

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Breakspeare School

Reference No.	27472
Assessment dates	5 th July – 7 th July 2022
Lead Assessor	Nikki Kennedy
External Moderator	N/A
Status prior to the assessment	Advanced
Advanced status applied for	Yes

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 considered in findings. 2 classes were not observed during this assessment, 1 due to COVID closure and upper phase because they were working on a project off site.

Findings from the Assessment

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

- Pupil profiles identify how a pupil communicate. Plans detail consistently the nuances of a pupil's communication and their abilities to use alternative communication methods.
- Pupil profiles show in a pupil's barriers to learning, the barriers that they have with communication with some strategies in addition to the communication that staff can use.
- Some pupils within the school will have an additional communication passport, these are completed by the NHS Speech and language therapy team.
- Case studies show the positive impact that interventions and support has had for pupils across the school in their communication skills. In one case study it shows how the introduction of and iPad for communication has not only expanded a pupil's vocabulary but also helped in a de-escalation of the pupil's behaviour and reduction of incidents.

- In interviews staff were able to share the impact of the use of Makaton in classes across the school.
- Staff also shared the importance of pupils having individualised communication systems in enabling the pupils to communicate effectively.
- Within SOLAR pupil's progress in communication – listening and speaking is tracked termly, progress is also recorded in their social development.
- Pupils in the upper phase are prepared for adulthood and developing skills of self-advocacy that they will need beyond Breakspeare school.
- 96% surveyed as part of the EHCP progress commented that they had seen significant progress in their child's communication development in the last year.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

- Support for pupil's communication is strong,
- Staff were consistently seen to make themselves understood by providing visual cues for pupils so that they understood directions. This included the use of symbols and Makaton in their communication.
- Staff were consistently seen to simplify their language, the use of Makaton was seen to reduce the verbal language as staff were observed to only mainly the key language that they were able to sign in their communication with pupils, this was not observed on rare occasions. Where best practice was seen in this all staff within the classroom were using Makaton to support their verbal language although where it was not observed to be used by all staff this did not impact on the pupils and their understanding of what was being said.
- PECS was seen to be used in a range of lessons across the school to comment on parts of the lesson. Where best practice was observed pupils were observed to use PECS structures to communicate with peers as part of a lesson.
- Although there were some examples of technology used to support communication, it was felt that greater use of this could have been made across the school. However the impact of limited technology was minimal on the pupils as they were seen to navigate their way through multiple pages of PECS books to find symbols they required.
- During the assessment Breakspeare School were participating in a music projects with a group of secondary mainstream pupils. The pupils worked together to create and perform various pieces of music after 3 days of working together. Mainstream pupils were observed to support the pupils from Breakspeare and communicate with them using symbols provided by Breakspeare staff.
- Pupils were consistently observed to make a choice in their activities through their now and next boards, selecting symbols from a wide choice to participate in a favoured activity.

- Breakspeare School have developed ways to ensure that communication for pupils is encouraged with their peers so that the interactions that they experience is more than with the adults in the classroom. This includes pupils who are using alternative communication systems.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

- Skills of independence are record on a pupil's passport document.
- The use of timetables and now and next are recorded in a pupil's strategies for learning
- Pupils have baseline assessments on their skills of independence with the progress tracked through termly assessment on SOLAR.
- Case studies outline the outcomes and progress that pupils have made in the skills of independence through adapting the support that is provided to pupils.
- In staff recording of lessons they comment on the level of support that has been provided to the pupils for the activities provided. This informs the teachers planning for future lessons.
- In interviews staff discussed the importance of allowing pupils to solve problems for themselves providing support when necessary, but encouraging pupils to learn when they need to ask for help.
- The upper school phase leader discussed the importance of providing pupils with the skills they need in preparation for adulthood. A range of ASDAN and AQA qualifications are completed by pupils in their last two years at school. Pupils will also engage in a wide range of community activities to develop their functional skills and access to a range of leisure facilities.
- Through EHCP surveys 23% of parents commented on the significant progress that their child had made in their skills of independence.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

- Pupils were consistently seen to be able to work out what they must do and what they are expected to do through the use of now and next, for some pupils this was extended to now, next and then. Now and Next folders were observed to travel with the pupils around the school to enable successful transition after activities. These folders were separate to their communication books.
- Pupils were observed to consistently be supported to do things for themselves. Pupils were consistently expected to tidy up after an activity, during one observation pupil were encouraged to help after an activity was completed.

