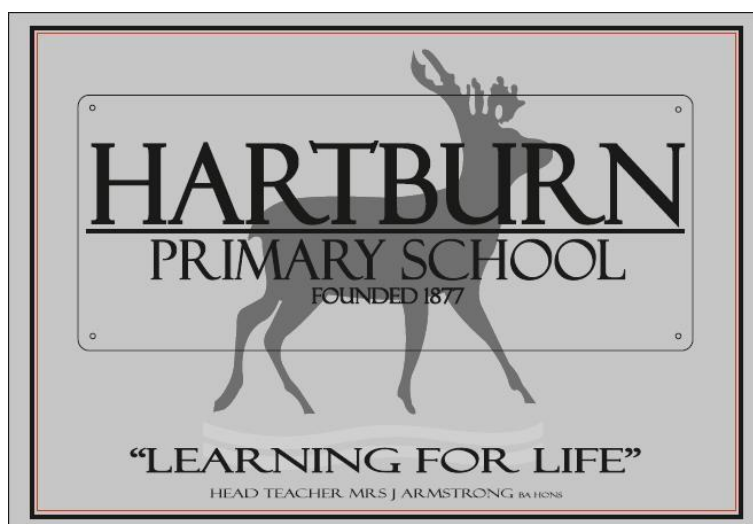


# Autism Policy



Head of School	Mrs. C. Park
SENCo	Mrs. L. Goodwin
Designated Governor for SEND	Mrs. K. Steven

School staff were consulted on this document and it was accepted	March 2021
Approved and ratified by the Governing Body	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
The policy will be reviewed	January 2022

## 1. THE PROVISION

## 2. RATIONALE

Impairment in social relationships/skills/interaction:

Impaired Imagination:

Communication and Language.

## 3. INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF PUPILS WITH ASD

## 4. COMMUNICATION

## 5. APPROACHES TO TEACHING PUPILS WITH ASD

## 6. SENSORY ISSUES

## 7. TRAINING

## 8. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

## 9. MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

## 1. The Provision

Pupils with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are included in every class throughout the school. The primary characteristics of ASD are as follows:

Difficulties in:

- non-verbal and verbal communication
- social understanding and social behaviour
- thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought)
- sensory perception and responses.

Pupils with ASD can be affected by sensitivity to sound, touch and/or visual stimuli. Reference to 'a spectrum' of difficulties is made because there is a wide variation of difficulties and needs within the Disorder and, as a child grows and develops, these may change. The pupils with ASD are supported by staff members who have specific training in aspects of Autism. In Addition, many members of staff have received basic training in supporting pupils with ASD so awareness is spread across the school. Structure, visual support and individualised strategies appropriate for each individual are provided to aid a pupil's access to the curriculum.

## 2. Rationale

Autism Spectrum Disorder affects communication, social understanding, and flexibility in thinking and behaviour. This is known commonly as the 'Triad of Impairments' In addition to this, there is often a strong tendency towards repetitive behaviour. All of which can result in unusual behaviour.

a) Impairment in social relationships/skills/interaction:

- lack of understanding others feelings & emotions
- very poor at interpreting other people's facial expressions and body language
- individuals may appear aloof, stilted, rude, aggressive, forthright, shy, thoughtless, immature &/or act inappropriately in social interaction situations and consequently fail to form 'real' lasting friendships

b) Impaired Imagination: is an inability to imagine things, which have not already been experienced, for example:

- New or different situations can be unimaginable and therefore perhaps frightening.
- Changes in routine are frightening / disorientating without the ability to imagine an alternative order of events.
- Do not realise/comprehend other people's mental states are different from their own. An autistic person may not appreciate that other people have their own thoughts, perspectives, plans etc.
- Have difficulties with generalisations.

c) Communication and Language: Autistic people have trouble with expressing and projecting themselves and difficulty understanding all levels of communication, which may manifest as:

