across the board our awards and frameworks are tailored to organisation types.





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SECTION One

Your Autism Accreditation journey: An overview

- [Our framework of best practice](#)
- [Awards Criteria](#)





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 where possible autistic people.)</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, 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 it has the option of applying for Beacon Status in recognition of the work they do in sharing their 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>





How long does each step take?

This depends on:

- How well good autism practice is already in place and consistent across the provision at the point of registration.
- How much time and resources can be committed to carrying out the self-audit, implementing the action plan and preparing for the assessment.
- However, we do recommend that right from the start you set your own dates as targets to work towards. This will help maintain a focus and direction. You can always review these dates if the progress you make is greater or less than you expected. For example:

Jan 2024	Register with the Programme
By July 2024	Complete self-audit
July 2024- Jan 2025	Implement action plan
Jan 2025	Book assessment *
Jan- June 2025	Work on completing action plan and preparing for assessment

*Remember assessments should be booked at least 6 months in advance.

Your assessment plan

On registering with Accreditation, you should receive a copy of your finalised assessment plan. The assessment plan outlines the work that Accreditation considers necessary to assess a provision together with associated costs. You can find out more by reading our [terms and conditions](#) .

The assessment plan will tell you how many consultant visits are included in the plan. If you are not intending for your whole service to be assessed, your plan should list what will be included. For example there may be specific care homes that you want to be included in the assessment or maybe in a school a specific department or classes. This should be listed accurately in the plan.

During the pre-assessment phase you may wish to add to expand or reduce your registration. You will need to seek the agreement of the Head of Accreditation to do so, by completing an amendment proposal form. This can be requested from your consultant or from March 1st 2023 it can be downloaded from the Accreditation members section of the National Autistic Society website.





Support should be:	What does this mean
Person-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each autistic person receives support that is uniquely tailored to them as an individual. • Autistic people and where appropriate their family/advocates are actively involved in shaping the support they receive in ways which are meaningful to them.
Evidence-informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches employed to support autistic people are informed by credible research that shows positive outcomes for autistic people, together with practitioner expertise and the lived experience of autistic people. • Approaches should be regularly evaluated to show they are achieving intended outcomes and changes made if they are not. • Whilst approaches can be those which are widely established within the field of autism, they should be adapted according to what will work best for the individual. • Where approaches may be less well-established, they are delivered by, or supported by, appropriately qualified and experienced professionals, are based on a good understanding of autism and closely monitored to ensure that they are not ineffective or harmful.
Strengths-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strengths-based approach begins with a holistic assessment not just of an individual's needs and challenges, but their skills, interests, preferences and strengths. • Support first and foremost seeks to celebrate and build upon these assets.
Directly promotes wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support is based around activities which each autistic person finds enjoyable, relaxing or engaging, and provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose. • Approaches are identified which help maintain the wellbeing of each autistic person, including where appropriate proactive and preventative strategies to avoid anxiety or distress and to help them understand and regulate emotions and sensory reactions. • Consideration is given to what changes need to be made to the environment or the way staff engage with the autistic person to support their wellbeing and engagement.
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autistic people are supported to actively take part in purposeful and meaningful activity that impacts on their quality of life. • Autistic people are taught relevant skills in communication, independent living, problem solving and decision making to empower them to have greater control, autonomy and purpose in their lives. • Autistic people are actively involved in and contribute to their community.



Aspiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service meets some of the criteria to be Accredited but there are one or more gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people. These areas of improvement directly impact on outcomes for some of the autistic people supported by the service and require a significant amount of work to address.
Accredited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have a working knowledge of evidence-informed approaches associated with good autism practice. They can adapt these specialist approaches so that support is person-centred and tailored to individual qualities, abilities, interests, preferences and challenges. Adaptions are made to the environment to support individual wellbeing and self-reliance. Each autistic person develops skills and confidence in communicating with others and engaging in a range of rewarding social activities. Each autistic person develops skills and confidence in carrying out tasks independently and in being empowered to make their own decisions, leading to them having greater control and autonomy in their lives. Each autistic person enjoys an increasing range of sensory experiences whilst developing regulation strategies to help them avoid sensory overload. Support enables autistic people to take part in activities which are purposeful and engaging and which promotes their emotional wellbeing and social inclusion. Proactive and preventative strategies are employed to help each autistic person avoid anxiety or distress and to help them understand and regulate their emotions. Feedback from autistic people and/or, where appropriate, those that represent their interests is overall good, confirming that the majority are happy with the support given and how they are involved and consulted. Whilst there may be some gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people these can be addressed quickly and in a relatively short period of time, within the provision's existing resources and capabilities.
Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service meets all the criteria to be Accredited at a high level of quality and consistency. Feedback from autistic people and/or, where appropriate, those that represent their interests is excellent, confirming that an overwhelming majority are happy with the support given and how they are involved and consulted. There are no or very limited gaps or inconsistencies related to fundamental principles of good practice in supporting autistic people.
Beacon Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision has received an Advanced Award within the last 18 months. The provision can demonstrate exceptional work done to impact on knowledge and understanding of autism amongst families, external professionals and the local community. A provision will only be considered for a Beacon Award on submission of an application form to our independent panel of professionals with considerable expertise in the field of autism.





Surveys of autistic people and/or families

Autism Accreditation values feedback from autistic people and where appropriate those representing their best interests. Provisions, especially those hoping to achieve Advanced status, are expected to take reasonable effort to support as many autistic people as possible to participate in our confidential survey, taking steps to make it more accessible where necessary.

- For an Accredited Award, we would normally expect to receive at least 10 % returns from surveys with over 50 % of these returns rating support as always or mostly good.
- For an Advanced Award, we would normally expect to receive at least 33 % return from surveys with over 75 % of these returns rating support as always or mostly good, with more in the always good category. The rest should be in the ok category with maybe the exception of one or two responses in the poor category.

These guidelines will be applied with discretion according to context.

Statutory inspections

Award decisions will be primarily based on observations, interviews and scrutiny of support plans, alongside feedback from autistic people and their families. However. Committee decisions will consider evidence from statutory bodies that a provision does not fully meet regulatory standards

- Accredited award will be withheld if the provision fails to meet statutory requirements related to wellbeing of autistic people,
- Advanced award/Beacon Status will be withheld if the provision enquires improvement or does not meet statutory requirements related to wellbeing of autistic people

Some discretion can be given in applying these rules dependent on when any statutory report was completed and specific content. They also do not apply for services not subject to statutory inspection.

Autism Accreditation reserve the right to declare an award as void if evidence is provided by a regulatory body or other accountable and reputable sources of failings within the service related to wellbeing and safeguarding within 18 months of receiving the award.



SECTION Two

Your self-audit

- [Completing your self-audit and action plan](#)
- [Self-Audit- **to be completed by the provision**](#)



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 or domains where autistic people most frequently experience differences when compared to the majority of 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 are 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.



SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan

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.





SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan

Setting up a Quality Action group

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

The QAG should ideally include representation from different departments and level of management and maybe 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 they 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 be 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 eg

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?



SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan



Appreciative Enquiry approach

We recommend that you use an Appreciative Enquiry Approach to complete the self-audit. This is a strengths-based approach that focusses on what is already working and building 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: <i>The best of what is.</i>	<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: <i>What might be.</i>	<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: <i>How can it be.</i>	<i>The participants work together and try to identify steps that can make the dream stage a reality.</i>
Delivery stage: <i>What will be.</i>	<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.



SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan



Creating and 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 pro-forma 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 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 6 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.



SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan



Getting support

Our members only section:

From March 1st 2023 you will be able to access an Accreditation members only section of 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 does not become excessive. If the consultant believes this is the case, they will advise that you book in a consultant session.



SECTION Two

Completing your self-audit and action plan



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 to get the most out of the visit. 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 apply to any Autism Accreditation visit which can be found [here](#).

Consultation session (virtual)

If you are just wanting 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.



SECTION Two

Your self-audit - completed by the provision



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.

**Commitment and
Consultation**

**Social communication,
interactions and relationships**

**Functional skills and
self-reliance**

**Sensory
experiences**

**Emotional
wellbeing**



Type of provision eg special day school; residential care home etc.

Severe Learning Disability School

How many people are supported by the provision?

113

How many of this number are autistic?

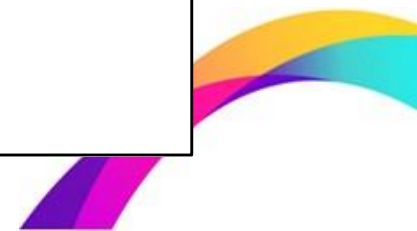
78

What is the range of autistic people supported by the provision (eg age; learning disability; verbal or non-verbal etc)?

The provision supports autistic pupils aged 2 to 19 years old, all of whom have a diagnosis of Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). Our cohort presents with a wide range of needs within the autism spectrum, and our provision is carefully tailored to meet these diverse profiles. The majority of our autistic pupils are non-verbal and rely on alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) methods to express themselves and interact with others. These include systems such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), communication books, sign along, and speech-generating devices. These tools are integrated into daily routines to encourage consistent, functional communication across settings. A smaller group of pupils demonstrate emerging or minimal spoken language, often using single words or short phrases alongside other communication systems. They may require structured prompting or familiar contexts to use their verbal language effectively. A

Outcome of last statutory inspection if applicable. (eg body, date, outcome).

Ofsted July 2023 - Outstanding Autism Accreditation May 2022 - Advanced Status





What are the main specialist approaches used by staff to support autistic people?

This should include reference to social communication, sensory regulation, promotion of independence, and wellbeing.

At Lakeside, our approach to supporting autistic pupils is underpinned by the SCERTS framework (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support). This provides both an assessment tool and a foundation for building a curriculum that meets the unique needs of each pupil, focusing on developing functional communication, emotional regulation, and meaningful engagement with others.

Social Communication

We prioritise the development of social communication skills using a range of specialist approaches:

? Intensive Interaction is used regularly to build foundational communication and connection through shared attention, turn-taking, and enjoyment of interaction.

? We also use methods inspired by the Bamboozle special needs Theatre Company, which include drama-based strategies that promote engagement, co-regulation, and meaningful interaction.

What training/ongoing professional development is provided for staff in delivering autism-related approaches or methods?