- During one observation pupils were supported in their transition through the use of song, relevant to the activity that was due to be completed next.
- Pupils were consistently seen to be provided with a choice of activities that they wanted to complete once they had finished their learning.
- Activities enabled pupils to solve problems in their learning, making choices about the answers that they provide and where there were multiple activities pupils were sometimes observed to have a choice with regards to the order of the activities that they completed.
- Snack and lunch observations showed the levels of independence that pupils have around food preparation.
- There is clear structure and expectations for pupils in classrooms. Pupils were observed to independently transition within their classrooms and around the school.
- Social stories were observed to be embedded in practice across the school with the principles of social stories being used during one observation to explain the differences and what was happening during the day at school
- Pupils were observed to be encouraged to complete activities independently, putting shoes on to go outside, collecting their own resources and participating in activities within the community.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

- Pupil profiles include an outline to a pupil's sensory difficulties in the barriers to learning, all autistic pupils also have a sensory profile which includes more detailed information about a pupil's sensory needs and their sensory diet.
- Information on their preferred sensory activities is included within the pupil's pupil profile and sensory passport.
- Sensory profiles show the tools which are required to support pupils in their sensory regulation throughout the day.
- Staff were able to share the importance of pupil's sensory regulation to avoid overload and dysregulation.
- Case studies show the impact of accurately meeting the sensory needs of pupils in their engagement within the school. Two pupils have been provided bespoke programmes and support to enable them to regulate effectively. One pupil has as a result of this and other interventions that have been put in place has been able to have some engagement with his peer group for favoured activities.

- Pupils will regularly be challenged to experience new sensory experiences both within the school and the community supported by staff so that they are positive experiences for the pupils.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

- Breakspere has a great amount of outdoor space. The layout of this has been carefully considered which pupil's can access to meet their range of sensory needs.
- Sensory circuits are available for pupils throughout the school day in the school hall. When events are in place staff will utilise different activities within the wider school environment to help meet the pupils needs.
- Pupils have regular access to sensory activities which they find enjoyable or relaxing when they need. Pupils were observed to ask to utilise various environments within the school.
- Classrooms with the more complex autistic pupils include a range of break out spaces which can be accessed from the classroom, including a gym with OT activities within.
- Pupils were seen to regulate their sensory experiences, breakout rooms are available to retreat to for many pupils, a range of low arousal approaches are used and these are developed even further for specific pupils who need to have something more bespoke. Ear defenders are available for pupils who need them.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

- Pupil profiles show what each pupil likes and often includes a wide range of interests for each pupil. They also include preferred activities, where and how these are structured during the day.
- Hertfordshire steps documentation outlines the approaches and activities that help to maintain the well being of pupils. It clearly outlines the proactive and preventative strategies for supporting students, as well as a wide range of analysis tools to support the understanding of the function of behaviour considering a wide range of factors which could impact on a pupil's behaviour.
- Case studies document the achievements and progress that pupils have made and SOLAR shows progress over time that pupils have made across all areas of the school including their skills of independence. ECHP and reviews provide opportunities for families and pupils to comment on progress that has been made over the year.

- Staff shared how community visits are developing again following a break over COVID, with a group of pupils attending a residential trip just before the assessment. Visits to the community are purposeful and provide pupils with the skills that they will need into adulthood.
- Behaviour support tools are comprehensive and enable staff to successfully reflect on new behaviour with a wide range of tools available to them. This is all kept within one place so that staff are able to see the impact and keep all information in one place related to each pupil. This is overseen and supported by a behaviour lead who will regularly support classes in their reflection and debrief.
- Breakspeare have a vast curriculum of enrichment which meets the needs of pupils, through the use of enrichment plans they are documenting and recording the impact that each intervention has on pupil's progress.
- The school have been working on how to obtain meaningful feedback from all the pupils within the school. A pupil survey had been completed and differentiated to meet the needs of the population within the school and had gathered pupils' opinions regarding what they liked and didn't within the school.
- Staff shared how they communicate with families, this is done so regularly with home school books, phone calls and regular meetings. Advice and guidance is provided when requested with resources for families regularly being sent home to support.
- Breakspeare school have access to a family support worker who can provide specific support to families where required. She is also available for coffee mornings and at parents' evenings so that families can ask questions and get any support required.
- Feedback from families has been obtained from surveys, details of which are in the appendix. Further information was provided from the school in surveys which they completed themselves. These showed that 87% of the parents would recommend the school to another parent and that 91% of parents felt the school responds well to any concerns that were raised. However, regular communication was raised as an area that could be improved seeing photos or evidence of what the children have been doing during the day.
- Following EHCP review all parents will complete a survey, 98% of parents stated that the school is meeting the child's needs. The 2% was related to meeting health needs and access to NHS therapies.
- 14% of families felt that their child had made significant progress in adapted behaviour and self-regulation.
- There is a well-being plan in place that supports parents, this includes a wide range of tools for supporting parents. The Deputy Head shared how further engagement of parents is an area for development that has been highlighted

on the SIP for the coming year so that all parents have the opportunity to engage in events and activities run by the school.

