



Autism Accreditation Assessment

Tettenhall Wood School

About this Assessment

This report states key findings on how well autistic individuals are supported according to our framework of good autism practice. Evidence has been primarily obtained from observation, supplemented by evidence from interviews, a sample of support plans and information provided by the provision. If opportunities to observe has been problematic or limited greater weighting has been given to other sources of evidence.

Where appropriate, feedback has been obtained from autistic people supported by the service and/or family members and this feedback has been taken into account in findings.

Findings from the Assessment

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school have a communication team who work across school alongside class teams to explore the communication needs of learners. The team meet bi-weekly to discuss any new referrals and strategically plan support and interventions around previously identified learners.

The school have a three-tiered system which allows staff to understand the supports and interventions which are in place for learners. Learners can be referred to the communication team if class staff have identified a new or additional need. The team

then work alongside the class team to identify key needs, implement interventions and if necessary make an additional referral to the SALT.

When joining the school staff attend training to support them to understand the communication supports and approaches which are implemented across school. The school have two Makaton trainers who deliver Makaton training to staff, pupils and parents. In interviews, staff discussed how Makaton topic books have been created by the Makaton trainers which are used to ensure staff have access to the key Makaton signs specific to each topic.

Parents are also regularly invited in to school to workshops to support them to understand the key methods and approaches used across school. During interviews parents highlighted these sessions as being essential in supporting them to implement the approaches at home.

Profiles, Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBS) identify how each learner prefers to communicate and what motivates them to socially interact with others. These documents also identify challenges or barriers each autistic person may experience in social communication and interaction alongside short- and long-term targets which reflect learners EHCPs.

One-page profiles, PBS plans and PLPs identify what approaches or tools should be employed to enable learners to understand others and express themselves, including learners' preferred communication method and where appropriate Blank Level.

Plans reviewed provide evidence of positive outcomes achieved by each learner in their communication and social engagement. In interviews, staff and parents gave examples of how autistic people have been supported in their communication and social engagement and the positive outcomes achieved as a result. Staff also discussed the creation of grab bags, related to specific activities or areas, which include learners' key communication tools alongside their steps towards communication targets, enabling staff to facilitate the generalisation of skills.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Within all observations, staff made themselves understood by using a range of strategies including visual cues, objects of reference and by simplifying and structuring verbal language. Staff are highly skilled communicators and were observed using a number of communication methods simultaneously to reinforce communication or requests. Where good practice was observed, staff effectively used Makaton when communicating to the whole class or individual learners, reinforcing or in some cases replacing verbal communication. Where practice could be further developed, in a small number of observations, staff should consider reducing the amount of spoken language when giving instructions and ensure that learners are given adequate processing time before repeating the instruction or offering additional prompts.

Within all observations, learners were able to make themselves understood by having access to a range of communication supports, AAC devices and communication tools. In all observations, learners had access to visual supports, sentence strips or communication boards to support them in their expressive communication. The school's environment is filled with a large number of communication devices and visual strategies, and although in some classes learners were observed to actively and spontaneously interact with these devices, in a small number of observations staff should review the number of devices on display to learners. The school may consider introducing more core vocabulary communication boards enabling learners to access relevant core vocabulary associated to specific tasks or areas of the classroom.

Within all observations, learners were provided with opportunity and purpose to communicate as part of a group or 1:1 with staff and their peers. Learners across school were seen to be provided with both planned and unplanned times for them to communicate with peers 1:1 or as part of a group in lessons and during play.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

'Progress towards outcomes meetings' are hosted each term by SLT and provide staff with an opportunity to reflect on documentation, ongoing outcomes and work collaboratively to strategically plan support. The school regularly analyse data to identify patterns or trends and the information gathered enables staff to be reflective practitioners, informing the strategic planning of whole school, class and individual training.

The school's PSHE framework aims to support personal development across school. The well-planned sequential curriculum focuses on providing learners with opportunities to develop skills and understanding in 6 key areas; self-awareness, self-care, support and safety, managing feelings, changing and growing, healthy lifestyles and the world I live in. Throughout the framework there is a focus on providing opportunities for learners to encounter new skills and build on existing skills learnt in previous topics or classes.

