



**The Grandin Centre  
(Specialist ASD Provision)**

**2019-20**

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## **I. THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM SPECIALIST CENTRE AT KAA: INTRODUCTION**

The ASSC (Autism Spectrum Specialist Centre) at KAA is The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's (and Tri- Borough's) specialist provision for students who have a specific diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/C). Internally we call the provision 'The Grandin Centre', inspired by the Autistic entrepreneur, Temple Grandin. The purpose of the provision is to enable students with ASD to benefit from the broad range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that are available to all students at KAA. The Centre aims to encourage students to participate, progress and achieve both alongside their peers in mainstream lessons and in any targeted interventions in the Centre.

Students with needs on the autistic spectrum are sometimes capable of high academic achievement, but the severe anxiety they can experience and the difficulties they may have responding to certain social cues mean that they find the school environment very challenging and can fail to achieve their full potential. Our aim is to provide students with an emotionally secure base within the school and the personalised support both in and out of lessons, which should help them to learn well within a mainstream secondary environment. Underpinning this is ethos of high expectations for all students at KAA which will be delivered through outstanding practice to ensure outstanding progress for every student. The ASD Centre will be inspected as part of the SEN provision for the whole school and will therefore be judged under Ofsted's criteria whereby;

*'The school's practice consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those with SEN.'*

*Ofsted, 2014*

We intend to ensure our young people in the centre will be provided with all the opportunities and support to reach this outcome. To provide this support the Centre will have dedicated, specialist staff, including teachers and Learning Support Assistants who will use a range of strategies that are appropriate to the very specific and individual needs of each student. All staff across KAA will also benefit from ASD awareness training to enhance their understanding and ability to engage successfully with the students from the Centre.

## **2. STUDENTS WITH ASD**

All of the students attached to the Centre have a Statement of SEN, or an EHCP describing Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC). We recognise that every individual that is on the Autistic Spectrum (AS) has their own strengths and difficulties like any other student. Despite this, as a centre of expertise, it is important to have an overview of the sorts of general challenges that these students are likely to have.

The central difficulty for these students is in social communication and interaction. They have difficulty in understanding social behaviour and conventions and behaving in a socially appropriate way. Most children learn these skills without having to be explicitly taught. Students with AS are very literal thinkers and interpreters of language and they often fail to understand its social context. In addition, there is a difficulty with comprehension, nuance and inference. Children with AS often find it difficult to play with other children, who may become confused by their behaviour.

Apart from the lack of understanding with regard to social conventions, students with ASC may also find it difficult to be flexible in their way of dealing with different situations. They find changes to routine difficult to manage and will need prior warning. They also have difficulty with seeing other people's points of view and may seem not to care. They often have a very low tolerance threshold to certain sensory stimuli, for example, flickering lights, the hum of machinery or noisy crowds may well upset them, as can certain textures of clothes or food and smells. Others may not be aware of these distractions but they can be very stressful for the child with ASC and teachers and others need to be very aware of this. It can literally cause an overload of their senses and raise their levels of

anxiety. Their interests are often very narrow and fixed, even verging on the obsessive. However, some children with ASC also find that they have extraordinary skills in particular areas. Their academic profiles are often described as 'spiky' as they may appear delayed in some aspects of learning, but have a particular strength in another, for example in aspects of, Maths, Science, Music or Art.

### 3. CURRICULUM

#### 3.1 KS3 Curriculum and Intervention

All students attached to the Centre are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. It is expected that the students will largely attend classes with their peer group with an appropriate level of classroom support to facilitate their access to the mainstream lessons. The curriculum will be appropriately differentiated in all subjects, by the specialist subject teachers with advice from the staff in the ASD centre, to ensure equality of access to the subject material, and to also challenge every student to result in sustained progress.

In addition to the National Curriculum, many students will receive Speech and Language Therapy (according to the provision set out in the EHCP) and an enhanced personal development programme, which may include Social Skills or Life Skills. From time to time we may also be able to offer other therapies such as Occupational Therapy or Rebound Therapy.

