



# **Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Policy**

**Date of Policy:** March 2015

**To be reviewed:** March 2016

**Person Responsible for the ASC Audit and Action Plan and for the development of specialist provision for pupils with ASC:** Dawn Brown

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including the following policies, documents and guidance: Curriculum Policy, Assessment and Recording Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Support Policy and Communication Policy.

## **Scope**

This policy is a whole-school policy.

## **Introduction**

All pupils at Greenside School have a statement of need that defines them as having A severe learning difficulty (SLD). In addition, many pupils also have a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), which at Greenside, at the request of one of our pupils; we refer to as Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). We agree with the young person that the term condition demonstrates greater respect and reflects the specific skills and insights that someone with this condition may have.

People with ASC have difficulties in:

- non-verbal and verbal communication,
- Social understanding and social behaviour,
- thinking and behaving flexibly (rigidity of thought) according to the situation
- sensory perception and responses.

Pupils with an ASC may experience unusual sensitivity to sound, touch and visual stimuli.

Although all people with ASC share certain difficulties; their condition may affect them in different ways.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the education of pupils with ASC at Greenside School. It will form the basis for the development of ASC specific practice in the school.

## **Rationale**

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 the additional difficulties characteristic of pupils on the ASC spectrum need to be taken into account and these will include: the learning environment, planning, teaching and learning objectives.

## **Aims**

To enable the following key principles to underpin practice and the best possible education for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder we strive to ensure:

- Knowledge and understanding of autistic spectrum disorder throughout the school.
- Knowledge, understanding and implementation of established interventions and approaches.
- Knowledge and understanding of general and specific behaviours and behaviour

## **Approaches and Interventions**

The teaching philosophy at Greenside School embodies the rationale of the SPELL approach developed by the National Autistic Society; provision of a structured, positive, empathic and low-arousal environment with good links between school, home and outside agencies. However, in order to meet the needs of all pupils across the spectrum we use an eclectic mix of established and researched approaches and interventions; drawing on best practice and continuously monitoring and evaluating their use.

Interventions and approaches include:

- TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children),
- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System),
- Sensory diets
- Intensive Interaction.
- Aspects of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

Specialist provision is provided for pupils who require and exceptionally high level of structure and support. This includes the provision of sensory interaction rooms which are designed to enhance the delivery of Intensive Interaction.

## **Equal Opportunities and inclusion for young people with ASC**

Pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder may be taught in specialist classes for pupils with ASC or may be included within a general Primary or Secondary class or a full or part-time basis. They may also access sessions in mainstream settings.

The decision as to where a pupil is placed and their degree of inclusion will be based upon individual need; assessed and agreed at Annual or Interim Review.

## **Specific needs and requirements**

At Greenside school it is recognised that pupils with ASC have specific needs and requirements that must be addressed. These include:

- Structured teaching.
- Continuity of practice and provision
- Visual prompts and cues.
- Communication systems which are developed with Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) and go with the pupil through school.
- Use of augmentative communication systems aids, including PECs, objects of reference electronic communicators.
- Personalised timetable.
- Use of social stories.
- Opportunities for tailored, specific support.
- Opportunities to learn to work without prompting from an adult.

## **Continuity of Practice**

At Greenside School staff recognise the importance of generalising the skills that pupils learn across school, home and respite settings. Class teachers regularly liaise with multi-disciplinary teams, respite workers, parents and carers to ensure continuity of approaches in and out of school. This is supported through regular meetings as well as the use of presentations providing examples of photographs and videos of the pupil's learning in school.

In order to ensure continuity every pupil with ASC at Greenside School must have:

- Communication system tailored to the individual
- Communication Profile, prepared by SALT.
- Structured teaching
- Structured learning environment
- Visual cues.
- Sensory Assessment.

In order to ensure continuity the majority of pupils with ASC at Greenside School will have access to:

- An individual timetable
- Individual work stations.
- Social stories to support their understanding.
- Access to specialist approaches, by trained members of staff (such as TEACCH; PECS etc.)
- Daily exercise.

In order to ensure continuity some pupils with ASC at Greenside School will have:

- Specific plans to support emotional and behaviour needs.
- Appropriate levels of staff support.
- Specific diet.
- Safe / calming spaces (both internal and external)

## **Environment**

Many pupils with ASC have sensory difficulties which can result in unusual or uncomfortable perception of sound, sense, touch, sight and smell. This means that many children are unable to focus upon teaching activities and can be distracted by noise and visual or other stimuli. This can have a profound effect upon their ability to learn and can impact behaviour when sensory input causes extreme discomfort or pain. Pupils on the autistic spectrum may also have difficulties with flexibility and require clear visual support to understand routines and expectations.

At Greenside School staff strive to reduce environmental anxiety and distress by the following:

- Providing an environment which is calm, distraction free and has a low level of visual and auditory stimulus.
- Providing pupils with a high degree of visual and physical structure.
- Providing pupils with a means of requesting withdrawal to a chill-out area (safespace) when their levels of anxiety become raised.
- Strategies to cope with highly stimulating environment / situations.

## **Sensory Issues / Sensory Needs**

Sensory profiles may be used for pupils with ASC following a sensory assessment. This will be carried out by the Occupational Therapy (OT) Team and programmes to address the areas of need will be devised and delivered in collaboration between the OT and class staff. Sensory assessments will be monitored and reviewed at the Annual Review.

## **Assessment**

All pupils are assessed using PIVATS. Assessment outcomes are reported at Annual Review. An analysis of pupil progress data is provided using CASPA and The Durham University EQUALs project. The CARs assessment is used by psychologists to assess the extent of a young person's autism.

## **Curriculum**

Underpinning all teaching and learning is an emphasis on the development of Communication and Personal Development including: social interaction, social understanding, social communication and physical development. Lessons are planned to facilitate development in these areas but specific teaching, for example in social skills, life skills and sensory desensitisation are also necessary.

Pupils are provided with many 'real life' opportunities, for example, educational visits are used to help reduce rigidity, develop appropriate social skills such as waiting in shops or having snack in a café and learning about road safety. Pupils all access a full differentiated curriculum delivered in a way that addresses the triad of impairment and sensory issues.

## **Behaviour**

Many pupils with ASC also display some behaviours that staff may not understand. Behaviour is often a means of communication. Staff must endeavour to understand the function / meaning behind the behaviour. Specific strategies are used to reduce anxiety and promote feelings of well-being and to modify unwanted behaviours and promote more appropriate behaviours. Pupils have individual behaviour plans that are regularly reviewed and updated with parents, healthcare and education professionals and form part of the documentation for Annual Review. All class-based staff are trained in positive handling.

## **Training**

- All teachers are trained in autism-specific practices which will include: PECs, TEACCH, Sensory Integration, Social Stories and Intensive Interaction.
- All learning support assistants are trained in autism-specific practices including: PECs, Sensory Integration.
- All staff attend training on autism-awareness. Staff are kept up to date with current research relating to the education and well being of pupils with ASC.

## **Development, Monitoring and Review**

In 2012, Greenside joined gained NAS accreditation in the teaching of pupils with ASC and will be reviewed in May 2015. This provides a valuable opportunity to gain an objective judgement of the quality of provision as well as informed future whole school planning and development. An important part of this process is the whole school audit and action plan. This is conducted by specialists in ASC. Provision for pupils on the autism spectrum is continuously monitored and evaluated as part of the

self-evaluation process. The specialist teacher for pupils with ASC works in collaboration with Heads of Departments (Primary, Secondary and Post 16) to oversee specific provision for pupils with ASC.