At Lakeside, all staff receive autism-specific training as part of their induction, ensuring they begin with a strong understanding of how to support pupils with autism and Severe Learning Difficulties. Ongoing professional development is delivered through weekly whole-school CPD sessions every Friday afternoon, covering a wide range of autism-related approaches. This year, training has included intensive interaction, enabling spaces, Therapeutic Thinking (Herts STEPS), effective questioning, low-level behaviour support, sensory integration, the use of communication boards, and introduction to AAC tools such as Grid Player. Staff also work closely with speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, who provide guidance and model strategies to embed into daily practice. This continuous training ensures staff are confident and skilled in meeting the complex communication, sensory, behavioural, and emotional needs of our autistic pupils.

What processes are in place to ensure that each autistic person has a regularly reviewed personal support plan that identifies strategies and sets targets in relation to social communication, sensory regulation, promotion of independence, and wellbeing?

At Lakeside, every autistic pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan which includes personalised outcomes and targets that focus on key areas such as social communication, sensory regulation, independence, and emotional wellbeing. These EHCPs are reviewed annually through a thorough and collaborative process. Before setting new targets, class teachers meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to review progress against existing targets using a structured document known as the 'Pupil Progress' form. This document captures academic progress, engagement, behaviour, and wellbeing indicators. Any significant changes in a pupil's circumstances, behaviour, or support needs are documented at this stage. Together, the teacher and SLT member reflect on what has worked well, what strategies have been effective, and where adjustments are needed. Following this, new, specific, and measurable targets are proposed in alignment with EHCP outcomes and discussed with SLT. All EHCPs are then quality-assured by the Headteacher to ensure consistency, relevance, and accuracy before being submitted to the local authority.

In addition to this formal process, the school has a proactive support system in place to monitor and respond to pupils' ongoing needs. Staff can raise day-to-day or emerging concerns with the Autism and Behaviour Team, who carry out detailed observations to assess communication styles, triggers, sensory needs, and behavioural patterns. This team works closely with class staff to design and implement targeted strategies, and also provides hands-on modelling



How are autistic people consulted in the support they receive? *This should include reference to any adaptation to enable them to express their opinion.*

Our Pupils are increasingly being consulted about the support they receive, with many systems and tools adapted to help them express their views and participate in decision-making. This approach aligns with person-centred planning, which values the voice and preferences of the individual, especially in educational and care settings.

Direct Consultation with Autistic Individuals

Autistic individuals are consulted using a range of adapted communication methods to ensure their opinions are heard:

Visual Supports to Offer Choices: Visual aids such as choice boards, symbol cards, and pictorial timetables help our pupils make informed decisions. These tools reduce reliance on verbal communication and provide clarity, especially for those with limited speech or who process information visually.

Activities Labelled through Symbols and Verbs: Labelling activities with symbols and simple verbs helps pupils to understand options and expectations. This supports independence and engagement, and allows them to give feedback or choose preferred tasks more easily.

Decision Making Tools (e.g. communication boards): Structured tools like communication boards or social stories can be used to support pupils in expressing preferences and making decisions about their learning, routines, or care.

How are families, carers and/or advocates of who represent the best interests of each autistic individual consulted about the support being provided where appropriate to do so?

Parents and carers play a vital role in ensuring that approaches are effective and consistent. This takes place through a variety of structured and informal methods that promote open communication, consistency, and collaborative decision-making.

Scheduled Meetings

Review Meetings (e.g., EHCP Reviews, Annual Reviews): Parents and carers are invited to participate in formal review meetings where they can share observations, raise concerns, and contribute to the planning and evaluation of the individual's support. These reviews are a key opportunity for collaboration and ensuring that strategies are aligned with the individual's evolving needs.

Parents' Evenings and Informal Social Events: We hold both traditional parents evenings, that are also complemented by more relaxed social gatherings that encourage open dialogue in a less formal setting, helping to build strong, trusting relationships between families and school staff.

Transition Worker Support: Our external Transition worker liaises directly with the families of our older pupils, as well as liaising with the school to prepare pupils for adulthood. She ensures that both the individual and their family feel prepared and supported and that we can put the right level of support in place to prepare pupils for change. Families are encouraged to share insights about what works best and raise any concerns about upcoming changes.



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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.	Pre verbal communication skills promoted by intensive interaction and child initiated methods. Objects of reference Communication boards Communication device Speech and language therapy	3	▼
C2	Each autistic person's preferences, skills and strengths in understanding and responding to others are recorded.	Pen Pictures Case studies EHCP targets PFA folders Behaviour plans	3	▼
C3	Each autistic person's challenges in understanding and responding to others are recorded.	Pen Pictures Case studies Behaviour plans EHCP targets	3	▼
C4	The environment is organised to encourage autistic people to socially engage with increasing self-reliance.	All staff have received training on enabled spaces All lessons include key vocabulary Communication board and sentence strips used so pupils can make choices and comment on learning.	3	▼
C5	All staff consistently use the best way of communicating with each autistic person within different contexts, including when out in the community.	All teachers liaise with speech and language therapists to put in appropriate support at the right level for pupils. Visual support is custom and practice and held as an expectation of support across the school.	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.	Speech and language therapy Grid player Communication boards Communication devices Symbol use Objects of reference	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.	Intensive interaction Social games - turning taking Community outings e.g farm McDonalds PE games Games with peers	3
C8	Each autistic person is supported to develop skills in forming healthy relationships including friendships and intimate and sexual relationships.	Turn taking opportunities built in to lesson Opportunities for peer interaction built in to teaching particularly in older students. Sex education built in to Summer term teaching	3
C9	Each autistic person is supported to deal with challenging or unwanted social interactions including abusive or unhealthy relationships.	Due to the nature of pupils needs this tends to relate to pupil crises. We always consider restorative practice and ensure that relationship breakdowns are restored after a behaviour incident.	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.	Meetings with communication lead and Speech and Language therapist monthly New strategies delivered as CPD to all staff led by speech and language therapist. Communication lead regularly observes lessons Currently reviewing curriculum to incorporate SCERTs assessment criteria Use of SCERTS assessment sheets for staff	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.	Annual review meetings Weekly Marvellous Me' s sent home (photographs of pupil achievements) Home school books written daily Annual parents evening Assessment data and case studies filled out termly by teacher	3



Action plan - completed by the provision

Things we do well and need to carry on doing: (word limit 325)

Liaise constantly with SALT- SALT deliver training to all staff regularly. Eg Grid player and communication boards with sensory integration. Head has monthly meeting with SAL
Use of visual support and request structure. Use of SCERTS sentence strips evident in all classes but used as a graduated response to communication difficulties
Use of objects of reference and now and next type structure so that pupils can see the the organisation of their day.
Use of intensive interaction as a naturalistic, holistic part of the school day with all pupils.
Promotion of prosocial behaviour and relationships. We believe that our pupils need this more than anything to survive with resilience in their community.
Making learning and communication functional and fun- we try to remove elements of repetitive activities so that learning is fresh and pupils are constantly motivated to communicate with us.

Things we could do better or consider introducing (highlight when complete): (word limit 325)

Communication environment could be clearer and more precise. We need to develop systems which encourage only relevant visual support to be on display.
We are in the middle of introducing Grid player and teachers will be rolling this out. The programme is easy and intuitive to use. Teachers will be able to significantly enhance the learning in their classrooms for individuals and groups through targeted use of Grid player.
We are interested in developing more group dynamic and cohesion through middle and upper school leading to pupils noticing each other and understanding what they can bring to the group.



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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 opinion.	CPD /training delivered every Friday (List training offered this year) Visual support across the school Tasks broken down into smaller steps Time given to solve problems (Bamboozle approach) Continuum of decision making Staff meetings	3
F2	Each autistic person’s strengths and challenges in functional life skills are recorded.	EHCP targets focus on self-help skills at individual pupils level - see new system where photos of progress are inserted into review documents, Independent skills list - journey through primary- middle and EXL with independence progressing as pupils get older.	3
F3	Staff organise the environment to support and encourage autistic people to function with increasing autonomy.	Labelled cupboards Visual support to encourage pupils to independently fetch resources/objects needed. Repeated trips to same community facilities and then changed to similar facilities e.g., Tesco to Sainsburys and garden centre. Ensure that skills are generalised across settings.	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.	In task visual support at individual pupils level. Varying from one symbol or OOR to lists in writing telling pupils what they need to do Much repetition with varied resources Use of TEACCH type structured teaching	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.	SCERTS transactional support training staff CPD programme Staff meetings Observations Use of transition objects	3

Functional skills and self-reliance (2)



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	Indicator	How we do this	Rating
F6	Each autistic person is supported in developing skills in making choices and taking decisions.	Continuum of decision making Assessment for learning strategies Choices offered within lesson - acknowledged through AFL	3
F7	Each autistic person is supported in developing daily functional life skills,	Independent skills list Independence encouraged in all lessons Staff supported to encourage independence through SCERTs transactional support In task visual support Lunch/snack visual support Please see Birch, Aspen and Redwood classes.	3
F8	Each autistic person is supported to develop skills in staying safe and healthy in a range of contexts.	Community outings - complexity of expectations for outing is judged on an individual basis Stop and go taught in a range of contexts For pupils able exploring local area and recognising common road signs PE and swimming weekly	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.	Speech and language meetings monthly Observations termly Regular review of curriculum -currently revisiting this. School council minutes. CPD relating to AFL	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.	Yearly reviews meetings- full photo diary of the achievement against targets is now in review document. For those able discussions supported with visual support AFL techniques commenting on what pupils are doing Marvellous me (photographs) sent home weekly.	3



Action plan - completed by the provision

Things we do well and need to carry on doing: (word limit 325)

We prioritise independence from exploration of immediate environment through to community access. Evidence is seen in all community trips where pupils are expected to be as independent as possible. They are given visual support which is differentiated according to reading and comprehension ability.

We utilise Bamboozle approaches to encourage pupils to engage in learning which is process rather than product lead.

We ensure that judgement and right/wrong answers are taken out of the learning process as much as possible

We allow pupils to make mistakes and train our staff to understand why this is important for the development of problem-solving abilities.

We work with parents to encourage them to allow their children to practice their independence skills at home. We work at a fundamental level to try to listen to parent worries and then support them to understand how little steps forward can have a big impact over time.

Our sixth form provision is differentiated to be inclusive of a wide range of people with autism. They are all challenged to be independent, autonomous in their decision making and assertive.

