

Inspection areas

Inspection area 1: Learning

General considerations on outcomes for learners with ASC

Are pupils...?

- Able to follow the instructions of staff with the appropriate resources?
- Developing their skills, including being able to work with greater independence, in line with their needs and abilities?
- Developing in their confidence and becoming resourceful in supporting their own learning?
- Able to engage in meaningful dialogue with staff and other pupils in line with their communication needs?
- Able to identify if they have achieved learning objectives?
- Developing the ability to communicate to meet their needs and express free opinions or from a range of choices?
- Developing social skills from individual starting points?

Inspection area 2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

General considerations on effective outcomes for pupils with ASC

Are pupils...?

- Given reasonable opportunities to calm and self-regulate if anxious?
- Able to interact with strategies to stay safe or regain a calm state?
- Able to participate in a range of extra-curricular and pupil voice opportunities?
- Motivated and engaged in tasks as a result of clearly communicated success criteria?
- Able to develop their ability over time to better engage in tasks?
- Able to manage transitions between tasks, lessons and environments?
- Able to maintain their own or others' high expectations of behaviour and engagement in line with their ability?
- Able to use a variety of recording methods in tasks in order to achieve lesson outcomes?
- Able to reflect on their progress and development over time?

- Helpful ideas for promoting pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning
- Using an effective method of regular communication with parents or carers can help maintain successful pupil wellbeing and readiness for learning. Interactive online sites and applications, weekly feedback sessions face to face or in written form in a home-school book can assist close liaison in the planning for learners with ASC.

Learners' own engagement in person centred planning approaches can help them give input into what is important and what works for them in, for example, the creation of a one page profile or as part of their IEP, IDP or statement of SEN.

Allowing for social breaks at unstructured times when learners with ASC find social demands challenging, can be helpful. The use of 'buddies' to help learners with ASC to navigate the social expectations of busy unstructured times can also be beneficial.

Where possible, allowing learners with ASC an element of choice in their learning can aid attitudes toward learning. Many learners with ASC have a special, or range of particular interests that can help motivate and be an avenue into rich learning experiences that engage and maintain motivation.

Inspection area 3: Teaching and learning experiences

General considerations on effective classroom practice for pupils with ASC.

Do teachers/support staff...?

- Use the learner's name to gain attention before giving instructions?
- Use a range of suitable resources to maintain motivation and engagement?
- Use simple and precise language, avoiding idioms, multi-step instructions and layered explanations?
- Enable learners to participate in paired and group tasks with appropriate support?
- Break down tasks into smaller chunks, presented visually where appropriate?
- Allow sufficient processing time for learners to process and respond?
- Promote independence with targeted structure and work systems?
- Maintain engagement and motivation through a system of reward?
- Have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils? Are they able to assist in developing new skills and understanding? Do they develop pupils' independence skills appropriately? Do support staff have sufficient knowledge of the subject being taught and the pupils' needs?
- Consider and plan for the impact and stimulation of the environment on learners?
- Make expectations and rules explicit, including the motivators to comply?
- Make effective use of special interest areas to enhance engagement and progress?

A special interest area for someone with ASC may be something like dinosaurs, 'The Titanic', space and the universe or technologies like tablet computers or online video platforms.

- Set high expectations of engagement and progress via tasks set at an appropriate level of challenge?
- Understand and plan for the sensory differences of pupils with ASC?
- How does the school ensure the meaningful inclusion of learners with ASC in mainstream curriculum, whole class, group and paired activities?

Helpful ideas for adapting resources and teaching

Pupils with ASC very often have a strength in visual learning. Visual resources such as timetables, work systems, explicit rules and instructions can help provide permanence, promote independence and reduce the anxiety associated with work tasks, change and transitions.

A restricted, repetitive and rigid mind-set is part of the diagnostic criteria for ASC. As such, enhanced means of motivation such as visually presented motivators, distractors and rewards are often effective. 'Choice time' or 'golden time' gives learners a specific goal to achieve.

A movement break sometimes helps pupils with ASC to reduce the anxiety associated with a busy classroom, refocus and calm. A short time of being engaged in a different environment or on a different task can help achieve a state where pupils are ready to learn.