In post 16 learners work towards a qualification in employability, which builds on skills learnt through the Talentino and Bambino programmes in KS3 and KS4. As part of the employability programme learners have the opportunity to encounter and practice skills essential to independence. The school also have a life skills room where pupils can practise life skills with a variety of supports to promote independence.

The school have an onsite café 'The Tree Room' which is used by learners to practise work ready skills. Learners receive training from Shropshire Coffee to ensure that the skills developed are transferable into the work environment. During interviews staff discussed how the café has been developed to ensure that learners at all different levels can play an active role, with an adapted coffee machine and visual supports developed alongside the more specialised training.

The school host an annual preparation for adulthood event. As part of the event external services are invited into school to meet with learners and their families to support them to make an informed choice about their future.

Family members discussed how staff constantly provide opportunities for learners to work on key life skills and have high expectations of them developing key skills to enable them to be independent. One family member also discussed the importance of the Personal Learning Goals document in supporting parents to understand how to implement strategies into the daily routine at home.

Learner profiles identify approaches and tools which support learners in carrying out activities, transitioning, coping with changes and making choices. Each learner also has a Personal Learning Plan which includes key strategies which should be implemented to support learners in achieving their goals. To further develop practice the school should refine the 'Top Tips about me' profiles, which are displayed in the classrooms, and support staff to reflect on the individual strategies in place, rather than whole school universal approaches.

The PLPs identify positive outcomes achieved by learners in developing functional life skills and becoming more self-reliant and autonomous. During interviews, staff and parents discussed a large number of positive outcomes and progress achieved as a result of strategies implemented by staff in the school. In interviews, staff discussed how they have developed consistent in class-systems which support pupils to follow routines, cope with change and make key decisions. Staff discussed how these strategies are differentiated based on the needs and pathway of learners and targets focus on daily living skills which all aim to improve the quality of life of learners.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

In all observations, learners were able to work out what they must do now and what they are expected to do next through a range of differentiated approaches. Within observations, staff were seen supporting learners with visual prompts, now and next boards, classroom timetables, activity schedules and individual checklists. Where particular good practice was seen, in the majority of observations, learners took ownership of their visual support and used it to transition and be independent when transitioning between activities.

Within all observations, learners were supported to do things by themselves rather than needing to be directed by a member of staff. There are a large number of active supports and

instruction documents located across school which aim to enable learners to be independent. Staff across school effectively used TEACCH based work stations to support learners to access activities and tasks independently. The approach is clearly embedded within these classrooms with learners independently completing tasks before transitioning onto their next activity identified on their individual schedule. Staff also effectively used learners likes and interests as part of tasks and the visual structure to motivate them to engage with activities at their work station.

In all observations, learners were supported to develop skills and confidence in actively expressing their opinion, making and taking decisions. Staff used a range of visual supports, choice boards and communication boards to support learners to express their opinion or make informed choices. Within classes in the learning 4 life and moving on pathway, staff empowered learners to reflect on their own development by using personalised target sheets and supported them to self-assess their own progress. Where additional support was required, staff offered a graduated response to assistance through the use of visual prompts and open questions.

In all observations, learners were provided with opportunities to consolidate and develop functional skills including literacy and numeracy, communication, self-care, work and independent living skills. Where particularly good practice was observed in Fusion class, staff provided opportunities for learners to practise a number of independent living skills, supported by staff and a clear visual structure. Staff within this observation were flexible in their approach and learners were observed practising washing up, vacuuming and preparing food. Staff across school have high expectations of learners and were observed to create and encourage them to practise independence skills during snack, lunch and lesson time.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school have a sensory team who work across school alongside class teams to explore the sensory needs of learners and implement programmes and interventions.

The school have a three-tiered system which allows staff to strategically plan supports and interventions which learners access within school. Learners can be referred to the sensory pastoral team if class staff have identified a new or additional need. The team

then work alongside the class team to identify key needs, implement interventions and if necessary can make an additional referral to an OT.

