

Waterloo Primary School and Nursery



Autism Provision

Policy document

Date of Policy: October 2024

To be Reviewed: October 2025

Person Responsible: Mrs J Escott Shaw

"Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them." (National Autistic Society)

Autism Spectrum Difference/Disorder (ASD) or Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

There are four areas of difference. They are social and emotional understanding; understanding and using speech and non-verbal language to communicate; flexibility of thinking and behaviour and sensory perception and response.

Social and Emotional Understanding

The social interaction and emotional understanding difficulty may result in a child appearing withdrawn and 'difficult to reach' and there may be limited motivation to interact with others. Pupils may have a desire to interact with others but have problems understanding the underlying and implicit rules of social interaction.

Understanding and Using Speech and Non-Verbal Language to Communicate

Difficulties with both receptive communication (what the child understands) and expressive communication (how they communicate with others) are a feature of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

These problems in communication mean that pupils may have difficulty in using and understanding verbally presented information as well as non-verbal communication such as, gesture, body language and facial expression.

Flexibility of Thinking and Behaviour

Impaired flexibility of thought will affect a child's ability to predict, understand and accept change, understand the thoughts, feelings and motivations of others and play and think creatively and flexibly. This may result in rigid and repetitive behaviours and thought patterns.

Sensory Perception and Response

Both research and personal accounts from people with autism highlight the problems that children may have with sensory stimuli. This may result in under or over sensitivity to movement, tactile information (touch), sounds, smells, taste and visual stimuli. Pupils may have difficulty regulating their sensory system which may mean that under or over sensitivities to stimuli are not consistent.

Waterloo Primary School Autism Provision Mission Statement

We endeavour to provide a setting where all are challenged to achieve their full potential. We will provide a safe, caring and supportive learning and teaching environment ensuring a meaningful and quality education. We aim to meet the academic, social, emotional and communication needs of all our pupils on the Autism Spectrum.

Waterloo Primary School Provision for children on the Autism Spectrum

Within the Autism Provision there are currently four primary classes which meet the needs of pupils from 4 to 11 years old. Our pupils have a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Admissions are independent of the school's admissions policy and will be controlled by Sefton SEN and Inclusion Services (SSENIS).

Classes have children of mixed ages and currently comprise the following:

Sycamore Class-Mr Parry's Class: Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

Bluebell Class-Mrs Escott-Shaw's Class: Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

Lyra Class-Mr Taylor's Class: Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Argo Class-Mrs Causey's Class: Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Staffing

Staff in the provision are allocated to a base depending on the skills they have to meet a particular set of pupils' needs. The staff team in the provision work very closely together as 'one team across three classrooms'. Staffing ratios comply with National Autistic Society suggested staffing levels. There are 4-5 staff to 10 pupils in most cases. Some of our students with more complex needs may require a higher level of staffing in order to enable us to meet those needs allowing them to progress in their learning. This happens through negotiation with the Local Education Authority. Within the provision staff are supported to continue to develop their skills and knowledge and the need for specific training and development is recognised as extremely important. The importance of a consistent staff team is also recognised as good autism practice and we strive for consistency where possible.

Intervention

The teaching philosophy in the Autism Provision at Waterloo Primary School acknowledges that it is unlikely that one intervention in isolation will meet all the needs of the individual with Autism and neither will one specific approach meet the needs of *all* children with ASD (Jordan and Jones, 2007). We therefore employ a variety of autism specific strategies and interventions according to each pupil's individual needs. Our beliefs embody 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.

Examples of some of the approaches used in the provision to meet the needs of all pupils across the spectrum include:

- Intensive Interaction
- Attention Autism
- Emotional Regulation work - discreet teaching to support pupils to understand how they feel
- Sensory input strategies - individual plans for identified pupils as well as regular sensory input strategies to support all pupils be 'ready to learn'

- Elements of the TEACCH Approach (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children) including the use of structure, visual systems, independent work areas and routine
- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC), e.g. Picture Exchange communication System (PECS), Communication Boards and books and digital communication devices where appropriate
- Social Stories and Comic Book Conversations
- Lego Therapy
- Use of Colourful Semantics and Blank Level Questioning to support literacy and communication skills
- Sensory play activities
- 1-1 teaching sessions
- Play and Interaction