In order for staff from the Centre to deliver the additional curriculum, some students are withdrawn from some mainstream lessons or given specific enrichment activities as and when necessary. Staff ensure that as far as possible the lesson content is delivered in the Centre but in a reduced amount of time to allow continuity for the student. This gives staff the extra time necessary to deliver the additional curriculum which the students need.

In cases where more lengthy adaptations to the curriculum are needed, a student may be withdrawn from one subject entirely. The decision to withdraw a student from a subject is done in liaison with the student, parents and staff at the school to ensure that every interested party is aware of the change, the reasons for it and the implications of the decision. For example, a student who needs regular literacy intervention may be withdrawn from MFL to provide the regular time in his/her timetable to allow for the intervention.

The need for flexibility is paramount; some students will need more intensive support in certain subject areas, whilst others may need to be withdrawn for a shorter period of time in order to 'catch up'. The student's progress in all curriculum areas is monitored very closely so that we can provide that most appropriate method of delivery to match the child's needs.

All students also have a one to one session with their 'keyworker' in order to work on individual issues. The content of these sessions is likely to be identified through the progress that they have made in the previous week, or through group social skills sessions. It could also be something which the student has identified. Their perceptions of bullying or teasing, for example, will need to be dealt with specifically as students with an ASD become very distressed by situations and occurrences which other students may well take in their stride. Whatever the event, it must be taken very seriously and also used as a learning experience for the student. Within the session the child will be helped to understand the situation and guided on building strategies for the future.

Interventions **could** include:

- Supported study sessions (e.g. homework support or subject catch up)
- Speech and Language Therapy and Social Skills
- Spelling and/or reading programmes
- Life Skills and / or PSHE
- Brain Gym or OT
- Emotional Literacy (ELSA), Counselling, CBT or other therapies from the Educational Psychology Service

### 3.2 Enrichment

All students will be supported to be able to fully participate in their chosen enrichment activities. Students may be hosted for some of the activities in the base, where they can access additional support from the staff on duty. Students will be expected to participate in the full school timetable, however some students may find the elongated day difficult to manage. If this proves to be the case, individual arrangements may temporarily be put into place, which will include a strategy to build the students back up to a full day.

### 3.3 Key Stage 4

At the end of KS3 all students, along with the rest of the school, will choose their options for study and final examination at the end of Yr 11.

All students attached to the Centre will have the opportunity to study for as many GCSEs or alternative post-14 courses as they are able to manage. However, it is likely that the demands of the course will be such that most students will not study all the options. Instead they may spend time in the Centre having support to help them with the courses and exams they are working towards.

