



The Autism and Social Communication Friendly School package consists of an audit, consultation and development process around autism and social communication good practice. The tool was developed using existing national benchmarks of good practice in addition to the recommendations and guidance developed by the team.

Through this process SENCOs and Senior Leaders will work with the Autism Spectrum Team to identify 'what good looks like', celebrate successes in this area and identify necessary developments within the six month time-frame of the package and longer term. The aim of the package is to improve the experience, attendance and attainment of pupils with an Autism Spectrum Condition or social communication difficulties.

Nancealverne School has now completed the Autism and Social Communication Friendly Schools Audit in partnership with the Autism Team.

Following 4 meetings with an Autism Spectrum Team Advisor and 3 training sessions on whole school INSET days, delivered by the Advisor, the school has evidenced their practice in all 8 areas of the Audit.

The school has demonstrated good practice in autism provision. The school has created an electronic folder of evidence showing clearly how the standards have been met. The Advisor was also taken on a tour of the school by two students and the Autism Champion, that demonstrated how the school environment is used to support young people with autism and social communication difficulties.



This workstation supports a TEACCH style system of structuring learning that enables a young person with autism to be able to work with increasing independence. The new tasks are set up on the left of the desk, the work is done in the middle and the finished work placed in the 'finish box' on the right.



This resource centre is an example of how staff ensure that pictures are selected and used that are the appropriate visual stage of representation. Some young people need an object of reference; some children are at the next stage of using photographs and others are able to understand a symbol that represents an activity.

Areas of existing good practice:

The Audit Tool addresses eight areas of practice. To achieve 'Autism and Social Communication Friendly' status in any one area, the school must evidence at least half of the elements of that area as Green (fully evidenced) and no more than two standards as Red (little/no evidence).

At visit 3, the Advisor was able to see evidence of good practice that already met the required standards at the highest level, **Green** in 6 out of the 8 standards areas, as follows:

Statutory Requirements, Policies and Continuous Professional Development

- School has a named lead person for ASD / SCD trained externally, who has non-contact time weekly and is single point of contact for families of students with ASC / SCD. (Baseline rating of **green**)

Advocacy

- A member of staff knows about appropriate strategies to elicit perspective of the pupil. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Pupils are included in meetings e.g. annual review or other reviews. Contributions by pupil are given in writing, drawing, pictures, in person or by direct advocate. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Pupils are given appropriate preparation for meetings and reviews to aid their involvement including appropriate visual tools and explanations (Baseline rating of **green**)

Meeting Individual Needs

- Staff use knowledge of student to understand, prevent and de-escalate actions that harm themselves or others. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Staff know the increased risk of comorbidities e.g. dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD, and recognise signs of conditions that may need further investigation/referral. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Consideration of non-curricular differentiation strategies e.g. provision during unstructured times (Baseline rating of **green**)

Transitions

- SENCo or other relevant staff member attends annual reviews or transition meetings or transition workshops for those entering or leaving the school. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- SENCo or other relevant staff member gather (and pass on) information to and from other agencies and settings. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Enhanced transition package is in place for new transitions and those leaving including class to class. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- In liaison with other settings, pupil and family a pupil profile is created for transition. (Baseline rating of **green**)

Curriculum

- Demonstrates equality of access to range of play and leisure activities including trips, extended curriculum and celebrations. (Baseline rating of **green**)

Environments

- Spaces are available and accessible for pupils where they may go during unstructured times including break etc (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Access for pupils to quieter work study areas both in class out of class and in other areas of the school. (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Visuals are used in class to structure tasks, spaces and plans etc (Baseline rating of **green**)
- Students are supported moving around the school either by adult or with appropriate visuals, including changes to timings etc (Baseline rating of **green**)

Only the areas relating to Relationships and Sensory Needs required more evidence to demonstrate that the standards had been met.

It is worth mentioning that in the standards area relating to 'Environment', there were no 'R' ratings at all. All evidence demonstrated green and amber ratings before further development commenced.

Prior to the start of this initiative, the school's commitment to meeting the needs of students with an autism spectrum condition and/or a social communication difficulty was evident. Nancealverne School already had an Autism Champion, trained and mentored by an Autism Spectrum Advisor from Cornwall Council's Autism Spectrum Team. They also took advantage of the free casework offer for special schools in addition to buying in additional services for students and commissioning training.

Areas identified for improvement (Baseline 'Red'):

Statutory Requirements, Policies and Continuous Professional Development

- E-Safety Policy specifically identifies needs and vulnerabilities of ASD / SCD students (Final rating of Amber)
- All staff (including office, premises, lunch, after-school, drivers, pastoral and SMT) attend regular ASC / SCD training every 3 years. (Final rating of Green)

Advocacy

- Process in place for pupils to share own concerns with staff. Where pupils are not confident to engage staff are able to engage then using appropriate tools and strategies (Final rating of Amber)

Meeting Individual Needs

- Students are asked about their strengths, interests, ambitions and well-being and this information informs lesson planning. (Final rating of Amber)
- Staff recognise the increased vulnerability to bullying, including cyber-bullying and there is clear system for identifying and addressing. (Final rating of Amber)

Relationships

- Designated member of staff to ensure communication between staff, pupil and family is positive. (Final rating of Green)
- Consistent use of appropriate interaction skills are used by staff with students on the spectrum. (Final rating of Green)
- Staff understand that ASD / SCD students are at high risk of stress, anxiety and depression and know how to recognise the signs. (Final rating of Amber)