- Celebration days and events are a key part of the Breakspeare timetable 80 families attended a recent Queens Jubilee event at the school.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

- During the assessment a "Create" project was happening with pupils from Breakspeare and a local mainstream secondary school. This had been a 3-day project which culminated in the students performing their musical pieces in the playground to an audience.
- EHCP targets are displayed in classes so that pupils are able to access and know what they are working on. During one observation a teacher shared each pupil learning with them in a format that they understood and therefore knew what learning was expected of everyone during the lesson. Pupils showed that they understood and were engaged with their learning.
- Pupils were observed to participate in meaningful activities and where best practice was seen that was related to specialist interest to engage the pupils within the lesson.
- Multi-sensory teaching was seen to be used consistently across observations within the school where a wide range of multi-sensory tools were used.
- Teachers put pupil's emotional well-being at the heart of everything. Where pupils need time to emotionally regulate this was observed to take priority over any academic demands. Teachers also have clear awareness of the impact of the pupils on the well-being of others within the room and have strategies in place to manage any impact this can have on well-being. All pupils presented as feeling safe and calm during the assessment.
- Zones of regulation was seen to be consistently used across all observations used by the staff and pupils. Staff were seen to check the reasoning for pupils' feelings with recognition that what they were feeling was okay. A wide range of emotions was seen to be expressed by pupils and modelled by staff.
- Pupils were engaged in activities which provided them with challenge, or allowed them to try new activities and skills. During one observation pupils were presented with the challenge of directing the teacher to make a pizza. Pupils clearly loved this and laughed when their directions were not accurate and the teacher poured ketchup on the table.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths: in supporting autistic people:

Pupils at Breakspeare are provided with opportunities to speak to their peers using non-verbal communication systems as part of structured lessons.

Breakspeare have strong collaborative working relationships with outside agencies to ensure that families get the support that they need as a preventative measure before families get to crisis point and unable to manage the young person at home.

Zones of regulation is well embedded across the school with staff using a shared language to support pupils understanding and regulation. Staff were consistently seen to model complex emotions and the reasons why they were feeling that way as well as trying to unpick the reason for pupils' feelings.

Behaviour support documentation is comprehensive and held in one place so that it is easy for staff to monitor, access and update.

What else the provision does well:

Support for pupil's communication is strong, many pupils across the school have access to PECS books which were observed to be used for lessons in addition to snack and lunchtimes.

The range of sensory tools available for pupils to regulate their sensory needs, both within the school building and in the outdoor environment.

Breakspeare consistently provide pupils with opportunities to be independent in what they are doing, in the structured activities in the classroom, choosing what items they need for an activity or in the development of their life skills.

Staff are clear and consistent in their communication with pupils.

The Headteacher is setting up a stakeholder's group of parents to get their input and influence at various stages through the building project of the new school.

There are some pupils within Breakspeare who have required a more tailored programme of support. Breakspeare have effectively adapted environments and programmes for pupils which have enabled positive outcomes for all pupils.

Social stories were seen to be a tool which is embedded in the support provided for pupils. They were observed to be used for a wide range of occasions and the principles used as part of whole class teaching to share expectations for the day and changes that occur.

What the provision could develop further

Makaton is used to great effect within some classes at Breakspeare, with staff and teachers using it effectively. However, there were rare occasions where this was not seen. Breakspeare to consider how they share this across the staff team and ensure it is part of consistent practice within class.