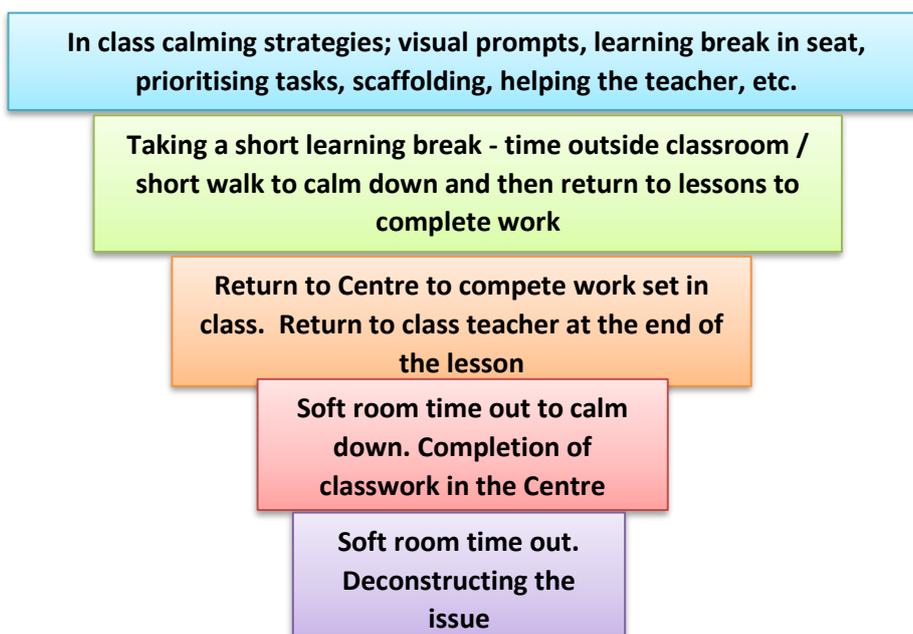
### 3.4 Internal and External exams

Students who sit exams will be accommodated within the Centre which provides them with a more familiar environment and aims to help reduce their anxiety. They are supported by people who they know to provide them with a more comfortable working atmosphere (this will also happen throughout KS3 to ensure students are used to the process).

Many of the students (but not all) are entitled to special access arrangements for their exams. These will be tested for within the school and an application will be made to JCQ to ensure students have the arrangements that they are entitled to, and those that reflect their usual working practices. These arrangements may include 25% extra time (or more if the criteria is met), a scribe, laptop, a reader (in certain exams only), an oral language modifier, a transcript and so forth.

## 4. SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN MAINSTREAM LESSONS

All students will have different educational needs and staff will be trained to adapt work and support every individual. It is widely known that, at times, the students may find it difficult to cope in the mainstream classroom and under these circumstances a hierarchy of strategies can be employed:



Students be initially be supported all of their lessons to establish key areas of need. This will be reviewed 4 weeks into the school year and a plan of support will be developed to reflect their requirements. A support assistant can expect to work with students in pairs or threes to allow for a degree of independence for each student. Students will be supported by all LSAs in the school to prevent overreliance on one or two particular adults.

## **5. ADMISSIONS**

### **5:1 Criteria**

The centre is funded by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea but will be run by KAA. It will form part of the wider Tri-Borough strategy for special education needs. The aim is to make provision available for up to four Year 7 students in our first year, growing to up to twenty students from Years 7 to 13 when the academy is full.

Admissions to the Centre will be through the Tri-Borough Special Educational Needs team, based on need and suitability of the Centre for each individual child. The Borough will refer students to the school through their admissions process and then the Lead Teacher of the ASSC will further assess the students' suitability. This process will include:

- A visit to the student's current educational setting for observations and liaison with current staff working with the child (and, if appropriate meeting with the student).
- Parent and student visit KAA for a tour and discussion of the students' needs (this may initially be done without the student where a range of educational settings are being visited, but student visits are beneficial once a decision has been made).
- Further discussions with the school, Borough case workers and other professionals
- Professional discussions within KAA with the Lead Teacher of Learning Support, the Assistant Principal: Pupils and Inclusion, and the Principal to assess whether a place will be offered.

### **5.2 Student profile on entry**

- All of the students attached to the Centre will have a statement of SEN describing Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/C) as their primary need.
- Students will benefit from access to all aspects of mainstream provision.
- Students' social skills/behaviour should be a level which enables them to, safely and appropriately, access a range of formal and informal activities.
- Students' needs, as described on their statement (or EHCP), should be matched to the resources available at the Centre.
- Students can transfer from a range of different settings, including those from a base provision, to those whose needs have been met through support within a mainstream school.
- Parents will make a commitment to embrace the ethos of the school in its desire to promote an inclusive educational experience by supporting their children to participate fully.

## **6 TRANSITIONS**

The process of change can be extremely challenging for anyone, but is often a source of great anxiety for individuals with Autism. At times, even small changes that occur on a daily basis can cause upset and confusion, therefore more significant changes must be managed and prepared for very carefully. The ASSC provides a link for students, their families and other professionals to plan and prepare the students for inward and onward transition. At the heart of the process is the

student, who will be consulted with at every stage to maximise their involvement in decision making and who will work with the staff to establish an appropriate transition programme.