Things we could do better or consider introducing (highlight when complete): (word limit 325)

We would like to develop some of our community access with more challenging students so that we offer functional learning on a one to one basis as it is offered after school by the care system.

Sensory experiences (1)



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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.	CPD programme - training re regulation Behaviour plans and meetings Staff meetings Autism/behaviour team support External Mental health team support (for individual pupils)	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 focussed, or provide enjoyment and pleasure.	Please see Case studies Pen Pictures PFA folders	3
S3	The challenges each autistic person may experience in regulating sensory experiences are identified and recorded.	EHCP targets Behaviour plans Case studies Pen pictures	3
S4	Staff organise the environment to support and encourage autistic people to self-regulate sensory input and avoid sensory overload.	Regulation boards Regulation packs Clear classroom environments	3
S5	Staff use proactive and preventative strategies (as best for the individual) to avoid sensory overload and discomfort which impacts on individual wellbeing.	Individual behaviour plans Ensuring that staff recognise the start of dysregulation and the signs are recorded Regulation strategies recorded on pen pictures and behaviour plan Observations and training delivered by Autism/Behaviour team. CPD on low level behaviour - focusing on preventative strategies before behaviour escalates.	3



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	Indicator	How we do this	Rating	
S6	Each autistic person is supported in using sensory self-regulation strategies and tools with increasing autonomy.	Sensory aspects incorporated in all lessons All pupils have individual regulation strategies Behaviour plan Autism/Behaviour team support EHCP targets linked to regulation	3	▼
S7	Each autistic person is supported to tolerate an increasing range of sensory experiences including when out in the community.	New sensory opportunities regularly introduced in lessons Use of headphones	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.	Regulation boards Sensory activities included in lessons Regular access to outside space	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.	Behaviour plans regularly reviewed SCERTS assessment completed every term (mutual regulation + self-regulation) Observations Pen pictures updated to reflect regulation strategies	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.	Marvellous me (photographs) Review meetings Home school books AFL strategies	3	▼



Action plan - completed by the provision

Things we do well and need to carry on doing: (word limit 325)

We have an established understanding regarding how sensory processing difficulties can impact our pupils.

We offer free access to the outside environment

We have a forest school and access an educational farm where pupils are able to explore quiet environments and we can support them to understand the benefits of this

Use of individualised sensory experiences linked to their own timetables- we do not offer blanket solutions; pupil responses are carefully analysed within the behaviour support system. These different sensory needs are recorded on the pupil behaviour support plans and or pen pictures.

Use of and access to rebound therapy, swimming, playground equipment, sensory rooms in each classroom, school dog, tactile materials, iPads and other personalised motivators to support wellbeing.

Highly personalised approach to sensory needs. We aim to bring sensory needs to the attention of pupils so that they can ask for what they need and begin to recognise their own regulatory signals.

Things we could do better or consider introducing (highlight when complete): (word limit 325)

We would like to make sensory needs clearer on the Pen Pictures - we are considering giving this a box in a different colour so they can be seen quickly and easily by staff.

Emotional wellbeing (1)



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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.	Behaviour/Autism team support External Mental Health team support CPD Friday afternoons - have covered attachment, sensory needs, behaviour support Team meetings	3
E2	Activities which each autistic person personally finds enjoyable, relaxing or which provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose are identified and recorded.	All lessons created around pupil motivators Recorded via pen pictures + EHCP reviews PFA folders Home school books	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.	Behaviour plans Case studies Pen pictures Assessment recording sheet Home school books and parent liaison	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 wellbeing.	System in place where pupils highlighted to Behaviour/Autism team. Observations carried out. Strategies implemented to support and often External Mental health team referral put in place. Work closely with nursing team and paediatrician where parents are finding life overwhelming and pupils are struggling at home. EG eating disorders, toileting issues, behaviours that challenge.	3



Emotional wellbeing (2)



Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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.	Clear environments Pupils identified as being able to access group table/own workstation/ own room CIL activities set up in room to encourage pupils to work alongside each other.	3
E6	Each autistic person is supported to understand and regulate their own emotions and recognise how they are expressed by others.	Use SCERTS framework to teach regulation starting with mutual regulation and working towards self-regulation All pupils have regulation targets on EHCP at their own individual level Behaviour/Autism team to support where class teams are struggling	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.	Behaviour/Autism team support Staff meetings CPD relating to functions of behaviour and low level behaviour All staff have 'Therapeutic Thinking' training and annually updated. Class teams also have individual training linking to individual pupils.	3





Rating	Not Applicable = 0	Not Met = 1	Partially Met = 2	Fully Met = 3
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	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.	Therapeutic thinking practiced RPI always used as last resort Behaviour plans that indicate the ‘first signs’ that things aren’t going well and preventative strategies to support this. Behaviour team support if pupil is flagged as having increased behaviour incidents.	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.	School ethos and curriculum support using pupil motivators to ‘hide the learning’ . All lessons designed around pupil motivators Pupil motivators recorded on pen pictures	3
E10	Each autistic person is supported to learn new skills, try out new experiences and challenge themselves.	Existing skills always built on Community outings and shifting expectations -e.g. skiing, horse riding, sailing , library, bowling, restaurants. We break things down into manageable steps, link new experiences to established motivators, use now and next to overcome anxiety about the unfamiliar. Link experiences to interests	3
E11	Each autistic person is supported to be socially included within (and contribute to) their community and to make meaningful connections.	Pupils who are able are supported to take part in group activities Turn taking opportunities CIL learning where pupils can work alongside each other School council Prioritise teaching prosocial behaviours.	3



Rating

Not Applicable = 0

Not Met = 1

Partially Met = 2

Fully Met = 3

	Indicator	How we do this	Rating
E12	The provision offers an inclusive environment in which each autistic person is empowered to recognise their autism as an integral part of who they are but also to explore and express diverse identities around gender, sexuality, race, religion and other aspects of their personality.	We have a non-judgemental ethos We use drama, free expression and exploration We remove as much praise as possible and build self confidence and advocacy through our ethos and approach	3
E13	Support plans focus on the wellbeing and quality of life of each autistic person and actively reflect the likes and dislikes of autistic people and what matters to them.	Pen pictures Behaviour plans (Therapeutic Thinking framework) Behaviour/Autism team support	3
E14	The strategies and approaches used to support each autistic person in their emotional wellbeing are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and achieve optimum impact.	Behaviour plans reviewed on 6 month basis (early if pupil is flagged as needing additional support)	3
E15	Positive outcomes that each autistic person achieves in improving and maintaining their emotional wellbeing are identified, recorded and celebrated with autistic people and their circle of support.	Pen pictures Assessment recording sheet Marvellous me (photographs) Review meetings	3



Action Plan - completed by the provision

Things we do well and need to carry on doing: (word limit 325)

Individualised approach means that pupil wishes and needs are considered to be a high priority. The systems in school are designed to support on an individualised basis. We have the flexibility to withdraw students who are struggling to give them one to one or two to one support in our cabin with highly trained staff. We have avoided at least 5 exclusions in the last 6 years through this approach.

Pupils are supported to understand their own emotions through explicit teaching and linking teaching to arrange of events and experiences- always understanding that we can learn through difficult experiences.

We work with parents to support pupils and develop partnership with families which really supports the child.

We recently delivered training regarding emotional regulation and support to parents which was very positively received and we have been working with a number of families since then with this specific area in mind.

We work in partnership with the school mental health team in order to secure good mental health outcomes for pupils.

Things we could do better or consider introducing (highlight when complete): (word limit 325)

We would like to work more families on an outreach basis linked to our outreach service to secure better outcomes for pupils with ASD in mainstream.



SECTION Three

- [Submitting case studies](#)
- [Case studies templates](#) - **to be completed by the provision**



SECTION Three

Submitting case studies



Submitting case studies

Your assessment is an opportunity for you to demonstrate how well your school or service supports autistic people.

Case studies are increasingly recognised as a tool that can help achieve this and can be an excellent way to showcase what you have helped autistic people achieve.

You can complete up to three case studies showing the impact of an initiative or specific programme for autistic individuals.

You can complete up to three more case studies about an autistic individual that shows what difference the support they have received has made in the quality of their lives.

Try to really focus on identifying what positive outcomes have been achieved.

Ensure that actual names and identifying personal details of people you support are not included to preserve anonymity.

You do have the option of not filling in the case studies but this will mean that you will only be considered for an accredited or aspiring award as case studies are required evidence for the Advanced Award.



SECTION Three

Case study to show impact of an initiative (1)



Date initiative started:	09/09/24
Description (What was the initiative?)	
Transactional Support - Planned support and strategies linked to interpersonal support that encourage staff to support autistic individuals engage in social interactions, activities and encourage independence.	
Context (What was reason for developing initiative?)	
Through observations it was identified pupils were rote learning skills with in the context of one lesson, however pupils had gaps in their social interaction abilities and were not necessary highly engaged. For instance viewing sentence strips as a cause and effect way to gain the item they wanted rather than a purposeful way to communicate needs/wants	
Purpose of initiative (What were the aims and objectives of the initiative?)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Adults observed consistently seeking and securing eye contact, turn taking, shared attention, imitation and communication. . ? All Pupils observed consistently across the school demonstrating above learning behaviours. . ? Staff are able to explain what they are doing and why with regard to regulatory and pre verbal teaching. ? Teachers and lead LSA' s are able to set up enabled spaces. Ensuring that the learning environment secures good pupil engagement. 	
Method (What did you do, and how were you going to measure, observe and record outcomes?)	
CPD training delivered to both teachers and LSA' s (list CPD) Termly observations using SCERTS transactional support assessment criteria by Head teacher.	
What happened? (Describe how the initiative developed)	
After a visit from our SIP and observations from SLT, we realised our curriculum was covering concepts and creating opportunities for pupils to practice skills, however the learning was not deep and pupils could not transfer their skills from one lesson to another. They were rote learning skills in certain contexts. We also saw that communication strategies were being used in the same way and felt that communication was not purposeful. Pupils could create complex sentences to request but not gain attention or take part in brief social interactions.	
What were the actual outcomes of the initiative? (What progress was made by individuals for example in communication and social skills; in self-reliance and independence; sensory processing; emotional regulation and wellbeing)	
After observations we were able to measure an increase in pupil engagement. Social communication skills of pupils have become more purposeful, with pupils sharing motivators, gaining attention and seeking eye contact being observed. Staff skill set has increased, and there is now further focus on social communication skills rather than completing the process of a lesson. Pupils are all regularly receiving intensive interaction and classrooms are set up to enable	
Next steps and lessons learnt	
Our next step is to provide further opportunities to add challenge to learning environments, creating further problem solving opportunities. We need to ensure that pupils are consistently moved on in their skills. We have liaised with speech and language team and a range of communication approaches are being used around the school to build on pupil' s communication skills. We are in the process of developing our curriculum so that it reflects our emphasis on social relationships, independence, emotional wellbeing and prosocial behaviour.	