Transitions

- Follow up after transition is in place including meetings or discussions with pupil and family and staff. (Final rating of **Green**)

Curriculum

- Student supported to generalise skills and knowledge between different contexts. (Final rating of **Amber**)
- Reasonable adaptation made to address difficulties with homework and exams (Final rating of **Amber**)

Sensory Needs

- Clear systems in place for implementation and communication of personalised provision. (Final rating of **Green**)
- Staff understand that sensory processing difficulties can cause behaviours that challenge staff, and behaviour policies and procedures allow for personalised response. (Final rating of **Amber**)
- SENCo and relevant staff attend training and disseminate to all staff. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Referrals made to Occupational Therapy where pupil meets current criteria for involvement. OT advice is implemented and shared with relevant staff. (Final rating of **Amber**)

At visit 4, in October 2020, the Autism Champion, Ms Natasha Stone, was able to show me evidence that all of the above standards had now been met, achieving either an A (**amber** / good) or G (**green** / excellent) rating.

Additional areas for improvement that the school chose to undertake (where baseline was **Amber**):

Statutory Requirements, Policies and Continuous Professional Development

- Teachers and other staff follow professionals' recommendations. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- SENCo / ASC Lead accesses ongoing relevant CPD opportunities. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Advocacy

- Pupil perspectives are considered when developing and differentiating the curriculum plans and other school activities. (Final rating of **Green**.)

- Communication methods are used appropriate to the pupil to elicit perspective across the school, including in lessons and at other times of the day by all relevant staff. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Curriculum includes a focus on developing the pupils' skills for sharing their own needs;-developing independence for future self- advocacy. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Meeting Individual Needs

- Students are supported to manage their emotional needs. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Relationships

- Channel of communication is open for pupil, staff and parent. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Transitioning or new pupils are able to meet with members of staff to begin to build relationships and a process is in place to maintain relations. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Social Skills development programme in place within the school to support development of age appropriate social skills including moving on to post-16 setting if appropriate. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Behaviour policy is positive, pupils are praised for what they do well and encouraged through motivation. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Transitions

- Year 9 \ 10 transition meetings held to consider next steps and ensure support in place for transition. Including other relevant agencies, EPs, CSW, AST etc (Final rating of **Green**.)

Curriculum

- Curriculum is personalised to address individual learning needs, including preferred learning styles. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Curriculum meets needs of learner re: social understanding, emotional well-being, communication, life skills and sensory issues. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Student is provided with alternative recording methods E.g. regular use of laptop, where appropriate or iPad access. Also, voice recognition software, touch typing skills are taught where appropriate. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Sensory Needs

- Sensory checklist for individual completed and regularly updated. Appropriate provision is in place. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Good understanding of factors that affect sensory regulation E.g. anxiety/ illness /seasonal (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Staff understand when and how to reduce sensory input and when and how to increase sensory input as appropriate. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Environments

- Areas of school are clearly defined and structured. (Final rating of **Green**.)
- Spaces are identified where pupils can go to de-stress / access emotional support and students are aware how to access them. (Final rating of **Green**.)

Examples of developments undertaken during the process:



The school was able to provide extremely strong evidence of how staff follow professionals' recommendations such as those offered by Occupational Therapists. During the consultation process, it was clear to see how these increasingly translated into personalised provision for children on a daily basis.

Pupils are supported to use communication methods appropriate to their developmental level and visual stage of representation. The school's advocacy strategies have been developed to elicit pupil perspectives, preferences and concerns, including a suggestions box. Pupil's strengths and interests support curriculum planning and are used as motivators and choices.



At Nancealverne School, there are a number of students who need an extremely high degree of

personalisation. This includes the need for very flexible and responsive provision in order for pupils to feel emotionally safe enough to be able to participate at all. I was able to see case study evidence of how bespoke planning, strong partnerships with parents and safe relationships with key staff underpin student progress. The school proactively consults with professionals and commissions training in order to develop provision for these young people, for example because they have emotionally-based school avoidance. The school again used INSET day time for training from the Autism Spectrum Team this year.



Relationships between staff and students are extremely positive and make a huge contribution to participation and progress. Over time, evidence was provided that demonstrated the positive impact of the relationship focus of the Behaviour Policy, the way staff build relationships with new students and how staff model appropriate interaction skills.

Nancealverne school staff increasingly recognise the importance of creating sensory regulation opportunities for their pupils. An example of this is the sensory garden. There are many other examples of where staff consider sensory processing needs both during learning and as a break between learning sessions.





Nancealverne provides a high level of appropriate provision for its students with a diagnosis of autism and social communication difficulties. The whole school environment supports participation and celebrates students' achievements.

Curriculum planning takes into account, the need for kinaesthetic and concrete concept learning. There is also careful consideration given to the balance of demands so that the level of social demand is appropriate for learners as well as the cognitive demand.



Future development plans:

The school is commissioning 'traded' work from the Autism Spectrum Team for a piece of casework for a young woman with a diagnosis of autism who presents with demand avoidant traits. The work will further add to staff knowledge about girls on the spectrum and strategies for supporting students who are demand avoidant (the foci of two of the INSET sessions in September 2020). This work will include collaborative curriculum target-setting and planning for a specific student but may lead to generalisation of these approaches across the school, where relevant.

The school continues to invest in the role of Autism Champion, who continues to have regular mentoring and consultation time with the Autism Spectrum Advisor.

Autism Advisor: Sarah Foden

Signed: