

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Birtenshaw School, Bolton

Reference No.	314
Assessment dates	16th, 28 th and 31 st March 2022
Lead Assessor	Rachel Gittens
External Moderator	N/A
Status prior to the assessment	Accredited
Advanced status applied for	No

About this Assessment

This report states key findings on how well autistic individuals are supported according to our framework of good autism practice. Evidence has been primarily obtained from observation, supplemented by evidence from interviews, a sample of support plans and information provided by the provision. If opportunities to observe has been problematic or limited greater weighting has been given to other sources of evidence.

Where appropriate, feedback has been obtained from autistic people supported by the service and/or family members and this feedback has been considered in findings.

Findings from the Assessment

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Each pupil's preferred method of communication was cited in all of the sampled class files. Communication Profiles were written to reflect the individual profile of each learner for example, including information on key strategies, specific recommendations from speech and language therapists and relevant information on diagnosis and medical needs.

Examples of specific approaches used to support young people included:

- Use a person's name first to cue them in, gain their attention at the start of a conversation
- Keep instructions simple
- Give enough time to allow a pupil to think and process

Within each Communication Profile there is a list of 'Fundamentals', these strategies address identified barriers each autistic pupil may face in relation to social communication and interaction.

Speech and language therapy assessments and reports provide staff with sound advice in how best to support individual pupils, the therapists are able to also be present in

classrooms to observe practice, to model approaches and to provide consultation to staff. This approach ensures that each autistic pupil is fully supported in their communication and social engagement, and ensures that staff provide the means and opportunities to assist learners in working towards identified goals.

EHCP Annual/Interim Review Meeting documentation includes clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each pupil in terms of their communication and interaction.

These plans, where relevant include identified goals in relation to developing:

- functional communication such as to be able to communicate when in pain and to use PECS to make requests
- social interaction skills such as initiating interaction with peers and developing conflict resolution strategies

Whilst, where applicable, speech and language therapy reports include guidance on strategies to support social communication and interaction it was not always clear, in the sampled working documentation, if staff had identified what motivates individual autistic pupils to socially interact with others, or what positive outcomes have been achieved by each autistic person in their social engagement. This could be an area for staff to reflect upon to ensure this is taken in to account and planned for.

The adviser spoke to staff from the organisation that Birtenshaw School has commissioned to provide speech and language therapy support. A speech and language therapist spoke about the remit of their work; they are conducting 12week assessments of new pupils, providing training and consultation to staff and providing direct support and modelling in classrooms.

Strengths of practice were reported as being:

- Staff at Birtenshaw School are reflective practitioners
- Support for pupils is person-centred and tailored to each individual
- There is a considered approach to using Total Communication approaches

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

The observations gave opportunity to see numerous examples of good practice which were seen to be consistent across all observed lessons. Total Communication practices were seen to be embedded, for example staff supported spoken language, to varying degrees, through facial expression, tone, pitch, sign, object references and symbols.

Further examples of good practice included staff understanding when to step in and when to step back providing adequate time for processing and giving learner's opportunity to do things for themselves.

As all pupils access individual levels of staff support, staff know those they work with very well and are therefore able to provide an appropriate level of support and challenge.

Staff provided graded support to foster opportunities to promote independence within classroom activities, for example they adapted their verbal language, provided differentiated support to manage resources and adjusted their expectations in terms of learning outcomes.

Whilst some pupils are able to express themselves verbally staff recognise the value in continuing to provide visual structure to all learners, demonstrating best practice in these approaches, and during all observations autistic pupils were able make themselves understood.

Staff provided learners with a range of visual tools to support both expressive and receptive language and communication, examples seen in use included:

- Now/Next
- Working towards
- Choice boards
- Communication Mats
- Checklists

Some pupils were seen to check items off checklists as they completed tasks, however this approach could have supported more pupils. For example, during two observations it seemed that for some it was the supporting staff who took responsibility for identifying next steps rather than encouraging learners to do this for themselves.

One teacher shared examples of planned support where 6th Form learners are working towards achieving ASDAN Awards that incorporate learning goals for communicating with members of the public, for example in local shops and in the local community.

As all pupils have individual support there is ready opportunity for 1-1 communication between staff and learners and in some observations, staff also planned opportunity for autistic pupils to communicate as part of a group and with each other.

All staff should continue to reflect on how they can foster more opportunities for learners to be engaged in activities alongside and together with each other in order to further promote social communication and interaction skill development.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Reports from occupational therapy and speech and language therapy were sampled, these included profiles of each pupils' skills and challenges, and identified strategies of support in relation to sensory processing, self-care and independence and functional skills. Staff use this information to inform their plans, incorporating the guidance into personalised curriculums and daily teaching and learning opportunities. For example to support coping with change, making choices and to support transitions.

EHCP Annual/Interim Review Meeting documentation includes clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each pupil in terms of their cognition and learning.

Individual Learning Plans describe long term aspirations, focussed areas of learning and SMART Targets which break down the EHCP goals in to achievable steps for learning.

The skills and challenges of autistic people are outlined in a number of documents, such as Pupil Profiles, Communication Profiles, Behaviour Profiles and Risk Assessments. Within each tools and approaches have been identified to provide suitable levels of support whilst fostering opportunities to further develop skills and to work towards identified goals.

Examples of goals to address skills and challenges in functioning life skills include:

- To put on a t-shirt independently
- To eat in the dinner hall at least once a week
- To use a crossing safely when in the community

The adviser spoke to a PHD student who is 18mths in to a 3yr placement, a collaboration between Salford University and the Birtenshaw Group. The research is providing a realist evaluation of what is working, how, why and how this affects the outcomes for Young People that access Birtenshaw Services. The student has had opportunity to work across the school at Birtenshaw Bolton and is now following two specific classes, their work has given opportunity to observe pupils in all activities, on and off site and throughout all transitions and to consult and interview staff. In interview the Phd student described the staff at Birtenshaw School as resilient and persistent, they were particularly impressed by the consistent approaches that staff take and by the positive approaches they have to manage behaviour.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Staff use a range of visual approaches to help pupils know what is expected of them, for example, in all observed sessions there were visual references to depict what was happening now and next. Staff utilise resources such as 'working towards...' to motivate pupils and use symbols to represent the available options during choose time on visual choice boards.

Observed lessons were planned to incorporate many opportunities for learners to do things for themselves, such as to collect the required resources, to follow a checklist to know what the next step was and to follow single and two step instructions.

Symbols to depict Now and Next and lesson objectives were used to provide visual structure and staff made good use on interactive whiteboards both to display this key information and to provide meaningful information to support the focus of teaching and learning.

Staff were mostly consistent in providing graded assistance although in some observed lessons a small number of staff sometimes unwittingly provided subtle non-verbal cues. For example, in one lesson some staff walked ahead of learners who were tasked with collecting the required equipment, thereby providing a visual cue. Practice used to foster problem solving and independence would have been improved if staff held back and allowed learners to take the lead.

Regardless of the focus of the lesson staff were seen to provide opportunity for learners to consolidate and develop literacy and numeracy skills and to take in to account daily functional skills such as being healthy. For example, staff provided differentiated support to assist pupils to read instructions, to incorporate mathematical

language such as more and less, and lesson planning incorporated natural movement breaks and opportunity for engagement in sensory breaks.

Staff recognised the individual learning approaches of different pupils and considered how best to utilise the learning environment in ways that would support their access to different lessons and learning experiences.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

All About Me profiles include details of identified sensory needs and other working documentation cite specific information, as required. For example, communication and behaviour profiles sometimes include information on pupils' sensory needs. Plans describe what sensory experiences autistic pupils enjoy and what they might find challenging.

Pupils are assessed by occupational therapy; therapists support school staff to develop individualised approaches, which where required can include access to specific interventions and therapeutic approaches.

Identified therapeutic approaches, incorporated in to individualised timetables, include Rebound Therapy, Sensory Circuits and use of the Hydro Pool.

The sampled occupational therapy reports cited strategies that can support autistic pupils in all areas of development, and some included 'volition', making clear how best to support pupils in their motivation, values and interests. Examples included providing learners with planned daily access to a range of opportunities for movement and sensory stimulation.

Sensory Processing Summary and Intervention Plans provide a summary of sensory processing difficulties that learner's present with, alongside examples of personalised strategies and, where applicable, sensory diet principles written by an occupational therapist to provide specific advice.

Examples of sensory strategies seen to be used to good effect during the period of assessment included provision of purposeful movement breaks and use of in class strategies such as use of wobble cushion, chewy stick, ear defenders.

EHCP Annual/Interim Review Meeting documentation includes clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each pupil in terms of their sensory and or physical development.

These plans, where relevant include identified goals in relation to addressing sensory needs, such as provision of sensory breaks.

The school has recently commissioned Occupational Therapy input (January 2022), the adviser spoke to the two occupational therapists working at the school. Given the short time they have worked there they were unable to comment on any specific impact/outcomes but instead gave an overview of their findings to date. The therapists

agreed that the school are equipped to meet the sensory needs of autistic pupils, providing a quality learning environment and access to a range of experiences such as pony riding, swimming and yoga.