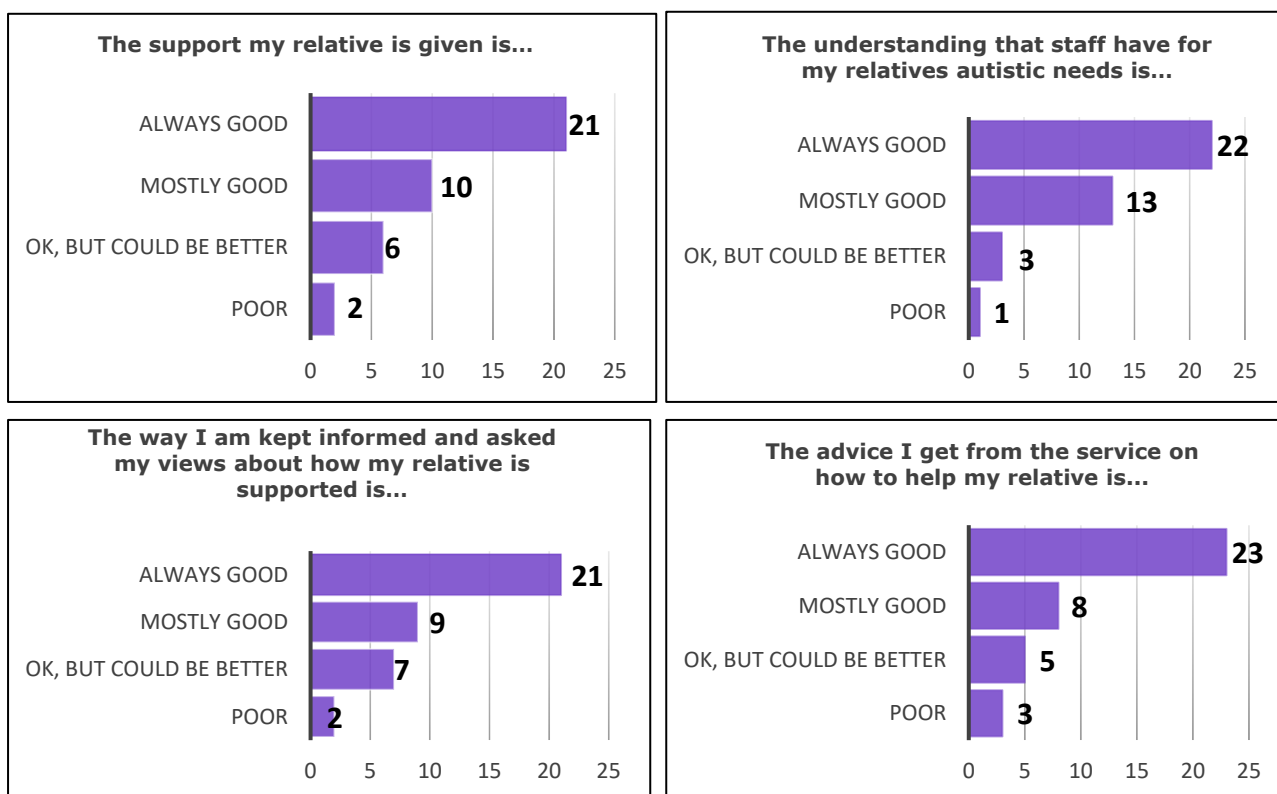
Breakspeare to consider how they further develop the use of technology for communication across the school to widen pupil's ability to communicate functionally in both home and school in a format that will be more widely understood by the community.

Breakspeare to explore ways in which they can provide further opportunities for communication with parents so that they feel informed and have strong communication links with school.

The Upper Phase Leader expressed how the offer for pupils next year is the same as it has been for the last few years and she would like to expand the activities available for the pupils in the Upper Phase of the school that they could continue into adulthood.

APPENDIX: SURVEYS

Families of Autistic Persons - Questionnaire Responses (39)



Comments

From the head teacher to the teachers everyone is so kind and helpful and I'm so grateful for everyone in this full for everyone in the school.

This is a very good school for children with ASD, the team has always been great!

Our experience at Breakspeare School has been exceptional. My relative LOVE this school. The teachers and all the staff is amazing. The communication with teacher, their understanding, help with resolving any ussies/problems re my relative and the level of their kindness and care is Outstanding.

Staff, teachers, head teacher everyone very supportive

We are very grateful and glad that our child is at Breakspeare School. The support and understanding given

to our family as a whole specially our child is just amazing. Staff always do their best to give support.

Need help with autistic child.

The staff are all very helpful.

Ipads should be used so no verbal children can use for communication.

Happy with school and services.

APPENDIX: INFORMATION FROM THE PROVISION

This section should be copied and pasted directly from the assessment introduction form

Provide a brief description of the provision made for autistic people.

Breakspeare is a local authority, all through special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school is based over two sites, although there is only 1 pupil at the section site with an autism diagnosis.

How many people are supported by the provision?

Breakspeare School – 96

Meadow Wood School – 36

How many of this number are autistic?