The SEN Code of practice (2014) makes this explicit:

*'Children have a right to receive and impart information, to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them from the early years. Their views should be given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability (Articles 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).'*

(SEN Code of Practice 2014, Section 1.6)

### **6.1 Inward Transition Program: Year 6 to 7**

A comprehensive transition program is key to building student confidence and enabling a smooth start to their new school. This will start from the initial contact during the admissions procedure (see above). After a student has been offered and has accepted a place in the Centre the following transition programme will take place:

- Parents and student (and in some cases current LSAs) to visit KAA and the Centre to discuss needs and the process.
- Attendance by Centre Staff at the Y6 Annual Review
- Summer term transition lessons: 3 small group sessions and 1 mainstream lesson on 4 separate occasions. Students will be accompanied by their current LSAs, but supported or taught by Centre Staff. Students and visiting staff stay for break time to meet current students and begin socialisation.
- Attendance at whole school induction days, supported by Centre Staff.

### **6.2 Inward Transition Program: Post Year 7**

Students who are offered a place outside of year 7 will also have an appropriate transition program. This will be developed on an individual basis depending on the circumstances and needs of the student. This will include visits with trusted adults, photo taking and experiencing lessons. Some students may require a gradual transition where they attend the school for part of the day, others may be able to make the transition more swiftly.

### **6.3 Onward Transition**

From the outset, discussions about appropriate pathways for each individual will be discussed. Review meetings will be timed throughout the school year to enable the student and parents to have additional support with the decision making process. These may be scheduled as follows;

- Year 7 - End of Year 7 (Summer Term)
- Year 8 - End of Year 8 (early in the Summer Term)
- Year 9 - Between Year 9 Option Choice Evening and the submission date for choices
- Year 10 - Spring Term (to monitor progress)
- Year 11 – Spring Term (after Mock Exams and to determine Post 16 opportunities)

These meetings will be part of the termly meeting schedule with parents to discuss progress.

Students will be supported by staff throughout the process, both in the decision making stage and in the transition. Staff will help to prepare students for interviews and in some circumstances may accompany students to interviews. Detailed handovers will take place to allow receiving establishments to have a clear understanding of the student and visits will be encouraged.

#### **6.4 Outward Transition**

Students for a variety of reasons may leave the School. In all circumstances, the Centre will endeavour to work with the new school to ensure that a detailed hand over is in place. The staff at KAA will work with the receiving school to develop an appropriate transition plan and will complete work in school with the students to prepare them for the move.

In very rare circumstances, it may be decided that the educational setting of a Specialist Centre within a mainstream school is not conducive to the effective education or well-being of the student, or the other students. If this is the case, in liaison with the Borough, all appropriate professional advice and support will be sought to endeavour to ensure that the student has a smooth onward transition to a more appropriate environment.

### **7. THE ROLE OF THE CENTRE**

#### **7.1 Environment**

The Centre provides a space for students with ASD to be able to retreat from the hustle and bustle of the mainstream school, when they need to. It aims to provide a comfortable setting, where students can have some space and time to regroup. Areas in the Centre will be zoned so that students are clear about the activities that take place in certain areas.

The corridor will include photos of all staff to encourage familiarity, student timetables (some may be visual or colour coded if necessary) and other essential information.

The rooms will remain low sensory, with dimmable lights and low stimulus displays around the white boards.

There is also an outside space that will be solely for the use of the students in the Centre and any invited friends. It is only accessible through the Centre and provides students with an alternative environment to enjoy. Over time the space will be developed further with specific equipment and outdoor games depending on the preferences and needs of the cohort.

#### **7.2 Use of the space**

Initially, there will be one classroom that will be dedicated during lesson times to deliver interventions and more structured lessons. There is also a one to one room that can be used to deliver therapies and for more sensitive conversations. The other classroom will be the designated 'break away' space, which the students (with their support) can come back to *if* they are struggling to cope in the mainstream class. This can also be used if there is an unexpected change, such as a supply teacher or an exam or test taking place during the lesson. This room will also be a space that students can use at break time.

The soft room will be used for therapies and as a calm down space where needed. Students may use it during their breaks if they wish.

### **8. KEYWORKERS**

All students are allocated a 'keyworker' who will be the main point of contact between the Centre, parents and the wider school. They monitor their students closely and build excellent working relationships with the children and their families.

