

Practical Approaches to Support Inclusion: Autism and Social Communication

Description of Needs	Strategies to support teaching	Hints and Tips	Examples of outcomes to work towards
<p>The child or young person (CYP) experiences needs which are managed well in a mainstream setting with Quality First Teaching and thought given to approaches and strategies at a whole class level with appropriate differentiation of task and teaching style.</p> <p>This CYP may or may not have a diagnosis of autism. However, they may exhibit some of the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finds social situations confusing; can be unclear about expected responses and how to form relationships with other CYP. • likes to follow own interests rather than accept direction • displays a strong interest in a particular subject • has a tendency to seek repetitive actions or routines • low level sensory likes and dislikes 	<p>Focus on quality first teaching and autism friendly approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a social communication friendly approach in the classroom and around school using the Autism Education Trust Standards Framework Framework Documents Autism Education Trust • Focus on presence, participation, inclusion, belonging, achievement, and independence. <p>Approaches may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a key adult for daily check in • Flexible grouping arrangements. • Some adaptation of activities and materials e.g. chunking tasks into smaller steps • Visual timetables, now and next boards, choice boards <p>Classroom adaptations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible seating – CYP may choose own seat or who they 	<p>Hints and tips for quality first teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise staff awareness of autism and social communication through whole school CPD • Staff are aware that differences relating to social communication may impact on academic attainment, confidence, self-esteem, social relationships, and emotional wellbeing, particularly anxiety. CYP with social communication difference may be vulnerable to being bullied. • Get to know the CYP well. What are their interests & strengths? Who are their friends & family? • Make use of preferred activities for rewards • Provide time for restorative/movement breaks • Regularly monitored, reviewed and updated inclusion and behaviour policies that underpin practice. • Create an inclusive ethos that supports the learning and wellbeing of all CYP promoting positive examples of diversity • A broad and balanced curriculum is planned for all CYP tailoring to interests where possible • Be aware that a CYP with social communication differences may need more time to process and complete tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X will have a clear understanding of strategies and support available to them e.g. X will independently access the quiet area during break time when needed • X will have a clear understanding of the daily classroom routine and will be able to confidently predict what will happen next and where they need to be • X will respond to a clear and simple instruction given to the class. • X will use visual structure to support independent work tasks • X will understand and respond positively to a paired or group game during social times. • X will manage transitions across the day with confidence • X will participate in school events, such as school trips, with a little support from adults

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	<p>sit with; personal space e.g. own desk and equipment; workstation if helpful for focus; standing desk available; classroom layout identifies zones; resources clearly labelled and accessible; quiet area available when needed – this may be outside of the classroom or in another part of the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quieter space to access during social times. • Differentiated questioning and processing time to reply • Use of multi-sensory approaches to learning • Consideration given to teaching materials e.g. power point backgrounds may be changed to accommodate sensory preferences; CYP is given a handout of the teaching materials at the start of the lesson • Visuals to support independence • School trips are planned well in advance and take into consideration the needs of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for social interaction between peers and the wider community of the school e.g. lunch time and after school clubs • Provision of planned opportunities to learn and practice social skills during structured activities. E.g. turn taking games • Provision of an inclusive PE curriculum, including arrangements for Sports Day where appropriate. • Other school pastoral interventions could include: - Meeting and Greeting/a soft landing, Circle Time, Peer mentoring, Buddy systems, Lunch clubs. • Create support teams within the classroom for peer support to promote independence and reduce reliance on adults. 	

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	<p>CYP. The CYP may benefit from a Social Story to support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and positively stated expectations that are visually communicated. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CYP has clearly identified needs but is making progress and is able to access the curriculum with Quality First teaching and targeted appropriate strategies/reasonable adjustments that are regularly reviewed with parents and monitored by the SENCO. <p>The CYP may present as having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication differences which make it hard for CYP to understand and follow instructions or interpret meaning (both verbal and nonverbal) • Difficulties regulating sensory needs e.g. in busy or noisy environments, brightly lit or brightly coloured classrooms. May become overwhelmed • Attentional needs which may require prompts in order to access whole class teaching 	<p>Include strategies above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to individual sensory supports to support regulation and attention e.g. sensory toolkit. • Regular planned access to a quiet safe space either within the classroom, near the classroom or in a designated place in school to ensure CYP is not overwhelmed • Safe space available on demand – time out card available • Individualised communication systems to support asking for help e.g. help card, traffic light card, putting specific item onto the desk, putting hand up • Individualised visual supports linked explicitly to rewards and motivators • Access to regular small group support e.g., Circle of Friends, social communication 	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the 5 P's framework (or similar) to clearly identify the factors that are contributing to the CYP's presentation: • What is the Problem? • Precipitating factors – what makes the CYP vulnerable? • Perpetuating factors – what is keeping the problem going which might include strategies the CYP and/or adults are using to manage the difficulties • Protective factors – what does the CYP have going for them including strengths / interests • Plan – what needs to happen / change for progress to be made • Information about the CYP's difficulties is shared with relevant staff, in partnership with parents. • Staff and carers share advice on successful strategies and set targets e.g., use of visual supports, developing organisational skills • Staff seek support/advice from SENCO and external professionals when required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X will follow short, simple instructions • X will use a toolkit to support regulation, with adult prompting • X will regulate in school using their time out card and safe space • X will complete adult chosen tasks with the support of appropriate motivators • X will complete short tasks independently • X will ask for help/use communication system to ask for help • X will join in with a structured group activity • X will begin to have an understanding that other people may have a different point of view • X will use comic strip conversations to explore social situations and begin to understand how other people think and feel