SECTION Three

Case study to show impact of an initiative (2)



Date initiative started:	April 2024
Description (What was the initiative?)	
Community Farm programme We access free sessions paid for by the DFE at a farm set up to provide animal experiences for people with learning difficulties. We have taken our most challenged and compromised groups of children here. It is a secure area which allows for freedom but also imposes its own expectations on how to behave.	
Context (What was reason for developing initiative?)	
We need as many places as possible that we can take our pupils where they can have high quality learning experiences that relate to real life situations and cater for their interests and needs. The farm was offered to us and we took advantage of the funding as we have already had very positive outcomes with our forest school. Our pupils need freedom, peace and quiet but also need to be challenged to do new things without fear and over adult involvement. The farm offers this with clear, designated areas for each animal group. The pupils get involved with each set of animals in a different way. E.g.: shower the Alpacas, walk the goats and brush the pigs.	
Purpose of initiative (What were the aims and objectives of the initiative?)	
Aims: Increase confidence in the community Increase independence in a safe community environment Build on communication and working memory	
Method (What did you do, and how were you going to measure, observe and record outcomes?)	
Repeat sequence each week Add higher expectations within the sequence and hone these as the weeks go on for each individual Use now and next, visual support Use working memory techniques on return so that pupils can learn to access memories by use of photos, repetitive questioning and symbols depicting feelings.	
What happened? (Describe how the initiative developed)	
Pupils have to walk a significant distance to each animal area and take what the animals need with them. They follow visual support and have begun remembering what they need for each type of animal. They can approach the animals in their own time and as much or as little as they want. We are finding it increases their confidence and ability to use planning skills. If pupils are not interested in the animals, there is a tractor ride which motivates them to get to the end of the visit and cooperate in order to get this reward. Pupils are now able to remember what they did and we are hearing a comment function with older pupils developing spontaneously. E.g.: "Pig is smiling" (quote from Sammy aged 16).	
What were the actual outcomes of the initiative? (What progress was made by individuals for example in communication and social skills; in self-reliance and independence; sensory processing; emotional regulation and wellbeing)	
Following EHCP targets achieved at the farm: N aged 9: For N to follow a 'now and next' board consistently B Aged 12: to follow social conventions in a range of community settings	
Next steps and lessons learnt	
Run summer school at the farm in order to expand access and support families in summer holidays. This is planned for 2nd week in August 2025.	

SECTION Three

Case study to show impact of an initiative (3)



Date initiative started:	09.09.24
Description (What was the initiative?)	
Function of behaviour – Low Level Behaviour	
Context (What was reason for developing initiative?)	
After monitoring data we saw a decrease in high and medium level behaviour incidents. This allowed us to start an initiative to highlight low level behaviour and encourage de-escalation at an early stage. We also wanted to create a level of thinking in all staff that enabled them to consider the function of the behaviour and deepen their understanding of behaviour.	
Purpose of initiative (What were the aims and objectives of the initiative?)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ? Staff are able to observe behaviour and recognise its purpose. Taking in to account events leading up to the behaviour. ? Staff are able to deploy a range of strategies that are effective in meeting the function of behaviour to decrease and prevent low level behaviours. ? Classrooms are quiet but purposeful. ? Staff intervene in order prevent behaviours that cause a barrier to learning. . 	
Method (What did you do, and how were you going to measure, observe and record outcomes?)	
<p>Term 1 – Teachers received training on the functions of behaviour. They were shown video clips of pupils around the school and asked to analyse clip and identify function. Teachers were also given examples of frequent behaviour incidents that take place in the school and asked to talk about the different functions and the strategies you may deploy to prevent behaviour incident from increasing.</p> <p>Term 2 – Training was repeated to LSA’ s after Christmas. Alongside this class teams were asked to take videos of low level behaviour incidents that frequently occur.</p>	
What happened? (Describe how the initiative developed)	
Low level behaviour was a focus in the school last year. However after completing training, and observations we could see that there was a gap in analysing behaviour and understanding the behaviours function. The Autism Team work alongside teams to develop strategies and train them in implementing them, however we wanted class teams to begin to start developing the same level of thinking.	
What were the actual outcomes of the initiative? (What progress was made by individuals for example in communication and social skills; in self-reliance and independence; sensory processing; emotional regulation and wellbeing)	
<p>Staff have been able to put in place effective strategies for low-level behaviour.</p> <p>Functions of behaviour are being identified ensuring that the intervention used in effective.</p> <p>Pupils’ wellbeing has increased as regulation strategies are being deployed quicker.</p>	
Next steps and lessons learnt	
We need to challenge staff to increase expectations so that behaviour continues to improve. We will be focusing on pupils between 8 and 12 years of age. It is in this group that we tend to see most dysregulation and learning barriers. Staff will be encouraged to reflect on their own practice through use of video with a specific focus on progress.	

SECTION Three

Case Study about an Autistic Individual (1)



Name of individual	<i>Use Initials or number (no names)</i> R
Period of time covered	Sep '24 - May '25
What support was introduced? What approaches, strategies, methods were used?	
R was highly anxious and struggling to access environments other than his classroom and home. Refusal to go outside and refusal to go on community outings. R will be transitioning to a residential setting in a years' time and his family expressed concerns that he will not leave the house except to visit TK Maxx and were concerned how small R's world already was. R struggles with direct demands being placed on him. He often self-sabotages a situation to stay in control of it before it goes wrong. When talking	
Pen picture of individual before support was introduced including challenges, difficulties etc.	
See Pen picture shared with document	
OUTCOMES	
Communication skills; social skills; relationships, Confidence; self-reliance; independent problem-solving; Ability to cope with sensory input; Emotional self-regulation and wellbeing	
R wellbeing significantly improved - we have seen an increase in him engaging in all activities as his confidence has grown. He is no longer worrying about what might go wrong and instead letting himself take part in activities. R's sense of achievement has led to increased social communication. He wants to share all his accomplishments with class and show them pictures of him achieving it. R's flexibility has increased, he is not predicting that activities will take place on certain days. He will accept changes to the timetable.	
Achievements, successes and quality of life outcomes	
R is now able to access the community in both settings. His world has opened up more and he is willing to go out with a range of adults. R is also able to share his achievements with others increasing his social communication. R looks forward to transitioning around school and seeing different pupils and adults.	
Next Steps; transition	
The next step will be preparing R for transition to residential. We will support the family to take R to his new setting in our school vehicle and support with the transition. In the short term we will increase the number of places R will visit to get him used to accessing all parts of the community.	

SECTION Three

Case Study about an Autistic Individual (2)



Name of individual	<i>Use Initials or number (no names)</i> E
Period of time covered	March '24 - Jan '25
What support was introduced? What approaches, strategies, methods were used?	
E was unable to transition to the classroom. Every time she entered the threshold she would experience extreme dysregulation and engage in violent behaviour such as kicking, biting and pulling hair aimed at peers and adults. E is highly motivated by people watching and would want to spend her day looking through other class windows and wandering around the school. She refused to enter the classroom to eat her lunch.	
Pen picture of individual before support was introduced including challenges, difficulties etc.	
See Pen picture shared with document	
OUTCOMES	
Communication skills; social skills; relationships, Confidence; self-reliance; independent problem-solving; Ability to cope with sensory input; Emotional self-regulation and wellbeing	
E' s communication increased. She is now able to use symbols spontaneously to request what she needs and this has become her default communication method.	
E' s emotional regulation and wellbeing has increased as she is able to now communicate her wants and needs.	
E is now able to cope with the classroom environment and sit at a group table with other peers. Adults are able to stand back from E allowing her to have time unsupported.	
Achievements, successes and quality of life outcomes	
E is now accessing the classroom for small amounts of time during all lessons, she is taking part in the class activities as well as engaging with top motivators. E is now able to sit at a group table with peers. E' s 1:1 is able to step back and allow E to gain more independence.	
Next Steps; transition	
Extend the amount of time in the classroom during summer months.	

SECTION Three

Case Study about an Autistic Individual (3)



Name of individual	<i>Use Initials or number (no names)</i> N
Period of time covered	September '24 - Jan '25
What support was introduced? What approaches, strategies, methods were used?	
<p>N started at Lakeside in September. He was struggling to access the classroom and become extremely dysregulated, attempting to bite peers and staff. Initially the Autism team went to observe N, and could see that the classroom was too overwhelming and causing sensory overload. We made the decision that N would have his own room for a short period to get him used to the school environment. N is motivated by sensory play and cannot yet regulate his emotions. We designed a timetable of sensory play activities, and worked with staff to recognise the first signs of over stimulation and dysregulation. Initially this was not successful as so many adults</p>	
Pen picture of individual before support was introduced including challenges, difficulties etc.	
See Pen picture shared with document	
OUTCOMES	
Communication skills; social skills; relationships, Confidence; self-reliance; independent problem-solving; Ability to cope with sensory input; Emotional self-regulation and wellbeing	
<p>? N is now recognising photographs and this has helped him transition</p> <p>? Signs of N' s dysregulation are being recognised and through mutual regulation he is able to stay regulated.</p> <p>? N is able to attend to sensory input for an extended period of time without becoming dysregulated.</p>	
Achievements, successes and quality of life outcomes	
? N is now accessing the classroom with one or two peers. He is becoming familiar with classroom environment.	
Next Steps; transition	
? N to access the classroom with an increased amount of peers and gradually extend the time.	



SECTION Four

The Autism Accreditation assessment

- [Preparing for your assessment](#)
- [Your assessment](#)
- [Assessment report](#) (to be completed by the consultant)





SECTION Four

Preparing for your assessment

When will my assessment be?

If this is your first assessment, you can discuss with your consultant when you think you are ready. Once you have been assessed we recommend that you have an assessment every three years.