- A literal understanding of language. 'Pictorial language' can be nonsensical. For example, it's raining cats and dogs, we're going 'down' the road to the shops, get your skates on or we'll be late etc.
- "Don't do that". An autistic person may not know what the word 'that' is referring to.
- People with autism have the same emotions as everybody else - but may not express them in a way that is easily understood, partly because they may fail to realize that language is one way of doing this.
- They may talk to somebody without taking any notice of that person.
- In order to ensure that pupils on the autistic spectrum are able to access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered to pupils throughout our school their additional difficulties and characteristics are taken into account in all aspects of their school life, including the school environment, planning, teaching and learning objectives. The emphasis is on communication, social interaction, and the independence and emotional wellbeing of the individual pupil.

### 3. Individual Needs of Pupils with ASD

As with all SEN pupils at Hartburn Primary, those on the spectrum have a SEN Support Plan in place, which will reflect their personal needs against Wing's Triad of Impairments (Wing & Gould 1979) SEN Support Plans are reviewed termly, or sooner if necessary.

### 4. Communication

Communication is fundamental to learning and therefore seen as a key area of development for all pupils. The school approaches this by providing a 'total communication environment', using sign-supported speech and symbols, as well as photographs and objects of reference if necessary, to provide clear and reinforced communication. Staff will encourage turn taking exchanges within group situations. Individual communication books may be developed alongside the visual timetables to aid the pupil's communicative intent where necessary. The Speech and Language Therapists will support the individual, along with the teachers and teaching assistants.

### 5. Approaches to Teaching Pupils with ASD

A visually intensive approach, based on the TEACCH Approach (See end of policy) is used to ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them, and to enable them to anticipate what comes next. This involves the use of visual timetables, and a structured environment plus consistency of approach. Where necessary there are direct 1-1 teaching times for the learning of new skills, as well as times when pupils are encouraged to work independently, or in a group with adult guidance. Regular physical exercise is encouraged into the timetable to develop gross motor skills and to help channel any excess energy that may cause anxiety. Life skills are an important part of the pupils' programmes. Social Stories (Gray 1997) are sometimes used to aid the understanding of the feelings of others and the consequences of actions.

## 6. Sensory Issues

Some pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder have specific sensory difficulties that can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of one or more of the following: sound, sense, touch, sight and smell. They may become upset, distracted or react in an aggressive manner due to the discomfort or pain they feel. We therefore try to reduce environmental anxiety and distress by providing the following:

- An environment which is calm and comfortable with few distractions
- An environment with clear structures and routines
- The knowledge that they can ask for help and it will be provided
- Specific sensory support to match their needs, to help them learn

## 7. Training

In-service training and advice on ASD for members of the school staff is available from the SENCo and external ASD specialists. Training will provide an overview of effective strategies, new resources and published approaches, such as TEACCH

## 8. Partnership with Parents

Parents are regarded as essential partners in helping their children to learn. A meeting with their child's class teacher and or SENCo, to discuss their child's SEN Support Plan - including targets, is offered every term.

## 9. Management and Monitoring

Provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum is regularly monitored and evaluated by the SENCo and Phase Leaders, as part of the school's self-evaluation process. Extra input, including training and support for class teachers is available from the advisor. This will be organised by the SENCo

## 10. Pupils with ASD in Key Stage 2

Some older pupils with ASD may still need to be in receipt of specialised support. This will be regularly reviewed by the class teacher, SENCo and Phase leader. The intention is to gradually reduce a pupil's reliance on extra support in order to enable the child to become an independent learner. Strategies to assist teachers, other staff and pupils to cope with the idiosyncratic behaviours that may affect the class as a whole, can be discussed with the SENCo.

## TEACCH values

**Teaching** – sharing autism knowledge and increasing the skill level of professionals and practitioners.

**Expanding** – increasing own knowledge to provide high-quality services to people on the autism spectrum and their families.

**Appreciating** – appreciating the strengths and uniqueness of autistic culture.

**Collaborating and Cooperating** with colleagues, other professionals, people on the autism spectrum and their families.

**Holistic** – adopting a holistic approach, looking at the person, their family and community