Parents can expect regular contact with the school via their child's keyworker. They will agree with the parents the best method for communication, whether it be a home/school book, email contact or regular telephone calls. Parents are always welcome to come to the Centre after calling to arrange a mutually convenient time.

### **8.1 The role of the Keyworker**

The keyworker will spend a proportion, but not all of their time with their allocated student. The aim is to foster independence through support, not a high level of dependency which is likely to occur if the student thinks that the keyworker is for him/her alone.

Specific aspects of the role will include the following:-

- Familiarisation with the student's file and background
- Build a positive relationship with the individual by making it clear what the keyworker role is
- Spend some support time in class with the student
- Ensure that student has an up-to-date timetable
- Spend some informal time with the student out of class to allow for 'problem solving' (this is likely to be in conjunction with SALT)
- Attend SALT and other therapy sessions
- Establish contact with parents on a regular basis by using a home/school contact book or other form of communication.
- Make sure that homework diary is completed and that homework is also completed. Parents will be contacted if necessary
- Ensure that the student has all necessary equipment, particularly for DT and PE
- Ensure that all teaching staff have a copy of the 'additional needs' profile
- Keep a record sheet of individual student's progress. This to be discussed with The Lead Teacher and used to inform their IEPs/ EHCP targets
- Complete social (and other) profiles annually
- Update IEPs or EHCP targets with parents as appropriate
- Attend and contribute to termly Review Meetings

## **9. BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Positive reinforcement is key to building students' self-esteem. Congratulating good examples of behaviour, kindness and consideration can lead to others following suit. Modelling good social behaviour at all times can support students to develop their own social skills.

However, students with ASD often make social 'mistakes'. They may find it difficult to understand what they have done wrong if they are being told off, or indeed they may get very agitated if someone else is breaking the rules, or if someone else is being told off. Therefore behaviour needs to be managed sensitively, calmly and with empathy for the perception of the student.

When a pattern of behaviour has been identified, visual prompts can be helpful to show the student when they are making 'that' mistake. Although there are pre-prepared visual packages available on the market, within the mainstream environment it is often more successful to develop highly individualised visual prompts or strategies.

If a student has been disruptive or inappropriate, it is important to address the issue as soon as possible after the event. Social Stories or Comic Strip conversations can be very helpful to explain to the student how their behaviour may have upset other people. Students may not necessarily find it easy to learn from this experience and will find it difficult to transfer this understanding to other,

similar situations, therefore they may seemingly make the same mistake again. Patience and understanding is paramount to supporting students with ASD when managing their behaviour.

At times, but not exclusively, it may be appropriate for Centre staff to conduct detentions, so that sanctions can be administered quickly and also discussed within the context of their ASD. This may be within the Centre itself, where short break-time or timed detentions may help to manage negative behaviour, or in liaison with a mainstream teacher.

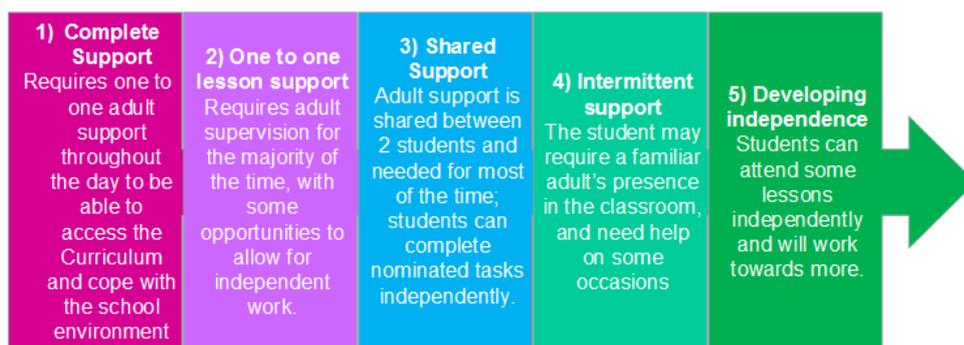
Throughout the academic year, staff training needs will be identified and addressed to ensure that appropriate techniques are being used to support the students. In particular, whole staff training to develop behaviour management techniques will be provided to support the specific needs of the students.