Breakspeare School – 53

Meadow Wood School - 1

What is the range of autistic people supported by the provision? e.g., age; learning disability; verbal or non-verbal etc.

Age 4 – 19

All pupils on the autistic spectrum also have severe learning difficulties. Communicative ability varies from pre-verbal, using objects of reference/object cues, symbolic level using PECS, verbal and able to use 1-2-word sentences creatively, able to verbally communicate using more extended sentences and partake in conversation. Some students have complex behaviour needs requiring individualised risk reduction plans.

What are the main approaches or methods employed by the provision in supporting autistic people?

In Hertfordshire, we use a holistic approach, taking the best parts from a range of specialist intervention:

PECS, Attention Autism, SCERTS, TEACCH, intensive interaction, ELKLAN, Makaton.

We use Herts Steps as a therapeutic approach to promoting prosocial behaviour.

We complete sensory processing checklists, ensuring all pupils have an individualised sensory profile, including a daily sensory diet, and transactional supports.

New this year: zones of regulation. Two teachers have attended the course and are disseminating the training to the rest of the school via a whole school training afternoon and an inset day for teachers.

What was the outcome of the provision's last statutory inspection (where appropriate)

Ofsted, November 2017, Outstanding

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

All new staff are trained by the autism lead (Masters in autism), on the AET tier 1 introduction to autism.

All staff have yearly refresher training on Herts Steps therapeutic approach to supporting behaviour.

Hertfordshire County Council provides yearly training sessions on: SCERTS, PECS, TEACCH, and Attention Autism.

Most teachers and some H4 learning support assistants have directly attended these training sessions.

Inset days, after school whole school staff meetings and Thursday afternoon training sessions are used to deliver training on approaches such as PECS, Attention Autism, Makaton as well as principles of autism best practice.

What processes are in place to ensure that each autistic person has an individual support plan that considers their communication and sensory responses and promotes their independent and well-being?

All students have an EHCP, which is reviewed yearly, via a teacher report and therapy reports.

Sensory profiles and individual risk reduction planning are reviewed at least yearly.

EHCP targets set priority targets in core areas such as social communication, sensory processing, emotional regulation, independence and self-help skills.

EHCP targets are reviewed termly on SOLAR.

What do you consider to be the main areas of development for the provision?

- Consistency in the teaching of emotions and regulating tools across school through the implementation of zones of regulation.
- Providing zones guidelines, proformas and agreed set of emotion symbols and vocabulary, ensuring consistency across the school.
- Individualising zones regulating tools for individual pupils – tools, keyrings.
- Consistent teaching of zones of regulation as part of PHSE planning
- Include zones targets in 'myself' section of Breakspeare pathway assessment.

What do you consider to be the main areas of strength for the provision?

- Individualised planning, provision and timetables for students who are not ready to take part in whole class teaching, prioritising social communication, regulating emotions and sensory needs supported transitions and independence skills – blue and purple classes.
- Enrichment opportunities – especially in the light of COVID, ensuring students have a breadth of experiences – horse riding, dog therapy, drama therapy, sailing, extra swimming, rebound therapy, arts award, trips out in the community.
- The school's focus on equity; providing differentiated experiences, resources, staffing, timetabling etc. to enable all students to feel safe at school and be included. One example of this, is by utilising all spaces in the school to create safe spaces for students to maintain their emotional regulation and access learning opportunities when ready e.g. one student's safe space classroom is currently in soft play.
- Multidisciplinary work supporting students who are at risk, examples; collaborating with care home for case study, WM, family support worker case studies.
- New online toolkit of behaviour analysis and planning tools has seen a reduction in dangerous behaviours reducing the need for restrictive physical interventions.
- New: The use of CPOMS (new online system for recording behaviour incidents) to provide immediate feedback and support for class teams, as well as tracking and analysing students who are at risk from increasing emotional dysregulation and providing immediate targeted interventions.
- Sharing expertise of teachers and delivery of in-house training, teachers leading on specific interventions/approaches e.g. one teacher leads on PECS, one teacher leads on attention autism, one teacher leads on ELKLAN and Makaton, one teacher leads on Herts Steps therapeutic approach to

behaviour. We have an autism specialist lead who has 1-day non-contact a week for autism support.

- Focus on autism and autism specific training which strengthens staff knowledge and skills, through termly autism meetings for teachers and learning support staff, inset day training, whole school training via after school meetings, autism specific targets for LSA appraisals, autism specific SIP actions.
- The student-centred individual approach throughout the provision starting from transitioning to school until the students' transition to adulthood.