You will need to give your consultant at least six months notice of your preferred dates. Once you have agreed dates, you should receive a confirmation email from the Accreditation admin team and will be invoiced any outstanding fees, which need to be settled at least four months before the assessment.

If you need to postpone or cancel your assessment let your consultant know as soon as possible. You can read our cancellation and postponement policy [here](#).

What is the purpose of the assessment?

The assessment helps you to identify what you are doing well and what could be improved in how you support autistic people.

It also provides evidence for our committee to give you an award at Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced level.

What key questions will be considered?

- What key approaches are used to develop autistic people's social communication and self-reliance, to address sensory issues and promote emotional regulation and wellbeing?
- How well do staff implement and personalise these approaches when working with autistic people?
- How are personal centred support plans created and reviewed?
- What outcomes do autistic people achieve with the support offered to them?
- What do those who are supported think about how well staff work with them and understand their autism?





SECTION Four

Preparing for your assessment

What evidence will be considered?

- Individual support plans and case-studies.
- Interviews with staff and where appropriate people supported by the provision.
- On-line survey of people supported by the provision and/or the family member representing their best interests.
- Observation of practice where appropriate and possible.

What paperwork do I need to send in before the assessment?

Three weeks before your assessment you should return:

- The Specialist Award Manual with the self-audit, action plan and (optional) the case studies completed.
- Key Policy documents related to the provision for autistic people (max. of 5) for example Policies on autism; communication: sensory Issues; independence; wellbeing; behaviour support; assessment etc.
- Visitor guidance for example dress code: documentation required; lunchtime arrangements etc.
- Service Prospectus or Brochure.

Please do not expect the consultant to consider lots of paperwork. You need to be selective or provide a summary of key points from documents or otherwise documents will be left unread and important evidence may be missed.

SECTION Four

Preparing for your assessment



How are the views of autistic people who are supported by the provision considered?

Accreditation expects to see evidence that autistic people are actively involved in their support plans and their views are sought and acted upon. This is commented on in all reports.

In addition, as part of the Autism Accreditation assessment, we send you a link to confidential surveys. These links should be sent out to autistic people and where relevant to relatives, carers or advocates who represent their best Interests.

Adults over the age of 16:	Requirement unless the provision has determined that they lack the capacity to understand and respond to the survey even with reasonable adjustments in place.
Young people of secondary age (11-16):	Recommended and considered good practice unless they lack the capacity to engage in the survey even with reasonable adjustments in place.
Children of primary age (below 11):	Discretionary.
Relatives/carers/advocates who represent the best interests of individual:	Requirement unless the autistic person is over 16, has capacity and do not wish their views to be represented by others.

It is your responsibility to make sure that the links are made available to anyone who is entitled to take part without good reason. You should also take reasonable actions to raise awareness that the survey is taking place for example via your website or through social media. You can also ask autistic people or their families/advocate to complete the survey onsite using any available device. The survey will still be confidential and cannot be recalled once submitted.

Whilst it is in your interest to actively encourage people to complete the survey, we trust you to act with professional integrity to ensure that the responses accurately reflect individual's views without undue duress or interference.

SECTION Four

Preparing for your assessment



What reasonable adjustments can I make to enable an autistic person to complete the survey?

There are two versions of the autistic person survey. Where an individual has learning disabilities the easy read version is likely to be most appropriate but you can discuss this with your consultant.

Reasonable adjustments should be made to support an individual in completing the survey so they are not disadvantaged because of their autism or another disability.

For example:

- The survey questions could be read out to the individual and their spoken responses recorded on the survey for them
- The survey can be copied and presented in a format that the individual finds more accessible, for example large print, symbols etc.
- Augmentative or alternative communication systems could be used to present questions and obtain responses.

Will I have an opportunity to talk to my consultant before the assessment?

Yes your consultant will offer you a pre-assessment session at least a month before your assessment, either as a visit or a virtual meeting.

At the pre-assessment meeting, they will discuss with you what should be included in the observation timetable and who should be included in interviews.

You should plan a timetable of observations which should be sent to the consultant in a draft format at least a week before the assessment. The consultant may ask you to make some changes.

As much as possible the observations should provide insight into the range of activities typically offered by the provision. In a small provision we would expect each autistic individual and most of the staff team to be observed at least once, unless there is good reason why this would not be possible. In a larger provision such as a school we would expect observations to reflect a cross-section, for example each year group, different staff, and a range of activities.

SECTION Four

Your assessment



How does your assessment start?

The assessment starts with you giving a presentation to the consultant. The presentation should describe key approaches you use to support autistic people in:

- Social communication, interactions and relationships.
- Functional skills and self-reliance.
- Sensory experiences.
- Emotional wellbeing.

You should also include in the presentation how you consult with autistic people (and where appropriate those that represent them) about the support they receive.

You should identify what you consider to be your overall strengths and next steps.

You may wish to give a pre-prepared presentation or if you prefer answer questions from the consultant on the topics listed above. You can discuss with your consultant whether the presentation can be given to them when they are on site or whether it would be more practical to present virtually.





What interviews should I arrange?

Interviews can be conducted face to face, virtually or over the phone. You will need to timetable interviews with:

- Staff who work directly with autistic people to find out about what training and support they have received. This might include recently inducted staff as well as those who are responsible for mentoring or training their colleagues.
- Staff with responsibilities for delivering particular methods or approaches. For example, therapists or Behaviour Support Co-ordinators.
- Staff with particular responsibilities for assessing, setting targets and monitoring progress for individual autistic people.

There is only a limited time available to carry out interviews so please be selective and think about who would be best informed to answer key questions.

Staff can be interviewed in small groups as this can be highly productive and an effective use of time. These could be grouped around a specific topic for example Professional Development; Therapeutic approaches; Behaviour Support etc.

Provide a brief description of the role of the person being interviewed in relationship to provision for autistic people.

Discuss with the consultant the feasibility of interviewing autistic people. You can also ask your consultant whether any interviews with relatives/carers or advocates should be arranged. The consultant may not consider these necessary if survey feedback has been obtained.

People being interviewed over video should not record the interview. However, the consultant may wish to record the session to help them write the report. Recordings will only be used to write the report, stored securely, and deleted after the report has been written.





SECTION Four

Your assessment

What personal support documents will the consultant need to access?

The consultant will need to review a sample of person centred support plans. They can do this during a visit but in order to reduce time spent on site we ask for you to email them. All reasonable steps will be taken to keep emailed documents confidentially stored and they will be deleted once the report has been completed. However, if you prefer you can send copies with personal details removed.

Depending on the size of your provision, a sample will normally be around 10 to 15 plans representing a cross-section for example from different school year groups; from different residential properties. The consultant may ask for you to send more plans following the initial sample.

You may also provide the consultant with summative qualitative and quantitative data that shows outcomes achieved by the school or service in relationship to autistic people for example reduction in the use of physical interventions; summary of survey results conducted with autistic people etc.

Safeguarding autistic people

Consultants and moderators have professional expertise in the field of autism and are DBS checked. However, they should not be asked to carry out regulated activities as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service, should not be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult or asked to give specific, detailed advice on how to support an individual.

Accreditation is not a safeguarding authority and will not investigate a safeguarding concern or an allegation against a member of staff as this could jeopardise a subsequent investigation by the local authority or the police.

If abusive practice is directly observed by a representative of Accreditation during an assessment then it will be referenced in the assessment report and will impact on what level of award is given. It will also be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and when considered necessary directly referred to the appropriate authorities.

In keeping with our framework of best practice, we expect provisions to employ behaviour support methods which are proactive, preventative and non-restrictive.. We would only expect to see restrictive physical intervention used in emergency circumstances and under strict controls. Where this is not the case restrictive interventions may be considered a safeguarding concern

Whilst the focus of our assessments is on autistic specific approaches we expect that such approaches are delivered within the context of a service meeting statutory expectations regarding the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. For this reason, the assessment findings are triangulated with survey results and the outcome of the most recent statutory inspection. You can find out more about this [here](#).

SECTION Four
The Autism Accreditation assessment



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:

The school is supported by a team of three Speech and Language Therapists who attend three days a week to provide in-class support and deliver staff training. The school has recently introduced the use of Grid Player, and staff have received training to support pupils in using this tool. The SCERTS framework underpins the school's approach, and the curriculum and assessment processes are currently being adapted to align with this model. One member of the primary team has recently completed Attention Autism training.

Each autistic pupil's preferences, skills, and strengths in communication and social interaction are routinely recorded in their Pen Picture. Examples include using short sentences, single words, SCERTS sentence strips, or non-verbal strategies such as vocalisations, facial expressions, and body language. For instance: "I communicate by using a range of non-verbal strategies such as grunts, vocalisations, facial expressions, and body language. I have started to use photo symbols to request desired objects. Encourage me to use an 'I want' sentence strip to request items."

Individual communication challenges are also recorded, such as preferring solitary play with favourite toys or books, disliking long group activities or tasks that require waiting, or having difficulty expressing wants and needs. Practical strategies to support communication and interaction are clearly identified and shared. These include the use of sentence strips, now/next boards, and intensive interaction. The 'Challenge Me To' section provides helpful prompts such as encouraging finger pointing or the use of photo symbols.

Support is reviewed and updated termly with the autistic pupil and/or their circle of support. Progress is celebrated not only during formal reviews and parents' evenings but also through social events, communication books, and weekly photo sharing with families. The school tracks progress using SCERTS and Engagement data, with more targeted interventions developed for pupils scoring red or amber. These may include increased use of sensory-based or intensive interaction strategies to build deeper connections and engagement. Staff are confident in discussing how they support autistic pupils in communication and social interaction, and in describing the progress made. For example, one pupil who previously relied on staff for constant engagement is now learning to self-occupy. Another pupil who initially had negative interactions with peers has learned to channel their enthusiasm more positively, resulting in emerging friendships. The school uses intensive interaction throughout the day and is supporting pupils to use their Grid 3 devices with increasing confidence. Recent training has focused on helping pupils develop independence in communication, particularly for those who may be overly reliant on adult support.

Case studies illustrate both whole-school initiatives and personalised approaches. For example, one pupil who previously struggled with community outings was supported through their interest in postal workers and delivery services. This motivation was used to increase engagement in community activities and build communication skills: "R is also able to share his achievements with others, increasing his social communication."