When joining the school staff attend training to support them to understand sensory supports and approaches which are implemented across school. Staff also attend additional training in rebound therapy and the use of the specialist rooms to ensure that they are used consistently by staff.

During interviews staff discussed a range of sensory interventions which are implemented across school and the positive outcomes achieved for individual learners as a result. Staff also discussed positive outcomes achieved as a result of additional support for families, supporting them to understand the needs of their child and implement sensory activities/tools at home.

One-page profiles and sensory ladders identify sensory experiences which have a positive impact on each autistic person and supports them to feel regulated and in the green zone. The documents are regularly reviewed by class staff alongside the pastoral team to ensure the information is accurate and relevant.

A large number of learners have a sensory ladder document which identifies individual challenges each learner may encounter in regulating sensory experiences link to different arousal levels. The document also supports staff to understand what a specific arousal level may look like and the approaches or tools which should be employed to support the learner to regulate sensory experiences or avoid sensory overload. Learners with a sensory ladder also have a sensory diet which supports staff to implement the sensory interventions and approaches within class and within the specialised sensory spaces.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how they have supported autistic people in their sensory regulation or in avoiding sensory overload and the positive outcomes achieved as a result. Staff particularly referenced the class grab packs which have been developed to ensure that the key information, which is needed to deliver sensory interventions, is easily accessible to the class team when transitioning to sensory spaces.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Careful consideration has been given by staff to the sensory activities and spaces which are available to learners within their classroom to ensure that they have access to

activities which they find enjoyable and support them to feel safe. Within all observations, learners were observed to access sensory tools and regulation activities independently and with staff support. Classrooms are clearly differentiated across school based on the needs of the learners and in some rooms learners have their own individual space with their individualised sensory strategies.

In the majority of observations, classrooms were low arousal and visually structured environments. To further develop practice, in a minority of observations, staff should review the amount of information and visual clutter on display to ensure that there is not too much information for learners to process.

Within all observations staff effectively used specialist sensory spaces/rooms across school as part of the curriculum delivery or regulation. This included planned and reactive opportunities for learners to access outside spaces, sensory rooms, sensory circuits, the sensory gym, swimming pool, immersive classrooms and the gym equipment. Staff adapted these environments by taking individualised sensory tools with learners to the spaces.

Within all observations, learners had the opportunity to encounter a range of new or familiar sensory experiences within a safe and secure context. Where particularly good practice was observed, in around half of the observations, staff planned sensory activities into the lessons in the form of sensory stories, sensory trays, mindfulness and yoga.

Within all observations, learners were supported to regulate sensory experiences which could interfere with what they are trying to do or may cause them discomfort. Learners had access to a range of tools including ear defenders, work stations and low arousal teaching approaches which all supported learners could access to avoid sensory overload. Learners also had access to strategies enabling them to request for time out or request a specific sensory input using choice or communication boards.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school's TWS Sports Podcast is hosted by learners and provides opportunities for learners to practise and develop key skills such as social communication and interaction. Each week learners interview famous sportsmen and women and talk to them about their lives, career, sport, autism and more. During interviews, staff discussed the positive impact of the podcast in supporting learners to develop confidence, self-esteem and communication skills and how it has been nominated for an international sports podcast award in Equality and Social impact.

The schools PBS team work across school and support staff to analyse the needs of learners. If classroom staff have identified a need they can make a referral to the PBS team who work closely with the communication and sensory teams to ensure that there is a collaborative and strategic approach to analyse the needs of pupils.

Motional, an online tool for identifying, assessing, and improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people, is used with learners across school. The snapshot tool supports staff to develop an understanding of each individual and identify individualised programmes of support to enable learners to develop skills in specific areas. Progress is tracked within the programme which informs planning and ongoing support.

Personal Learning Plans are used effectively by staff to inform planning around the key needs of the learners. The school use data effectively to inform practice and staff regularly review progress towards targets using Evidence for Learning. Evidence for Learning, an online record keeping, tracking and assessment programme, is used to collect evidence towards learners' identified targets throughout the year by both staff and families.