APPENDIX 3: ADVANCED APPLICATION FORM

AUTISM ACCREDITATION: APPLICATION FORM FOR ADVANCED STATUS

In order to achieve an Advanced Award you must show that you are an outstanding and innovative provision that goes well beyond similar provisions. Please complete this form to give examples of initiatives that make you stand out and most important of all the impact they have had for autistic people. Copy and paste where you may have more than one example. However, the entire application including case-studies should not exceed 1000 words.

Please note you are also required to include case-studies (please refer to additional guidance) as part of your application. It is also important to recognise that the application form and case-studies are only part of a bigger picture, with considerable emphasis being given within the award process to observation of practice, personal centred support plans and surveys.

Part 1: Professional Development
Initiatives or innovations that impact on staff insight into the personal experience of being autistic e.g. regular involvement of autistic people in professional development activities or review of practice.
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Comprehensive CPD starting from induction, in-house training packages (easy access), Herts-Step 'roots and fruits' thinking embedded in practise encouraging the staff to think from the students' point of view, regular team meetings focusing on individual needs. ✚ LSAs and teaching staff completed open university autism module where personal insights were used throughout. ✚ Through new staff autism induction, staff haven been trained using the AET tier 1 programme, which includes video footage and quotes of autistic adults explaining their own experiences. ✚ All AS students have a sensory profile that is prepared in liaison within the class team. Staff have received training on sensory processing differences within the autism spectrum, including video simulations of sensory overload. ✚ Links with electric umbrella – Staff seeing young adults on the autism spectrum, including ex students, have a meaningful and fulfilling career, highlighting the importance of nurturing special interests, developing social skills and community participation.
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Consistent delivery of individually adapted student centred programmes and interventions. ✚ Students' special interests and motivators are well researched and identified making a positive impact on the students' motivation and progress in different curriculum areas

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Herts Steps therapeutic approach enables staff to empathise and develop a greater understanding of the experiences and feelings of the students and how this impacts their prosocial and difficult/dangerous behaviours.
<p>Initiatives or innovations that ensure that specialist approaches or techniques are fully understood, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.</p>
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Specialist environment designed for two AS classes that comprise a highly specialist and tailored learning environment, including separate break out rooms and a shared gym for sensory diet. ✦ Targeted training at universal level for all but also focusing on the staff's individual development needs. ✦ Autism specific LSA appraisal targets. ✦ Teachers and H4s receive training in specialist approaches, such as TEACCH, PECS, Attention Autism, SCERTS, Herts Steps. ✦ Teachers take responsibility for a specialist intervention, and provide in house training, offer advice and resources. For example, we have: Gillian – Makaton, Monika- PECS, Gill – Attention Autism, SCERTS, Sophia – Herts Steps. ✦ Most recently Gill has written an Attention Autism online training module, followed by a whole school training session looking at the transactional role of the supporting adult. ✦ Monika runs communication café – focusing on PECS.
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ The most complex AS students have access to curricula in safe environment; they make progress in their learning, which is evidenced through the Breakspeare Pathway assessment phases on solar. ✦ Staff are able to quickly learn the skills they need in supporting AS students in the school. ✦ Consistency in specialist interventions and approaches – new PECS passports for each student who uses PECS as their functional communication system, which includes phases which have been achieved, phases they are currently working on, and the support needed. ✦ All students have a sensory profile incorporating – sensory processing difficulties and preferences, sensory triggers to behaviour, transactional support and daily sensory diet.

<p>Part 2: Outcomes for individuals</p>
<p>Initiatives or innovations that have had a considerable impact on the quality of life and inclusion of autistic people e.g. programmes; projects; therapeutic interventions social enterprises etc.</p>
<p>Description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Therapeutic interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dog therapy, ❖ Drama therapy, ❖ Music therapy,

- ❖ Rebound therapy
- ✚ Enrichment:
- ❖ Horse riding,
- ❖ Sailing,
- ❖ Tennis,
- ❖ Swimming,
- ❖ Swimming gala
- ❖ Choir,
- ❖ Eco gardening,
- ❖ Enrichment days for the whole school: circus, jungle animals, world book day.
- ❖ Links with Electric Umbrella and Big Yellow Choir.
- ❖ Links with Sunnyside – adult special needs gardening project, who have refurbished our sensory garden and woodland area, students go to Sunnyside community site to experience work in their gardens.
- ✚ Arts award – external accreditation with ‘Funky Pie’ artists, combining art, music, drama
- ✚ Create – working with a mainstream school to compose and create a musical production.
- ✚ Pupil premium budget spent on providing personalised AAC – PECS on the iPad.
- ✚ Family support worker.
- ✚ Designated link person from learning disability team (Tom Kempford) identifying our more complex pupils at year 9, to support them with planning for provision when leaving school after year 14.
- ✚ Mental Health Support Team workshops.
- ✚ Designed learning environment for 2 most complex AS students, providing a separate safe space for learning as a Herts Steps protective consequence.