Assessment Findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Each autistic pupil is supported in understanding what is being communicated to them through staff adapting their spoken language. Staff consistently modify their communication to meet the individual needs of pupils in the classroom. In many lessons and during unstructured times, staff used minimal or no spoken language, instead relying on alternative communication strategies.

Visual supports were available in all observed lessons, although they were not always actively referenced or embedded into interactions. All staff carried lanyards equipped with visuals to support communication, offer choices, and encourage interaction. Communication boards were also used, enabling pupils to express their wants and needs. These boards were structured using Colourful Semantics, helping pupils understand and construct sentences to make requests. Pupils were also encouraged to identify the person they were communicating with.

Pupils were consistently given time to process, reflect on, and revise their responses—for example, when the order of symbols on a sentence strip was incorrect or when they accidentally requested something unintended.

Staff were highly attentive to all communication attempts, taking time to respond, engage, and join in. The principles of Intensive Interaction and approaches informed by Bamboozle were consistently observed in staff communication during child-led learning and less structured sessions such as playtime. Child-led learning is clearly a strength of the school.

Where appropriate, and when pupils showed interest, they were supported to interact with assessors.

Although support for peer interaction was observed in about half of the sessions, we agree with the school's own reflection that they are "interested in developing more group dynamics and cohesion through middle and upper school, leading to pupils noticing each other and understanding what they can bring to the group." A staff member has recently attended Attention Autism training, which may offer further opportunities for structured and enjoyable social communication activities, particularly for younger cohorts and social partner pupils. Several observations included excellent and purposeful social interactions—for example, pupils showing peers their highlight of the morning, taking turns, role-playing visits to the shop or bank, and using incidental moments to teach pro-social skills such as considering how their choices might affect others. There is potential to expand these opportunities throughout the day—for instance, encouraging turn-taking during playtime, sharing resources, and promoting social interaction or shared attention during other learning activities.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school provides dedicated weekly CPD training for teaching assistants every Friday. Topics include a wide range of approaches and interventions such as assessment for learning, working memory, questioning techniques, securing engagement, SCERTS, and more recently, Attention Autism and how staff can support some pupils to learn to self occupy. The curriculum and assessment system are currently being amended to align with the SCERTS framework and the Engagement Model.

Lesson content is informed by each autistic pupil's preferences, skills, and strengths in functional life skills and independence. This is reflected in the Pen Picture, which includes sections such as 'Tasks I Like' such as taking photos on iPad, games, or feed based activities. This also has a section on 'New Tasks I Have Discovered I Like This Term', such as playing with cars on a ramp, swimming, cornflour exploration or learning to laminate.

Challenges that pupils may experience in developing functional life skills and independence are also recorded—for example, difficulty with transitions, disliking the end of preferred activities, direct instructions, or struggling with being told “no.”

Practical strategies to support pupils in developing independence are detailed in the “My Learning Styles” section of the Pen Picture, which is broken down into:

- How I communicate – e.g., using objects of reference, leading by the hand, photo symbols, give two choices or give an indirect offer.
- How to engage with me in my leisure time – e.g., exploring objects through the senses, or comment on what we are watching,
- Challenge me to – e.g., share attention with adults, use signs, hang up a coat, tidy up
- Additional information is included on how to support eating, drinking, choosing snacks, and toileting needs.

Support for developing independence and life skills is regularly reviewed with the pupil and/or their circle of support. This ensures that strategies remain relevant and that progress can be celebrated. The school shared detailed spreadsheets and progress reports tracking engagement and SCERTS targets (e.g., joint attention, symbol use, mutual and self-regulation). These are RAG-rated, with additional tabs outlining personalised interventions for pupils rated red or amber, aimed at increasing task engagement. Data is also inputted into Solar.

From Year 9 onwards, pupils are supported by the local authority to create a “Preparing for Adulthood” book. This includes photos of what they can do and enjoy, with the aim of supporting transitions into services and colleges after school. Pen pictures use colour coded amendments also illustrating how a pupil is discovering or learning new skills each term, such role playing answering the phone, or beginning to access the community.

Staff are confident in discussing how they support autistic pupils to develop independence and life skills, and in describing the progress made. For example, one pupil who previously screamed to communicate is now successfully using a switch button to express needs such as “more” or “finished.” Teachers have observed a shift in the school's approach, with a stronger focus on engagement, making learning irresistible, and presenting activities as choices—strategies that have improved both engagement and enjoyment and create hidden teaching and learning moments.

Case studies illustrate school-wide initiatives such as Duke of Edinburgh volunteering at a farm, as well as bespoke approaches. These include supporting pupils to transition and access the community in preparation for adulthood, or helping a pupil express wants and needs and access classroom environments for short periods through highly motivating activities.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Each autistic pupil is supported in understanding what is expected of them through activities and tasks presented within a structured framework, reinforced by visual prompts. All pupils were observed using a "now and next" visual supports, which they carried with them, including during playtime and outdoor activities.

In-task schedules were generally used effectively—particularly when staff encouraged pupils to check their schedules to determine the next step. However, there were also a few missed opportunities where schedules were either not within pupils' reach or not referred to during learning activities, resulting in adults expl

Pupils were consistently observed making choices using a range of visual and communication supports. Some pupils used their Grid Player to make sentences to make requests or Big Mac buttons to request "more." Colourful Semantics were used to help pupils identify different elements of a sentence, supporting their understanding and expression and help them reflect and update sentences. Some of the pupils showed great skill and independence in using this to make requests during lunch or snack time.

All classroom environments were thoughtfully arranged to enable pupils to select resources or make requests, with symbols displayed throughout the rooms for easy access.

The learning environments were generally well-organised and structured, enabling autistic pupils to complete tasks independently or with minimal support. Pupils were frequently seen collecting resources or making requests using their communication tools. They also consistently tidied up after activities, supported by visual prompts and songs. Daily schedules included classroom jobs, and pupils were given responsibilities such as locating cleaning sprays and cloths to clean surfaces. On occasion, staff provided guidance on how to manage messier materials like flour or powder. In a few observations, staff skillfully navigated pupils' reluctance to follow the schedule by negotiating compromises—encouraging pupils to take some responsibility for tidying up before engaging in a preferred activity.

The Engagement Curriculum is designed to offer motivating activities that "hide learning," and staff were observed skillfully using both incidental and planned teaching moments to help pupils extend and consolidate their skills.

High staffing levels allowed autistic pupils to experience a sense of completion and success. Through modeling, questioning, time to explore and problem-solve, and playful strategies such as making silly suggestions, staff supported pupils in engaging meaningfully. Pupils worked with a range of adults who collaborated seamlessly to provide consistent support and guidance.

However, there were some missed opportunities for pupils to develop independence, self-reliance, and resilience. Staff were often readily available to assist, which sometimes limited pupils' chances to self-occupy or engage in activities independently. This was particularly noticeable in the playground, where pupils continued to receive 1:1 support with a focus on Intensive Interaction. While this approach fostered connection and communication, it also meant that pupils had limited opportunities during the day to simply be by themselves and engage in self-directed play. This is something the school had identified through their own observation cycles and staff had recent training on how to support pupils to learn to self-occupy other than using laptops or tablets, they also focused on striking a balance, as some pupils prefer to engage in self directed activities, where others veer towards engaging with adults. The school also has a HLTA who leads on playtime activities, facilitating social interaction or self occupation opportunities.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school uses the SCERTS framework and Bamboozle approaches to support pupils' understanding of emotional and sensory regulation. While the occupational therapist works on a referral basis and primarily focuses on mobility (without a specialism in sensory integration), the speech and language therapist has provided introductory training on sensory integration. The school also maintains a bank of resources and guidelines to support staff in delivering sensory-based learning activities.

Some sensory experiences—both those that positively impact and those that challenge autistic pupils—are recorded in the "likes and dislikes" section of each pupil's Pen Picture. Examples include preferences for messy play, bubbles, trampolines, or foot spas, and aversions to noise, prolonged sitting, messy art, or wet clothing. More detailed information about sensory processing challenges is documented in each pupil's Behaviour Support Plan, along with specific strategies to help pupils engage positively. Practical approaches to supporting sensory regulation are clearly identified and shared with staff.

While sensory preferences are sometimes reflected in the Pen Picture's "likes and dislikes" and "how to keep me calm and alert" sections, the service has identified the need to make sensory needs more explicit. They are considering adding a dedicated section for sensory needs and strategies which could enhance clarity and provide a quick reference for staff—particularly when these strategies are already outlined in Behaviour Support Plans. Summarising key sensory regulation strategies or equipment, such as ear defenders, blankets etc in the Pen Picture would be a helpful addition. and sensory strategies could be added to the 'how to keep me calm and alert', which currently provides information on behaviour presentations, triggers, and support strategies.

All Pen Pictures also include information on "how I eat and drink" and "my toileting needs." Providing information such as preferring to eat in their work station, or support on how to introduce using the toilet.

Support for sensory regulation is reviewed regularly through home-school communication. such as home-school books and the Marvellous Me app, termly progress review data drops, and annual reviews. Both school staff and families report that changes are discussed as needed, allowing for timely adjustments and celebration of positive outcomes. Regular observations and meetings within the school team and with external professionals ensure that strategies remain responsive and effective.

Staff are confident in discussing how they support autistic pupils to regulate sensory input. For example, they use Bamboozle role play to help pupils develop an understanding of sensory regulation. Progress is tracked through engagement monitoring and photo evidence shared via Marvellous Me. Staff reported that training in low-level behaviours, sensory-based learning, and child-led approaches has had a positive impact on pupil engagement and progress.

Case studies illustrate how individualised approaches support pupils in regulating sensory input and highlight the outcomes achieved. For example, "N is able to attend to sensory input for an extended period of time without becoming dysregulated."



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Multi-sensory learning was highly evident across all lessons. Well-organised and motivating sensory resources and learning materials encouraged pupil-led learning and exploration. Pupils were observed engaging freely with a wide range of materials and sensory experiences, including tasting certain items, without any judgment from staff. Food items were also thoughtfully incorporated into the multi-sensory environment.

This approach enabled pupils to encounter sensory experiences they might typically find uncomfortable—such as exploring different textures or trying new foods—within a safe and supportive setting. Some pupils were supported to wear protective equipment such as gloves or aprons when exploring messy materials.

A wide range of sensory regulation supports were observed throughout the school. These included bespoke ear defenders, wobble cushions, sensory chews, weighted jackets, personal backpacks, gym balls, peanut balls, trampolines, work stations or quiet areas and outdoor play equipment.