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misunderstandings around expected social communication when relating to other children • Difficulties sustaining or repairing friendships • Challenges when there are changes to routines • Difficulties getting started on an adult-directed task, planning longer tasks and completing tasks, especially when it is in a non-preferred subject • Difficulties with emotional well-being, for example CYP may be more likely to feel anxious, struggle with low mood, have low-self-esteem and lack confidence • Differences in understanding and regulating emotions which can lead to fluctuating arousal levels and impulsive or unexpected behaviours when dysregulated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programmes, self-esteem group, collaborative interaction (Lego therapy). Group work is planned and tailored to meet identified need • Use of turn taking boards and additional structure e.g. specific roles, to support pair work in lessons • Alternate ways of recording may be helpful e.g. laptop, practical activities, scribe • Explicitly teach problem solving skills for everyday life, supporting CYP to understand the bigger picture • Careful preparation for changes to activities/routines/ staffing • Support the CYP with daily planning and organisation e.g. of homework tasks, planner, getting possessions ready for home time • Check CYP has picked up on the main learning points of a lesson – highlight for them or use mind maps to show how learning progresses from lesson to lesson within a topic • Be aware that some CYP may need less information on a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use additional adults flexibly to support small groups and individuals, however independence is also being promoted and supported through use of structure and task adaptation • School staff access training regarding meeting the needs of pupils with social communication differences, including more specific workshops e.g. social cognition, autism and anxiety. • Consider the less structured activities of the day and plan for additional support if required e.g. breaks times • Consider additional support for some areas of the curriculum e.g. forest schools; PE; RE • Use Talking Mats to gain CYP views on aspects of school which can inform planning and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X will begin to understand that thoughts and feelings effect actions • X will manage changes to routines through using social stories with adult support • X will organise their resources and work tasks with increasing independence, using a structured approach

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	<p>power point slide due to processing differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to 1:1 support for some activities e.g. to look at social stories, to carry out comic strip conversations, to support individualised regulation strategies • Check-ins across the day e.g. on arrival, after break times, before home time. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CYP has clearly identified needs and requires structured and consistent additional support in order to make expected progress. • Quality First teaching, targeted approaches and strategies/reasonable adjustment are consistently implemented and reflected in a personalised support plan shared with all key staff. The plan and approaches, strategies are support are regularly reviewed with parents, the SENCO, key staff and the CYP <p>The CYP may present as having:</p>	<p>Include strategies above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent access to targeted 1:1 work, which maybe for interventions relating to support plan or to support learning in class e.g. social cognition support; co-regulating • A high level of adaptation of tasks may be required, although not necessarily in all subjects • Individualised visual supports e.g., task planner, use of symbols to support written word, mind maps, now/next, individual timetables, personalised motivators 	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual targets agreed and regularly monitored, following discussion with CYP and parents. • Consult with external professionals regarding issues relating to speech and language, social communication needs and sensory profile. • Schedule meetings with carers on a regular basis and try to link with them regularly in informal ways too; ensure the family feel supported and signpost to other services if required e.g. Early Help, Durham County Carers • Classroom Teaching Assistance (TA) is targeted towards support for access for specific tasks/settings and engagement in learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X will use a structured approach with adult support so that they can access learning tasks • X will follow every day routines using objects of reference/photographs/Now...Next boards • X will develop attention from single channelled to focusing attention • X will engage and participate in intensive interaction sessions • X will take part in simple paired games in PE, with the support of a turn taking board • X will regulate in school between lessons by leaving 5 minutes early • X will regulate in school by frequently accessing a quiet space

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant communication differences which lead to difficulties accessing instructions or interpreting meaning (both verbal and nonverbal), which can impact on significantly on learning and relationships • Attentional needs which can prevent them from accessing whole class teaching • Impulsive actions due to dysregulation which can result in unexpected behaviour impacting on learning and access to other activities • Difficulties sustaining or repairing friendships, which can lead to vulnerability in relationships and significant difficulties in unstructured times • Dysregulation when faced with changes in routines and settings • Apparently unwilling to attempt or complete an adult-directed task, especially when it is in a non-preferred subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of specialised intervention may be required e.g. Attention Autism or Intensive Interaction • Home-school communication book. • Additional adult (e.g., TA) for focused support during unstructured times every day e.g., lunchtime supervision/ targeted extra-curriculum activities, supervision in the playground. • Additional adult support required for some lessons such as PE • Support CYP when moving around school and at other daily transition times. Consider use of transition objects which offer emotional support • Use count down strips to help a CYP shift attention between activities as these can be controlled by the adult to ensure the timing is right for the CYP • Allow CYP to finish one activity before moving on where possible • Support CYP to recognise and communicate their feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a high level of predictability around every day routines and plan for changes very carefully • Many aspects of structured teaching (TEACCH) are likely to be helpful, such as use of a workstation, clearly labelled tasks which are set up to encourage independence, use of visual structure and personalise rewards, plenty of opportunities of repetition and consolidation – learning needs to be at the right pace • Make sure that there is an enhanced transition plan between key stages and/or year groups. • Consider using roles as a way to manage unpredictable time e.g. milk monitor/ library manager at break times • Consider alternate spaces for the CYP to eat lunch if the dining room causes sensory overload • Staff should be familiar with the arousal curve and understand the things which cause the CYP to become over aroused; they should proactively plan to adapt situations which cause overload. 	<p>and preferred activities with adult support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X will be able to name emotions and say how they are feeling • X will transition between activities in school using count down strips and transition objects • X will share outdoor space with others at break times.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent need for a separate space as finds busy or noisy environments overwhelming • Social, communication and anxiety difficulties impact on attendance in school and lessons • High levels of anxiety can lead to distress. 	<p>about the school day e.g. Using Zones of Regulation or 5 Point scales. Adults may need to be leading on and prompting the CYP with this type of activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong focus on adults proactively making adaptations to the physical environment, the timetable, social demands and remember to adapt language. 		