## 10. WORKING TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

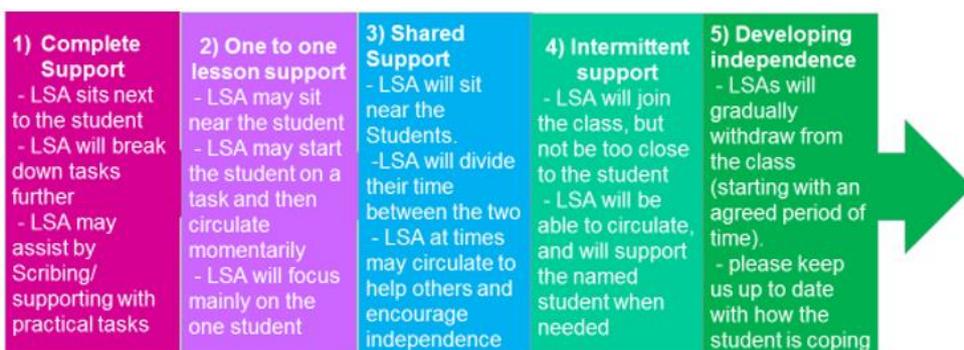
Some students with ASD find it difficult to operate independently, whilst others are determined to become independent before they have the necessary skills to do so. An essential part of the role of the Centre is to equip students as best as possible with the range of skills that they will need to move on to independent life. An additional life skills curriculum can help to develop some of the theoretical skills, however to emotionally develop in independence a reduction in reliance on adult support should be aspired to.

As a student grows in confidence and in liaison with the student, staff and parents, additional adult support will be reduced. This will happen at a comfortable pace for the student, which could initially mean that the adult is still in the room, but moves away from the student for a set period of time. The figures below outline the developing independence strategy for the Centre. The aim is to give all staff and visiting professionals an understanding of the level of personal support the student requires. It will be used to monitor the student's progress towards developing independence and provide a framework for setting developing independence targets for each individual.

### Skills for Independence Scale:



### How this support will be reflected in the classroom:



## **11. ASD EDUCATION FOR ALL**

### **11.1 Staff Training**

All staff in the Centre will have annual training to develop their own specialist skills in working with people with ASD.

As a centre of expertise, the whole staff will be trained by the Lead Teacher for the Autism Centre on Autism awareness. It is important that this is a whole staff training to ensure that anyone who may encounter the students during the school day will be aware of the needs for the students.

Teaching staff will also have additional training on strategies that can be used in the classroom to cater for the needs of these students.

### **11.2 Teaching Strategies**

There are many alternative teaching strategies that can be used when delivering material to students with ASD. The students will almost always have difficulty with processing spoken and written information, therefore some of the following may prove useful;

- Slowing down the pace of delivery
- Using direct, unambiguous language
- Whenever possible providing visual support
- Using the student's name before giving an instruction
- Whenever possible giving one instruction at a time

