

Definition: (National Autistic Society)

Autism (ASD) is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with ASD share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with ASD are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with ASD may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours, movement.

Characteristics seen in the classroom:

- * May exhibit repetitive behaviours e.g. always playing the same game in the same way, repeatedly lining up objects
- * May be resistant to change or doing things differently e.g. change to timetable
- * Emerging difficulties with social interaction, social communication and social imagination (3 main areas of difficulty known as the 'triad of impairment')
- * Behaviours such as biting, pinching, kicking, putting inedible objects in mouth, or self-injurious behaviour
- * May over- or under-react to sensory stimuli

Where to go for help:

- Speak to class teacher / SENDCo in the first instance
- National Autistic Society (NAS)
- Speech & Language Therapist
- Autistic Spectrum Team



**Communication and Interaction
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

Assessment and Diagnosis:

- * If parents have concerns about a pupil, they may approach the school, their GP or Health Visitor who may carry out a screening interview that will indicate whether there are ASD traits.
- * The pupil may then be referred for a formal assessment (diagnosis) which may be completed by the school, GP or health visitor with parental input via The Early Help Hub / CAMHS.
- * The ASD Pathway can be a lengthy process till a possible diagnosis may be obtained due to long waiting lists.
- * Diagnosis is completed by a multi-disciplinary team with reference to: Deficits in social-emotional reciprocity; non-verbal communication behaviours used for social interaction; developing, maintain and understanding relationships; stereotyped or repetitive motor movements, use of objects or speech; insistence on sameness, inflexible adherence to routines or ritualised patterns of verbal or non-verbal behaviour; highly restrictive, fixated interests that are abnormal in intensity or focus; hyper or hypo reactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment.

Frequently used Interventions:

- * Allow time especially for abstract concepts
- * Social stories to support, explain, encourage appropriate social skills, and play skills
- * Visual timetables
- * Quiet work area with little sensory stimulation
- * Consistent classroom rules
- * Carefully structured activities
- * Support in the playground e.g. buddy system, circle of friends
- * Language support - use simple language and visual clues or symbols. Avoid metaphors, idioms, sarcasm
- * Sensory support e.g. ear defenders, workstation to ease distractions
- * Following an individual Speech & Language Care Plan