A focus of work the therapists have is to foster the working knowledge and approaches of staff, in respect of recognising and addressing sensory needs. This will be achieved through staff training and consultation and through direct teaching and modelling. The occupational therapists report that they are working closely with the speech and language therapists to ensure a collaborative approach is developed.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Some pupils have in place sensory diets and staff demonstrated a sound appreciation of the value of this approach, for other learner's staff recognise the importance of providing for sensory experiences, including sensory breaks, and are proactive in how these are managed.

Staff ensure autistic learners have access to the things they need, for example during the period of assessment pupils were noted to use ear defenders, chewy sticks, carry preferred items and adapt their clothing, such as to be in class without any shoes.

Learning is planned taking in to account individual sensory preferences and challenges and staff utilise the learning environment to provide autistic pupils with accessible learning experiences, such as making use of quiet rooms and outdoor learning environments.

Some learners were able to initiate taking a sensory break whilst others needed to be guided by staff. In the sampled documentation there was reference to how staff should provide graded assistance for pupils who are learning to choose appropriate regulatory activities.

Learners accessed sensory activities that they found calming and enjoyable, for example during lunch time a 'Pamper Session' provided a range of sensory based activities and throughout the day staff fully utilised the environment, accessing resources such as quiet rooms, outdoor areas and the ball pool.

These proactive approaches seemed to address the needs of individual learners as throughout the observed periods pupils were seen to be on task and engaged in learning.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Plans show an appreciation of activities which each autistic person finds enjoyable, for example All About Me profiles describe what make autistic pupils happy and things they can do by themselves. Where applicable they also include references to physical and sensory needs.

Life Skills, Health and Wellbeing and Enrichment activities are included in weekly timetables for pupils in 6th Form, with the curriculum adapted accordingly to meet individual needs.

A Behaviour Profile is used to summarise key information that supports the behaviour and wellbeing of pupils, this document includes information on what are effective rewards and reinforcers, along with information on known triggers and ineffective strategies. The profile cites both the proactive and reactive strategies that have been agreed for each individual.

As required, staff write positive behaviour plans for pupils. These are written in clear language and provide an overview of the aims of the plan, identified behaviours to be addressed, the function/reason for the behaviour and strategies of support. Examples of positive strategies of support include:

- Use of quiet spaces
- Use of sensory resources such as weighted blanket
- Redirection to a preferred activity

Where Team Teach approaches are required the plans describe the agreed approaches and make it clear that these are only to be used if the young people cannot be kept safe by other means of support.

Risk Assessments assess potential hazards and how to manage known risks.

EHCP Annual/Interim Review Meeting documentation includes clear references to the individual strengths and progress made for each pupil in terms of their social, emotional and mental health. For example, identified needs include difficulties regulating emotions

A number of documents cite information on the goals and aspirations of learners, for 6th Form pupils these include long term aspirations in four key areas; cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social emotional and mental health and physical and sensory.

For pupils in 6th Form meaningful work experience placements are identified which provide 'real life' opportunities for Young People to work towards achieving goals and aspirations, examples include work in charity shops, car valeting, kitchen prep and a café.

Feedback from learners and their parents, gained through surveys and interviews, shows that they are happy with the support their relative receives. The adviser met with a group of pupils and spoke to four parents, three of which said "the school are amazing". Further comments included:

- communication between home and school is good
- the staff know their child well
- they feel their child is safe
- they are pleased with the progress their child is making
- there was an individual transition in to school

The parents spoke highly of how the school works in partnership with them, and with other services, to address the complex needs of their children.

The school celebrates and comes together through a range of in-school experiences such as Super Learning Week and Mental Health Awareness Week and they have links with the wider community. One example is links with a residential care home where pupils visit the residents and partake in shared activities such as exercise and singing.

In interviews staff spoke about how they involve learners in identifying goals and aspirations through the EHCP process. They described how individual learning plans are developed which break down identified medium- and long-term targets in to achievable steps. Staff adapt their approaches to enable meaningful consultation with pupils in determining how they like to be supported and they seek to provide engaging learning experiences which encourage learners to actively participate.

Staff spoke about how they engage pupils to reflect on their learning using approaches respectful of their age and capacity, for example through annotations and photographs, taking in to account their feedback when planning new learning experiences.