Impact

- ✚ Access to the community raising awareness and skills in supporting people with AS
- ✚ Developing social, emotional learning.
- ✚ Developing social communication skills.
- ✚ Promoting access and engagement with learning.
- ✚ Developing special interests and leisure skills.
- ✚ Supporting transitions.
- ✚ Keeping young people safe, protecting and preventing dangerous behaviours.

Initiatives or innovations that empower autistic people as experts in their own lives e.g. examples of co-production; working in partnership; developing effective consultation tools and processes to ensure that autistic people have a voice etc

Description

- ✚ School council.
- ✚ Student surveys.
- ✚ Phase assemblies – celebrating learning which is shared by students.
- ✚ Individual enrichment plans with impact statements.
- ✚ Some students where appropriate attend their EHCP meetings.

- ✚ Zones of regulation – developing students’ emotional vocabulary and self awareness, developing their understanding of regulating tools which will enable them to self regulate.
- ✚ Arts award – external accreditation with ‘Funky Pie’ artists, linked with art, music, drama (silver class – upper school class)
- ✚ Create – joint venture between Rickmansworth Secondary school and students from Breakspeare over 2 weeks, composing and creating a musical production.
- ✚ Upper school completion of ASDANS and AQAs.

Impact

- ✚ School council – empowering students from all phases to come together to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas, make decisions that will impact school.
- ✚ Zones of regulation – empowering students to be self aware and reflective, and develop independence communicating what they need in order to regulate and feel well supported.
- ✚ Arts award – creative project held at West Herts music centre, where students get to collaborate with students from other schools as well as real life performers. They comment on their sessions through a blog where they can express what they like/dislike and what they want to improve on.
- ✚ Create – uses the students’ ideas, actions, words, vocalisations to create a joint musical production which is then performed to the whole school.
- ✚ Students’ personal development is well supported enabling them to further develop their character, talents and socio-emotional skills

Part 3: Sharing of Expertise and development of knowledge and understanding

Initiatives or innovations that have had a significant impact on how families, other professionals or members of the public understand and respond to autistic people
e.g. outreach support; training for other professionals, families; sharing best practice at events etc.

Description

- ✚ Due to the school expansion to Durrants Hill in 2024, the school has begun outreach to schools where students are awaiting placement. We have had mainstream colleagues come to Breakspeare to share our good practice, we have shared resources and training materials as well as observed and offered advice in their mainstream settings.
- ✚ Parent training at Friends of Breakspeare (FAB) coffee mornings. Most recently a training on prosocial behaviours, analysing functions of behaviour and our therapeutic approach.
- ✚ Training for drivers and escorts on autism as well as makaton.
- ✚ Transition support and visits to mainstream schools.
- ✚ Parent visits to school.
- ✚ End of year reports include ‘strategies to support at home’ section.

- ✚ Colleagues from other special schools/mainstream schools visiting Breakspeare, spending time in class to observe best practice.
- ✚ Links with the local community – visibility in the local community, e.g. accessing village café and library, attending the summer village carnival.
- ✚ Family Support Worker.
- ✚ Mental Health Support Team.
- ✚ Excellent home school communication through daily home school diaries, regular telephone calls.
- ✚ Collaborative work amongst professionals, e.g. class teacher and speech and language therapist providing support and resources to support music therapy sessions.

Impact

- ✚ Sharing outstanding practice empowers skill development of professional partners and parents.
- ✚ Students have a more successful bus journey to and from school, reducing anxiety and difficult/dangerous behaviours.
- ✚ People with Autism are accepted in the community, raising awareness of their needs, by attending the local café, shop and library on a weekly basis.
- ✚ Family support worker has supported families of autistic students this year by:
- ✚ Accessing respite in the form of SBLO hours at Mencap to foster social skills for one of young people with autism.
- ✚ Applying for higher level disability living allowance to gain a Blue badge or parking space outside their home to enable better transition and regulate the children as they visit the communities to enable their parents to take them out safely.
- ✚ Accessing direct payments to support families to have respite and their own chance to refresh so they can be the best carers they can in sometimes difficult and challenging circumstances.
- ✚ Purchasing a bed for a family member and provide access to food banks.
- ✚ Providing behavioural support and make parents aware of PALMs and its work and support parents to implement strategies provided by PALMs.
- ✚ Addressing issues and building confidence in parents who are faced with domestic violence, drug related issues and complex family matters
- ✚ Providing support not only for the Breakspeare child in the family with autism but for siblings who may have issues with attendance or mental health.
- ✚ By just being there as a listening ear and having the time to pop round for a coffee and a chat so that parents are not alone in the battles they face.
- ✚ Evaluating the benefits that families are getting and making sure they get what they deserve.
- ✚ Attending one of Breakspeare's coffee mornings to raise the awareness of their role to parents and the services they can offer which also include workshops, drop in sessions, advice on financial issues, housing etc.