PBS Plans, one-page profiles and personal learning plans show an appreciation of activities which each learner finds enjoyable, relaxing or provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose.

PBS Plans identify approaches or activities to help maintain the well-being of each learner including proactive and preventative strategies to support them to avoid anxiety or distress and support emotional regulation.

Learners' personal learning plans identify positive achievements and progress impacting on the quality of life of each learner. The school regularly analyse whole school and individual data to reflect on progress and ensure that it informs future planning.

In interviews, staff gave examples of positive outcomes achieved which related to improved quality of life and life opportunities, including greater inclusion and involvement within the community. The school have developed a collaborative relationship with a local trust consisting of two mainstream schools and a number of learners access the school for inclusion opportunities. One learner, who met with the assessment team during the assessment, discussed positive outcomes achieved as a result of accessing the mainstream provision for drama and PE lessons.

In interviews, staff described how autistic people are actively engaged in determining how they are supported, including what activities they take part in and what goals they are working towards according to what is appropriate for their age and capacity. Learner voice plays a central role in the school's annual review process and during interviews staff discussed how it is collected through adapted sheets, talking mats and video. The school council have recently been gathering feedback from across school through adapted questionnaires to ensure that their decision making is informed by their peers. Feedback from autistic people was obtained from direct interviews with 6 autistic students and by watching pre-recorded videos created by the school council. Feedback was also obtained through 97 survey responses. Feedback from these learners shows that they are happy with the support they receive. Results also show that learners feel staff have a good understanding of their needs and 'listen to me on how I want to be helped'.

In interviews, staff described how family, carers or advocates are supported and involved in key decisions. The school have a family liaison officer who is available to offer ongoing advice and support to parents and parents have a range of mediums which are available to them to communicate with staff in school, including Class Dojo and texts.

Home learning opportunities, identified on learners' personal learning plans, ensure that parents are informed and supported to offer purposeful learning opportunities at home. Staff also shared the positive outcomes achieved as a result of the home learning packs which supported families to facilitate learning opportunities at home through practical activities during the lockdowns.

The school offer a variety of training programmes and coffee mornings to parents. The structure and format of the sessions is led by the needs of parents which is gathered through feedback and questionnaires.

Feedback from family members was obtained from interviews and 96 completed surveys. Feedback shows that families are happy with the support that their relative receives and staff's understanding of their relative's skills and interests. Families who gave feedback in interviews and surveys feel well supported, respected and listened to by the school. During interviews parents particularly highlighted the school's open communication systems as a strength of the school.

When asked for developments parents couldn't think of anything regarding the support their child receives in school but highlighted that they would enjoy more opportunities to return to onsite visits and training with other parents post COVID restrictions.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

During all observations, learners presented as feeling safe and calm. Where learners appeared dysregulated, proactive and preventative strategies are in place to support learners to avoid anxiety, confusion or distress from occurring or escalating.

Specialist rooms including sensory rooms across school were used positively and proactively as low arousal areas for the learners to access during planned and unplanned regulation sessions.

During all observations, learners were treated with dignity, status and respect and were provided with meaningful positive feedback to boost confidence and self-esteem. Staff have clearly developed positive relationships with the learners and learners were proud to discuss their progress and interact with the assessment team around school. One learner particularly discussed the progress he had made in being able to self-regulate with the support from staff and activities around school.

Within all classrooms, learners are supported to understand and regulate their emotions. Each learner has access to an individual or whole class Zones of Regulation check in display which was seen to be differentiated to the needs of the class and pupils. Where best practice was observed staff use the display to model emotions and support learners to independently identify self-regulation activities. Although Zones was used effectively in the majority of observations, during some observations there were missed opportunities for staff to use the programme to support learners in their emotional understanding and self-regulation. The school should continue to review how they are using the programme and continue to support staff to implement it consistently to support self-regulation and emotional understanding.