Curriculum

The needs of our pupils require us to have a flexible, motivating and accessible curriculum. Pupils follow one of three different pathways:

- Subject Specific
- Semi-Formal
- Informal/Therapeutic

As we have different year groups within a class (and sometimes different Key Stages) planning has to be flexible and creative to meet the needs of all pupils. The areas we focus on are outlined below:

- My Language and Literacy
- My Thinking
- My Body
- The World Around Me
- My Social and Emotional Well-Being
- My Play and Leisure

Where appropriate, we make links within the subjects of the National Curriculum in order to make them meaningful to our pupils. Therefore, in Mrs Causey's class, this covers

- History, Geography, Science and Design and Technology
- Music and Art
- Computing
- PSHCE

Within their curriculum, pupils also have access to:

- Sensory room
- Outdoor play area
- ICT suite
- Computer and Interactive whiteboard in every classroom
- iPads
- Laptops
- Sensory circuit and other sensory equipment

Therapies at Waterloo Primary School

Waterloo Primary School, in conjunction with the Local Authority, commissions the following therapies:

Speech and Language:

Olivia Graham is the Speech and Language Therapist who works in the ASD Provision one day a week. Her role includes:

- In class advice and support in relation to general communication strategies
- Support for staff - training, guiding, modelling and demonstrating
- Support for children: observation, language assessment, development of therapy plans, delivery of specific therapy, liaison with support staff in relation to speech and language programme delivery
- Support for parents: support and advice around communication strategies, including observation in the home

Occupational Therapy

Lisa Hamer is the Occupational Therapist who works in the ASD Provision one day each fortnight. Her role includes:

- Support for staff: advice, training, guiding, modelling and demonstrating in relation to Sensory Processing and Motor skills
- Support for children: observation, working with staff to provide specific advice related to individual children and model and demonstrate how best to support their sensory integration; assessment and development of motor skills therapy programmes
- Support for parents: advice and recommendations to support Sensory Processing and/or Motor skills

Play Therapy

Jane Smith is the Play Therapist who works in the ASD Provision one day each week. Staff can refer children whom they feel would benefit from this therapy. Jane then works with them 1:1 to work on identified goals for an identified period of time. She liaises with staff and parents as part of the process.

Inclusion

Every child within the ASD classes has the opportunity for inclusion in a variety of forms, for example:

- ❖ Mainstream inclusion with support where this is appropriate and relevant to the child's learning and EHCP
- ❖ Reverse inclusion (other pupils from the school spend time with pupils from the ASD classes) where this is appropriate and relevant to the child's learning and EHCP
- ❖ Daily on the school bus to and from school
- ❖ Participation in whole school activities (where appropriate)
- ❖ Participation in whole Provision activities (where appropriate)

Behaviour

Behaviour is often a means of communication and we endeavour to understand the function 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 ones. Where necessary, pupils have Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) that are regularly reviewed and updated with parents. The provision has its own reward and motivation systems that link with our whole school behaviour policy and that incorporate the pupil's special interests and individual communication strategies. All class-based staff are trained in positive handling (Team Teach) and where necessary, children have a Positive Handling Plan (PHP) that is linked to their Behaviour Support Plan (please see the Care and Control Policy and Quiet Room Policy). The Team Teach accreditation is updated on a biyearly basis and Mrs Jones (SENCo and Assistant Head Teacher) is an accredited Team Teach tutor.

Family/Carer support

Working in partnership with parents is vital particularly as the young people often struggle to generalise skills between the two settings. Information sharing is crucial and all pupils have a home/school diary or access to the digital communication app 'Class Dojo' in which school staff write as often as necessary. Parents are encouraged to use the book/app to share information as often as possible. We aim to work together with parents and carers. They are encouraged to contact the school about any worries or concerns they have via the home/school diary or app, telephone or email. There are regular, planned opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child's progress as well as opportunities to speak to other parents/carers. These offer the families a chance to talk informally to other parents about their experiences of Autism and offer advice to each other.

Links

Waterloo Primary School SEN Information report: new link needed once ratified

Sefton Local Offer:

<http://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Sefton Carers

<https://www.sefton-carers.org.uk/>

SENDIASS

<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/advice.page?id=x8sKvkxyZyo&localofferchannel=9>