Initiatives or innovations that have significantly increased knowledge and understanding of best practice in supporting autistic people e.g. involvement in action research; development of resources; partnership work; publications etc.

Description

- ✚ Practical support for parents and respite services/carers by preparing resources such as visual supports: now and next books, PECS books, zones of regulation keyrings, social stories, calendars.
- ✚ Partnership work with care agency and respite centres, collaborative approach – EHCP invites sharing targets and strategies.
- ✚ Newsletters sharing best practice (Purple class example).
- ✚ New role in school – facilitator, to train new staff working towards teacher status, on the job.
- ✚ Expanding knowledge and skills by recently training 2 more staff to be Herts Steps Trainers.
- ✚ AS handbook

Impact

- ✚ Consistency in support for pupils with autism across school, home and care settings.

Part 4: Validation

Validation from other bodies or professionals e.g. awards; summative evaluation data; inspections etc.

Example

- ✚ Local Community Group ‘Excellence’ Award (2022) Abbots Langley Parish Council
- ✚ Full International School Award, British Council 2018-2022 (2010-2013, 2013-2016, 2016-2018) in recognition of its partnerships with schools across the world
- ✚ EYFS Quality Mark; Gold (2022) Silver (2021) in recognition of high quality EYFS provision
- ✚ Committed to work towards meeting the Quality in Careers Standards incorporating Gatsby Benchmarks 2019
- ✚ Advanced Autism Accreditation NAS 2019-2021 in recognition of exemplary autism provision that makes impact beyond the school
- ✚ Autism Accreditation NAS (2013-2016, 2016-2018) in recognition of meeting high quality autism provision
- ✚ AQA internal assessment quality mark (2017)
- ✚ Outstanding Ofsted inspections 2003, 2007, 2013, 2017
- ✚ PE Quality Mark with Distinction 2015-18 in recognition of outstanding cross curricula PE opportunities and practice
- ✚ Signing Award 2016
- ✚ Green Apple Award 2016 for recognising commitment for sustainable development in the local community
- ✚ ECO School, Silver Award
- ✚ Managing Volunteers Award
- ✚ CPD quality Mark

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✚ CEG Mark (Care Education and Guidance)✚ The school is working towards; Makaton Friendly School, Careers Quality Mark, Communication Friendly School Award, Move – school, Forrest School status |
| Relevance |

Criteria for Autism Accreditation Advanced Award

CRITERIA	NOTES
Statutory Inspectors consider service to have outstanding features. Nothing is scored as less than good.	The Committee will consider ratings from the last statutory report and quality of life outcomes for the autistic individuals attending the provision.
There are many considerable areas of strength with no or minor actions for development. Highlighted areas of development are likely to address issues that the service is already working on or fine-tuning practice which is already of a very good standard.	The Committee will consider evidence of what the provision does well and what it needs to work on from the latest Autism Accreditation assessment.
A high-quality programme of continuous Professional Development is in place. It ensures that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. Overall support is clearly based on methods and approaches that produce positive outcomes for autistic people.	The Committee will consider evidence from the latest Autism Accreditation report of what training and professional development staff receive and how this is evident in observed practice. It will also refer to Section 1 of the Application form.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how each autistic person communicates and socially interacts	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people to become more independent,	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their sensory regulation	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their emotional well-being	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Feedback from families and/or autistic people shows that an overwhelming majority are happy with the service e.g. over half very happy and the	The Committee will consider surveys carried out by Autism Accreditation. An overwhelming majority would normally be defined as 75 % or more respondents.

rest happy/ Only a tiny minority are unhappy e.g. one or two respondents.	
The service shares expertise through quality consultation and training as well as actively contributing to research into autism and innovations in practice.	The Committee will consider part 3 of the Application form and relevant case studies.