Within all observations, learners had access to activities which they appeared to enjoy or find fun or interesting. Within a large number of observations activities were based around, or incorporated, the likes of the learners, which was particularly evident in the TEACCH based work stations. Within observations, staff also used learners likes and interests to encourage them to try new things.

Throughout all observations, staff celebrated achievements and success by providing pupils with positive verbal feedback. In some observations, staff also used individual reward charts to celebrate success and achievement and provide pupils with rewards as a result of completing tasks.

Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

- Personal learning plans are detailed and informative documents which support staff to plan personalised learning opportunities with clear personal learning intentions. Home learning opportunities, identified on learners' personal learning plans, ensure that parents are informed and supported to offer purposeful learning opportunities at home.
- There are clear systems in place to ensure that support is strategically planned across school. The school's tiered approach to specialist and pastoral support and the referral processes which are in place ensures that learner's support is strategically planned collaboratively by specialist teams. Staff across school have a good understanding of the referral process and the support pupils receive at each level.
- During all observations autistic people presented as feeling safe, regulated and calm. Where learners appeared dysregulated, proactive and preventative strategies are in place to support learners to avoid anxiety, confusion or distress from occurring or escalating.
- During all observations, learners were treated with dignity, status and respect and were provided with meaningful positive feedback which appeared to boost confidence and self-esteem. Staff and learners have clearly developed positive and purposeful relationships which was evidenced in observations and parent feedback.

What else the provision does well:

- The school demonstrates inclusion by ensuring that all learners are able to contribute and play an active role in making the school a better place for everyone.
- Families who gave feedback in interviews and surveys feel well supported, respected and listened to by the school. During interviews parents particularly highlighted the school's ethos and values as a strength of the school. Parent feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
- The school's TWS Sports Podcast is hosted by learners and provides opportunities for learners to practise and develop key skills such as social communication and interaction. Each week learners interview famous sportsmen and women and talk to them about their lives, career, sport, autism and more. During interviews, staff discussed the positive impact

of the podcast in supporting learners to develop confidence, self-esteem and communication skills.

- The school use data effectively to inform practice and staff regularly review progress towards outcomes using evidence for learning.

- The recently introduced PBS (Positive Behaviour Support) approach places an emphasis on improving quality of life. During interviews, staff discussed positive outcomes achieved as a result of implementing the approach and regularly referenced the importance of improving the quality of life of learners and their families.
- The school have a “Valuable Outreach team” who provide internal and external training, raising standards within Tettenhall Wood School, as well as within the City of Wolverhampton Authority.
- The school have developed positive partnerships with a number of mainstream providers, enabling them to offer additional inclusion opportunities for learners.
- The school regularly analyse data to identify patterns or trends and the information gathered enables staff to be reflective practitioners, informing the strategic planning of whole school, class and individual training.
- The school’s training programme is constantly evolving based on the needs of the staff and learners. New staff to the school feel well supported by the 10 week probation period, their mentors and the structures in place across school.
- Careful consideration has been given by staff to the sensory activities and spaces which are available to learners within their classroom to ensure that they have access to activities which they find enjoyable and support them to feel safe. Staff also effectively used

specialist sensory spaces/rooms across school as part of the curriculum delivery or regulation, which is supported by information within the sensory ladders.

- Grab bags allow staff to deliver interventions outside of the classroom consistently. The bags contain key communication and sensory tools as well as learner's targets to ensure that learning outside the classroom is purposeful.
- Staff are highly skilled communicators and were observed using a number of communication methods simultaneously to reinforce communication or requests. Across all observations, staff effectively used Makaton when communicating to the whole class or individual learners, reinforcing or in some cases replacing verbal communication.

What the provision could develop further

Areas for consideration for the provision in ensuring consistency and quality in supporting autistic people:

- The school should continue to implement the Zones of Regulation programme across school with a focus on supporting staff to actively use the programme as part of curriculum delivery.
- Continue to introduce and embed the school's new PBS plans which are detailed and will support staff to have a greater understanding of learners' needs.
- Continue to refine the 'Top Tips about me' profiles and support staff to reflect on the individual strategies in place, rather than whole school universal approaches.