Pupils with ASC sometimes respond favourably to having access to a 'fiddle toy' or something to hold to aid concentration and engagement. Plasticine or a small tactile object can help pupils focus and self-regulate, especially when required to sit or listen to adult instruction.

Task breakdown or planning resources help learners with ASC access tasks that require multistep action. Similar to the format of a cooking recipe, 'I need...', 'first...', 'then...', 'now...', 'then...', 'finally...' and 'now I can...' for example, can help pupils develop independence in tasks and not rely on adult prompting.

Learners with ASC often struggle to understand and generalise social rules. A small

number of explicit rules of conduct, behaviour or other parameters give definition to sometimes vague social boundaries.

Seating learners with ASC who find distraction a challenge at or near the front of the room and directing instructions or requests using their name, keys learners into the information.

Learners with ASC often have heightened levels of anxiety. Tracking challenges faced using an antecedent/ behaviour/ consequence model can help staff identify problem times of day, environment, tasks, clothing, weather or any other factors that may contribute to challenges that learners themselves are unable to articulate.

Inspection area 4: Care, support and guidance

- Does any additional support target the development of life skills and building independence?
- Has the school taken good enough account of the needs of pupils in adapting the physical environment?
- How does the school ensure learners with ASC have the opportunity to participate fully in the wider social aspects of school life?
- Does the school make effective use of targets on IEPs, IBPs, IDPs or statements of SEN to maximise support and progress?
- Does attainment data for learners with ASC demonstrate that progress is being made? How well are learners with ASC making progress in relation to their starting points over time?
- Are targets on IEPs, IBPs and IDPs relevant and appropriate for learners with ASC?
- Are annual review meetings for pupils with a statement of SEN held in line with national guidelines? Are learners and parents encouraged to access person centred planning approaches to fully participate in these reviews?
- Does the school provide an appropriate level of curriculum and social challenge for learners with ASC?
- Are appropriate measures identified in risk assessments to ensure that pupils with ASC are not disadvantaged? For example, inclusion in off-site visits or positive handling procedures?
- Is an appropriate focus given to personal and social development and independence to maximise the skills of learners with ASC?

A low stimulus environment can be helpful to learners with ASC. Having an area in a classroom or work area that is less busy with less extraneous visual information can help learners with ASC focus on the given task. In rooms where there is less free space, a table in a quieter area of the class, ideally looking away from the zone of activity for example, at a blank wall can be beneficial.

Anxiety is a common end product of high levels of social interaction, communication, requests to be flexible and expectations to work on someone else's agenda. Learners with ASC can change from appearing calm to being very upset very quickly. This is likely to be as a result of underlying anxiety when coping with the demands of a stressful environment. A quiet space, room or area that learners with ASC know is safe can be very successful in allowing learners with ASC to calm and return to learning.

A key member of staff who knows the individual can be effective in helping the learner with ASC feel safe.

Where learners with ASC are experiencing heightened levels of anxiety, being seated near the rear of a room or the door can be effective. A time-out system, for example in the form of a card can further reduce anxiety.

The ability to arrive late at lessons, or leave lessons early to avoid busy times in corridors and cloakrooms can assist learners with ASC to remain calm.

Opportunities to check-in and check-out at the start or end of the day with a key member of staff can help learners with ASC assimilate to the new environment, problem solve any concerns the pupils have or bring closure to issues that may have occurred throughout the day.

Certain learners with ASC experience difficulty with physical contact, or sports that involve getting wet or muddy. Reasonable adjustments such as undertaking physical activity in the gym or on exercise machines can enable pupils to achieve goals via alternative methods.

Inspection area 5: Leadership and management

Do leaders in the school...?

- Set high expectations for learners with ASC?
- Ensure that all staff have received basic training in ASC?
- Ensure that where learners are in receipt of a diagnosis of ASC that appropriate advice, when relevant, is sought from outside agencies such as specialist teacher teams or an educational psychologist in line with their referral procedures and that any advice is implemented.
- Raise awareness and understanding of ASC in the school and with parents?