Autistic pupils were supported in regulating sensory input that might interfere with their learning or cause discomfort. This support was primarily initiated by staff, who offered sensory breaks, alternative seating, or ear defenders. There is an opportunity to further develop this practice by introducing scripts or prompts that help pupils recognise and express how they are feeling, and offering sensory regulation choices to support the development of self-regulation skills.

The environment is carefully maintained and adapted to promote self-regulation. Classrooms include distinct learning areas and personalised workstations. Pupils also have access to sensory rooms, a swimming pool, rebound therapy, and outdoor learning experiences such as the local farm or going to MacDonald's. Outdoor areas are accessible at all times and are well-equipped to support both play and sensory regulation.

Staff consistently maintained a low-volume tone of voice, and in some classrooms, staff were observed whispering to pupils to minimise overall noise levels. Notably, staff interactions were entirely pupil-focused, with no observed conversations between staff members during sessions, ensuring that all attention remained on supporting the pupils.





Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school has a dedicated autism team and six trained Therapeutic Thinking trainers. The school works closely with a range of external professionals, including Mental Health Support Teams, nurses, and paediatricians. The SCERTS framework underpins the school's approach to supporting emotional regulation, and Bamboozle theatre-based role play is used to help pupils explore and express emotions. A recent focus on training staff to recognise and support low-level behaviours has had a measurable impact, with Solar data showing a significant reduction in high- and medium-risk incidents.

Pen Pictures prioritise the well-being and quality of life of each autistic pupil. They reflect pupils' likes, dislikes, and what matters to them, including new activities they have discovered and enjoyed during the term—such as accessing the community, dancing with peers, or spending time in the classroom. These are particularly significant for pupils who have previously found peer interaction or classroom environments challenging.

Detailed Behaviour Support Plans and Individual Risk Management Plans identify factors that may cause anxiety, stress, or distress—such as hunger, transitions, noise, or the end of a preferred activity. These plans also outline practical strategies to support emotional well-being, self-esteem, and safety, such as using visuals, offering ear defenders, or supporting pupils around noisy environments.

Support is reviewed regularly with the pupil, often during or after lessons. This was observed in practice, for example, when pupils used visuals to reflect on what they had done during a "remembering" lesson, or when a pupil reflected on their behaviour choices during a trip. Daily communication with families via home-school books, regular photo sharing through the Marvellous Me app, and planned reviews and catch-ups ensure that support remains responsive and that positive outcomes are celebrated.

Solar behaviour data shows a significant drop in high- and medium-risk incidents, alongside an expected increase in the recording of low-risk behaviours. This reflects the school's emphasis on understanding the function of behaviour and measuring the effectiveness of interventions. Progress reports also track development in mutual and self-regulation. Examples were shared of pupils being supported in their own rooms, with gradual plans to introduce more staff to build trust and flexibility.

Staff are confident in discussing how they have developed a deeper understanding of the function behind low-level behaviours and how to proactively support pupils. They have observed a positive shift since implementing the Engagement Model and using pupils' motivators and interests to drive learning as well as focusing on supporting low-level behaviours. These approaches help reduce anxiety and support pupils who may experience demand avoidance. For example, one pupil who previously found outdoor learning challenging is now actively participating in outdoor activities. Staff report that making activities into a motivating choice has improved well-being. The staff team are reflective and communicate with each other in a timely fashion, for example an observed incident involving a pupil invading another pupil's space, was quickly reported and analysed.

Case studies illustrate both whole-school initiatives and personalised approaches. For example, one pupil who was highly anxious about transitions and unfamiliar environments is now more confident and less worried about accessing the local shop, thanks to a bespoke programme built around their motivators. Another pupil is able to stay regulated through staff recognising early signs of distress and using mutual regulation strategies.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

All pupils appeared to feel safe, calm, and at ease. Staff were attuned to pupils' individual needs, and warm, trusting relationships were evident throughout the day.

Highly personalised, proactive, and preventative strategies were in place, including child-led learning, embedding learning within motivating activities, and offering structure, predictability and choice. The team has invested significant effort in understanding low-level behaviours and the underlying functions for each pupil. As a result, preventative interventions are well established, and staff are generally quick to read and respond to pupils' cues, effectively preventing anxiety, confusion, or distress from arising or escalating.

One incident of restrictive practice was observed, where a pupil was moved off another pupil. This incident was reported and analysed immediately and was understood to be related to wanting access to a favoured adult.

Autistic pupils were supported by staff to understand and regulate their emotions, although this was observed more consistently during afternoon sessions. In these instances, staff identified pupils' emotional states and, where appropriate, suggested regulation strategies (e.g., "I can see you are getting excited—do you need to go out for a run?"). However, there were a few missed opportunities to use visual supports to help pupils identify emotions. Additionally, when emotions were acknowledged, staff could have offered a choice of regulation strategies rather than suggesting a single option.

Autistic pupils were treated with dignity, status, and respect. Staff provided meaningful, positive feedback to boost confidence and self-esteem. Where good practice was observed, time was taken to reflect on learning using photos and visual supports. Pupils were also supported to understand how their choices might impact others.

Each autistic pupil was engaged in a range of well-organised, motivating activities that they found fun and interesting. Staff demonstrated a detailed understanding of each pupil's interests and motivators, using this knowledge to support the development of key skills through embedded learning opportunities. Pupils were encouraged to stretch and challenge themselves, and child-led learning was clearly embedded.

Learning activities were practical and functional—for example, making food, engaging in messy play followed by tidying up, or learning to swim. Within those activities staff modelled and taught health and safety, such as using tools safely or wearing protective equipment.

All staff demonstrated a thorough understanding of pupils' preferences and needs, seamlessly transitioning between the pupils they supported.

The environment was flexibly maintained and adapted to support autistic pupils' well-being. Learning spaces were quickly transformed between activities with collaborative effort from staff and pupils. Outdoor areas were accessible throughout the day to support regulation.

Addressing the areas of development highlighted elsewhere in this report—such as embedding visual supports, fostering peer interaction, and promoting independence—can significantly enhance the emotional well-being of autistic pupils. These approaches contribute to a more predictable, inclusive, and empowering environment where pupils feel secure, supported, and increasingly confident in themselves.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Survey ratings

Version 1

Number surveyed	Number of responses
4	4

Question	No	Sometimes	Yes
The help I get is good.			4
Staff know what I find hard and what I am good at.			4
Staff ask me how best they can help me.			4
Staff help me to do things in my life that I want to do			4

Who filled in the form?	Number
I did by myself.	
I did with support.	1
A friend or family member.	
A member of staff.	3

Version 2

Number surveyed	Number of responses

Question	I do not know	Poor	Ok but could be better.	Good	Excellent
The support I get is:					
Question	I do not know	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Staff understand my skills, challenges and what my autism means to me.					
Staff ask me about how best to support me and act on what I tell them.					
Staff help me do things that I enjoy doing and that are important to me.					
Staff help me to set and achieve important goals in my life.					





Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Comments included in surveys:

No comments were left

Additional relevant information:

Staff interviews demonstrate that autistic pupils are actively supported to engage in decisions about how they are supported, the activities they participate in, and the goals they work towards, in ways that are appropriate to their age and capacity. The school has developed a continuum of decision-making tools to gather pupils' views throughout their journey at the school.

The vast majority of pupils have severe learning disabilities and use few or no spoken words. They are supported through visual communication aids to make choices and express themselves. Photographic evidence is used to capture pupils' preferences and engagement, which is then shared with families. Older pupils are supported to create their "Preparing for Adulthood" folders, which showcase the things they enjoy and are able to do, to help them when they are transitioning into college and adult services.

The school council has contributed to the design of the sensory garden and participates in council meetings and joint activities with other local partnership schools.

Currently, the school felt only a small cohort of pupils were able to provide feedback through surveys. Among those who can, responses indicate that they are happy with the support they receive and with staff understanding of their skills and needs.

The school could further explore ways to capture pupil voice using its bespoke communication tools already in use.





Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Survey ratings

Number surveyed	Number of responses
78	33

Question	Poor	Ok but could be better.	Mostly good	Always good
The support my relative is given is...			4	29
The understanding that staff have for my relatives autistic needs is...			7	26
The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...		1	5	27
The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...		1	5	27





Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Comments included in surveys:

- The school and all the staff are incredible and I could not be happier that my child attends this amazing school
- Can not fault the care and support my son gets at Lakeside. They know and read him so well and they are always willing to support at home too. Thank you x
- Absolutely excellent school. Best choice we could have made.
- I am very happy with the support my child and my family receive from the school.
- Over the last two academic years, Lakeside School has been a transformative environment for our son A. The care, respect, and professionalism shown by the staff have had a profoundly positive impact on him and on us as a family. For the first time, we have teachers and teaching assistants who truly appreciate and respect not just our family, but more importantly, A. himself. his class teachers, along with all the teaching assistants, have been outstanding. They communicate clearly, show genuine empathy, and treat our son with such warmth that we as a family have come to see them as his elder sisters. A. is non-verbal, but the bond they have formed with him is unmistakable and that speaks volumes.
- The wider teaching support team have also been brilliant, offering steady, compassionate care that allows A to feel safe, included, and valued every day. We especially appreciate the Head and Deputy Head who are honest, open, and approachable, qualities that are too often missing in leadership. the front desk consistently greet A. with kindness and understanding, setting a calm and respectful tone from the moment he arrives. B, who also supports the front office (despite his unfortunate loyalty to Manchester United), contributes to a great camaraderie that helps make the school atmosphere feel safe, positive, and genuinely welcoming.

Additional relevant information:

In interviews, staff describe how families and carers are actively supported and involved. The school has a dedicated Family Support Worker who maintains regular contact with families, assists with referrals and form completion, and helps address any issues that may arise. They also work closely with the Mental Health Support Team, flagging concerns and making referrals where appropriate.

The school offers workshops in response to recurring themes, such as managing behaviour in the home. A range of social events—including BBQs, Christmas class gatherings, social evenings, and coffee mornings—help families connect and foster a sense of community. The Family Support Team has also supported parents in setting up class WhatsApp groups to enhance peer support.

Home-school communication is well established through daily updates in home-school books, and teachers regularly share photos of pupil engagement via the Marvellous Me app.