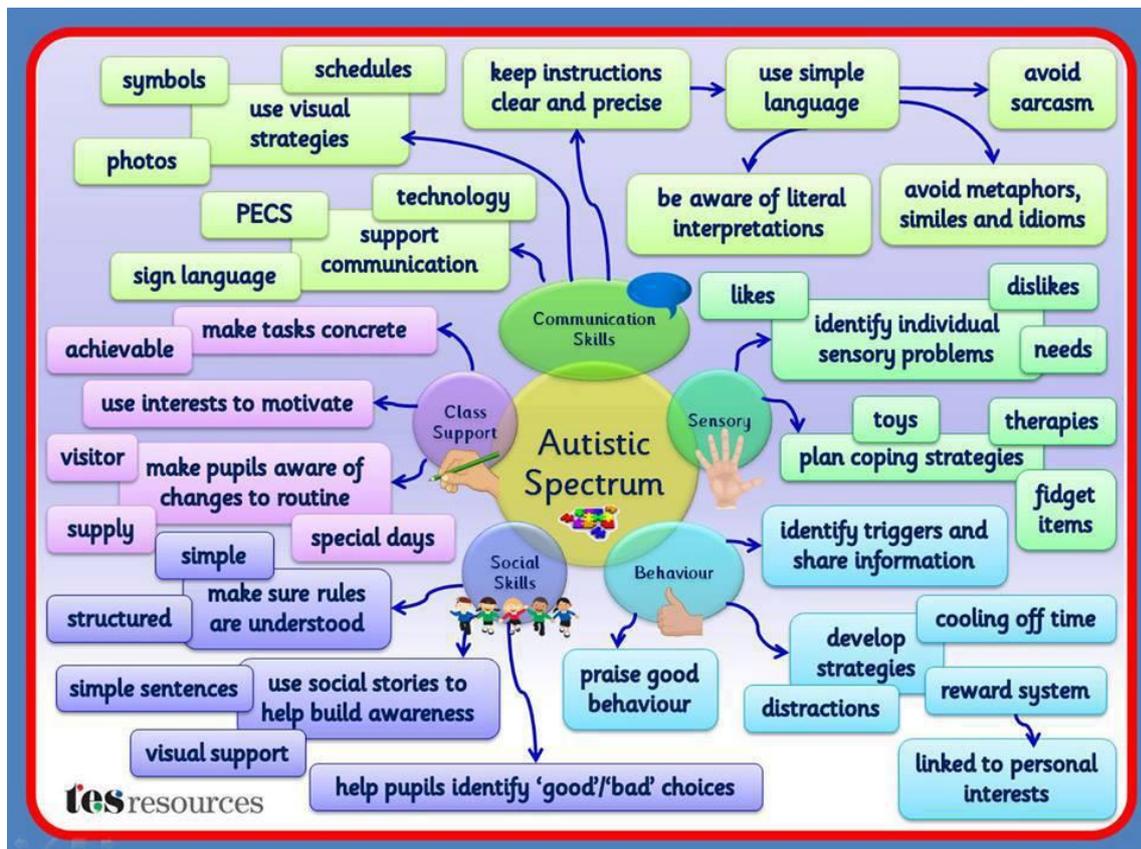
These students also find it difficult to make rapid, conceptual links and may well 'switch off' in class. To manage this it is possible to;

- Ask questions to check understanding (allow processing time)
- Repeat an instruction in the same way, break it in to sections but try to avoid rephrasing unless it is necessary
- Use a structured approach in the lesson with clear beginnings and endings to each task

Changing from whole class to pair or group work can be enormously challenging for the student with as ASD. It is important to:

- Not expect the student to know what to do when told to get into pairs or groups
- Select their groups for them with sensitivity
- Give them a specific task within the group
- Check they know exactly what is expected of them

In addition to these general strategies, each member of staff receives Student Profile for each ASC student that they teach. These outline the specific needs and appropriate strategies for the individual student. These profiles are written by Centre staff in partnership with parents and previous schools and should give staff all the information they need.



### 11.3 Student Training

For students with ASD to succeed, they also need understanding from their peers. Other students may not understand why they have been spoken to inappropriately, or why the ASD student is not laughing at their joke. ASD Awareness lessons will be delivered to all students in their classes to help them to understand the perspective of the ASD students and to provide them with strategies to help.

### 11.4 Further information

There are vast amounts of materials available online that can help when working with students with Autism. The centre has a small library of reference books and some resource packs for that can be photocopied and used with the students.

#### Suggested Reading:

- Baron-Cohen, S (2008) 'Autism and Asperger Syndrome: the facts (Oxford University Press)
- Canavan, C (2015) 'Supporting Pupils on the Autism Spectrum in Secondary Schools: A practical Guide for Teaching Assistants' (David Fulton)
- Howlin et al (2012) 'Teaching children with Autism to mind read: A practical guide' (Wiley)
- Lawson, W (2011) 'The Passionate Mind: How people with Autism Learn' (Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

#### Suggested watching:

- 'My Autism and Me' Newsround Special <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/15655232>
- 'Living with Autism' Horizon Special (Uta Frith) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvZE4Sg4SqE>