Feedback from four families gathered via phone interviews was overwhelmingly positive. Parents described the school team as approachable, knowledgeable, and helpful. They felt their children were well supported through bespoke, individualised approaches. All families reported feeling listened to and said the team worked collaboratively with them on support, advice, and goal setting. One parent commented, "I could not fault them, I am over the moon with them."

Survey responses from 33 families echoed this sentiment. All respondents reported being very happy with the support their relative receives and with staff's understanding of their relative's skills and interests. One family noted that communication and advice were "okay, but could be better," though no further detail was provided. The school may wish to explore this further through its existing feedback mechanisms.





Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Topic	What the provision does particularly well:	What the provision could develop further:
<p>Social communication, interaction and relationships:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dedicated CPD for Teaching Assistants: Weekly training covers a wide range of relevant topics including SCERTS, and engagement strategies. •Child-Led Learning is embedded. Lesson content is informed by pupils’ preferences and motivators, incidental teaching moments are used well •Consistent calm and adapted communication, intensive interaction. •All staff were highly attentive to all pupils communication attempts. •Pupils were given time to process, reflect, and revise their responses, supported by bespoke communication tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Visual supports were available in all observed lessons, although they were not actively used or referred to on a few occasions. •While peer interaction support was observed in about half the sessions, the school recognises the need to further develop group dynamics and cohesion. Recent Attention Autism training may support this aim. Positive examples of social interaction were noted, and there is potential to expand these opportunities across the school day.
<p>Functional skills and self-Reliance:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Embedded Child led learning, hiding learning and using motivating activities to creating incidental teaching moments. •“Tasks I like” as well as “New Tasks I have discovered I Like this term” •Detailed processes to track progress and engagement, photos of this are shared regularly with families •All pupils were observed using a “now and next” visual schedule, which they carried with them and where regularly referred to, •Pupils were consistently making choices through a range of support tools Learning was designed to be practical, functional and motivating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There were some instances where in task schedules were available and used well, particularly when staff referred pupils to check their schedules to figure out the next step, but there were also a few missed opportunities where these were available but not in reach of the pupils or not referred to during learning. •Staff were often readily available to assist, which sometimes limited pupils’ chances to self-occupy, which the school has identified and has begun working on with the team, or engage in activities independently.
<p>Sensory experiences:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Multi-sensory learning was evident across all lessons. Well-organised, engaging sensory resources encouraged pupil-led exploration. Pupils freely engaged with a variety of materials, including tasting items, without judgement. This supported positive exposure to sensory experiences they might otherwise avoid. •A wide range of sensory regulation supports were in use. Staff consistently used low-volume voices, with some whispering to reduce noise. Interactions were entirely pupil-focused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Autistic pupils were supported in regulating sensory input that might interfere with their learning or cause discomfort. This support was primarily initiated by staff, who offered sensory breaks, alternative seating, or ear defenders. There is an opportunity to further develop this practice by introducing scripts or prompts that help pupils recognise and express how they are feeling, and offering sensory regulation choices to support the development of self-regulation skills. •Agreeing with school to clarify and specify sensory likes, triggers and support needs in pen picture, summarizing key detail from behaviour support plans.
<p>Emotional wellbeing:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Highly personalised, proactive strategies are in place, including child-led learning, embedding learning in motivating activities, and offering structure and choice. The team has worked extensively on understanding low-level behaviours and their functions for each pupil, enabling timely, preventative responses that reduce anxiety, confusion, or distress. •Staff show strong knowledge of individual motivators and use these to support skill development through hidden learning, encouraging stretch and challenge. Staff were able to switch seamlessly between pupils they were supporting and were attuned to pupils needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Autistic pupils were supported by staff to understand and regulate their emotions, but this was only observed in some of the afternoon observations where staff were seen to identify an emotion that a pupil was displaying and where appropriate recommending strategies to help them regulate. “I can see you are getting excited, do you need to go out for a run”. There were a few missed opportunities to refer to visuals to help identify emotions, or where staff did acknowledge emotions staff could have offered choices of what would help pupils to regulate, rather than suggestion one regulation option.



Assessment findings - completed by the Assessor

Topic	What the provision does particularly well	What the provision could develop further
<p>Consultation with Autistic People:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The school has developed a continuum of decision-making tools to gather pupils’ views throughout their journey at the school. •Older pupils are supported to create their “Preparing for Adulthood” folders, which showcase the things they enjoy and are able to do, to help them when they are transitioning into college and adult services. 	<p>The school could explore ways to capture pupil voice further, using their bespoke communication tools.</p>
<p>Consultation with the Families, Carers and/ or Advocates of Autistic People:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home–school communication is well established through daily updates in home–school books, and teachers regularly share photos of pupil engagement via the Marvellous Me app. •The school has a dedicated Family Support Worker who maintains regular contact with families, •The school offers workshops in response to recurring themes, such as managing behaviour in the home. A range of social events help families connect and foster a sense of community. •Feedback from families was overwhelmingly positive. 	
<p>Other areas:</p>		<p>Be mindful of using neuroaffirmative language for example “this pupil is unable to speak or communicate” but can use “visual support, photo symbols, OOR” or challenge me “to make eye contact when requestion or trying to communicate”</p>





SECTION Five

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





SECTION Five

Committee outcome

What happens at the end of the assessment?

At the end of the assessment, the consultant will arrange a meeting to give you verbal feedback.

The consultant will feedback on what the service does well and what it could consider developing further. The consultant will also summarise findings from the surveys.

The consultant cannot comment on whether you have met the criteria for Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced status as this is not their decision.

The consultant will complete an Assessment report which will be submitted to the Accreditation Awards committee.

Within a month of the completion of the assessment you will be informed by email of the Committee decision- whether you have been awarded Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced. This will be based on our award criteria.



SECTION Five

Committee decision and next steps -
Completed by the quality manager on behalf of the committee

Committee decision:

Advanced

Date of committee decision:

04/07/2025

Comment:

The Autism Accreditation Committee has carefully reviewed the report regarding Lakeside School to determine whether the school continues to meet the standards required for reassessment at the advanced level.

The school meets advanced criteria across several key areas, demonstrating a deeply embedded, evidence-informed approach to supporting autistic pupils. Ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) equips staff with expertise in frameworks such as SCERTS and engagement strategies. Child-led learning is a notable strength, with lessons shaped around pupil interests and motivating experiences. Personalised visual supports, calm and attuned communication, and approaches like Intensive Interaction contribute to high levels of autonomy, engagement, and emotional well-being. Multisensory learning is effectively woven throughout the curriculum, supported by a wide range of regulation strategies. Case studies reinforce this strong practice, illustrating initiatives that enhance social communication, independence, and quality of life. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive.

However, the Committee has identified some inconsistencies and gaps in practice that fall short of the standards expected at the advanced level. Thank you, Stephen. Here's a concise, paragraph-based summary of the school's areas for development, drawing together the key themes for clarity and practical planning:

While visual supports were present in all lessons, their use was not always consistent or accessible. Strengthening staff understanding of when and how to use these tools—with clear expectations across settings—would enhance communication and learning structure for all pupils. Similarly, peer interaction opportunities were limited in scope. With the school's renewed focus on group dynamics, there is scope to embed structured social experiences more widely throughout the day, supported by recent Attention Autism training.

The use of in-task schedules showed promising impact where implemented well, but inconsistencies in accessibility and use suggest a need to embed more systematic routines. Staff attentiveness was a clear strength, though in some cases this inadvertently limited opportunities for pupils to self-direct their learning or independently explore tasks. Continued reflection on "when to step in and when to hold back" could help balance support and independence more effectively.

Sensory regulation strategies were thoughtful and readily available, though primarily adult-initiated. Extending these by introducing co-produced scripts or visual tools could enable pupils to begin recognising and articulating their own regulation needs—laying the groundwork for self-regulation. Emotional support, while evident in some sessions, varied in delivery. Increasing the consistent use of visuals and offering personalised regulation options would foster pupils' autonomy in managing emotional states.

Finally, while sensory needs are recorded in individual behaviour plans, there is inconsistency in how this information is summarised in accessible formats such as the Pen Picture. Consolidating key sensory preferences, triggers, and strategies into a single, co-produced summary would support clarity and application across all environments.

The Committee has determined that an advanced award will be granted in recognition of the overall maintenance of high-quality practice across the school. However, this award is based on the clear expectation that the school will fully address the inconsistencies highlighted in this report. Should these issues remain unaddressed by the time of the next assessment, the school should expect that it will not maintain its advanced award.

SECTION Five

Next Steps



Maintaining and progression

Once you have agreed terms and conditions you can expect to receive your certificate and logo. You can continue with your current Autism Accreditation plan or amend it by increasing or reducing the number of consultation visits.

Please contact your consultant to discuss your options.

You will also be asked to complete an online survey about your experience of the process. Your feedback is very important to us so please take the time to complete it.

You can expect to receive a final version of your assessment report and the date and level achieved will be published in our directory. We do not publish the assessment report but you are welcome to share or publish it if you want to. You may wish to share or publish a sample of the report, rather than the full manuscript. We are happy for you to do so but request that this is done in a way which does not misrepresent our findings, for example by only publishing what we found that you do well without acknowledging that we may also identified some areas of development. If you are not sure what would be acceptable please feel free to ask.

We recommend that you undergo another assessment in three years' time to show that you have maintained standards or progressed to a level where you can be given a higher Award. You can request an earlier reassessment if you don't want to wait this long.





SECTION Five

Committee outcomes

Applying for Beacon Status

If you have achieved an Advanced Award you can now apply for Beacon Status. This is awarded to provisions which in addition to providing consistent high quality support to autistic people, share their knowledge and understanding of good practice with families, external professionals and the local community.

Application forms can be obtained from your consultant and should be returned to the Autism Accreditation Quality Manager at

Stephen.dedridge@nas.org.uk.

The Panel can award Beacon status if the application form provides clear evidence that the provision carries out exceptional work that has had a significant impact on how:

- Families understand and support relatives who are autistic.
- Other professionals understand and work with autistic people, including helping them to appreciate the personal experiences of autistic people.
- The local community or members of the public understand and work with autistic people; autistic people are socially included within their community.
- The provision contributes to developing knowledge and understanding of autism, for example by contributing to research.

The application form should also explain how the provision works in partnership with autistic people. Beacon status will be withheld if the provision requires improvement in meeting statutory requirements.



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.