In interviews staff also spoke about their links with families and with staff that work in the residential children's services. There are daily handovers for every pupil, these are carried out in different ways for example verbally, through communication books and emails. Parents and carers are involved through the formal EHCP process and throughout the year staff liaise with them in respect of celebrating achievements and addressing concerns.

Team Teach support for staff in residential services is provided, as required on an individual basis, and where families need further direct support they are signposted to community based services.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Staff were observed to use proactive and preventative behaviour support strategies in line with those documented in personal plans and in line with Birtenshaw Behaviour Policy.

All staff treated learners with respect and provided structured support to help them make and take decisions and to support them to be ready to learn. During the period of assessment most pupils presented as feeling safe and calm, and where support was required, staff were quick to de-escalate and provide personalised support to those that presented as anxious or distressed.

There were many examples where strategies of support were differentiated to ensure that learning was accessible to all, and where staff were mindful to adapt lessons and work flexibly in the moment, in response to pupils learning and emotional wellbeing needs.

Using calm and sensitive approaches staff supported autistic learners to understand and regulate their emotions, to take responsibility for themselves, and to know what strategies were available to them.

No restrictive practices were observed to be used during the assessment.

In some classes the use of Class Dojo was observed being used to good effect, staff were seen to use the system to provide positive praise and reward which was directly linked to their actions.

Structured support gave opportunity for pupils to both foster their independence and generalise skills; during learning times and transitions around school staff used positive language to encourage and motivate pupils, and they had high expectations of what learners can do things for themselves.

The curriculum is highly differentiated and lessons are planned to provide learners with meaningful activities, they find fun and interesting, and which give opportunity to both consolidate knowledge and try out and learn new things. Lesson planning incorporates opportunity for pupils to work towards identified goals, staff plan graded support and differentiated learning opportunities that create opportunities for success whilst also providing a level of challenge. These approaches help ensure that pupils get to experience a sense of completion and achievement.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths: in supporting autistic people:

During the assessment it was found that autistic pupils are well supported in speech, language, communication and interaction at Birtenshaw School Bolton.

For example, Total Communication practices were seen to be embedded and used consistently across; Staff supported spoken language through facial expression, tone, pitch, sign, object references and symbols.

With regards to problem solving, self-reliance and the teaching of functional skills staff use a range of visual approaches to help pupils know what is expected of them.

In all observed lessons, transitions and in observations undertaken at lunchtime, staff provided learners with a range of visual tools to help them know what was expected of them. Staff were consistent in their use of resources such as 'Now' and 'Next' and 'Working Towards...' and they used symbols to represent the available options during choose times.

Staff provided opportunities for sensory breaks made good use of the direct classroom access to outdoor spaces. Classrooms and the wider school environment were found to be well managed with auditory and visual distractions kept to a minimum.

Within all observed sessions pupils had access to the things they needed such as wobble cushions, ear defenders, and chew sticks.

Autistic pupils are well supported in their emotional wellbeing. During the period of assessment most pupils presented as feeling safe and calm, and where support was required, staff were quick to de-escalate and provide personalised support to those that presented as anxious or distressed.

What the provision could develop further

Priorities for the provision in ensuring consistency and quality in supporting autistic people:

In order to further promote social communication and interaction skill development staff could foster more opportunities for all learners to be engaged in activities alongside and with each other.

It was not always clear, in the sampled plans, what motivates individual autistic pupils to socially interact with others or what positive outcomes have been achieved by each autistic person in their social engagement. This could be an area for staff to reflect upon to ensure this is taken in to account and planned for.

To further develop staff approaches in how they are able to best support pupils to become effective communicators, and to further support autistic pupils to develop skills of self-reliance and problem-solving staff could be more mindful of graded levels of assistance and cues. With this in mind a focus on prompt hierarchy might be beneficial.

Other areas to consider:

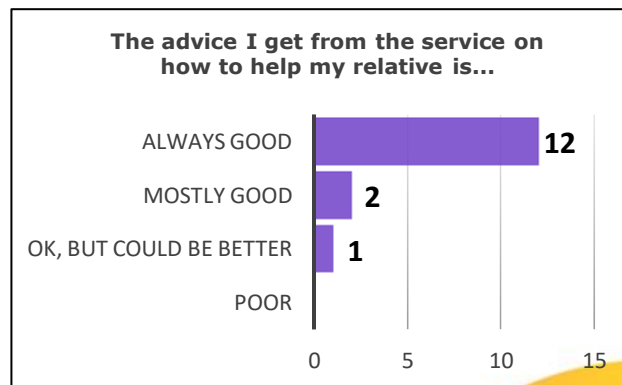
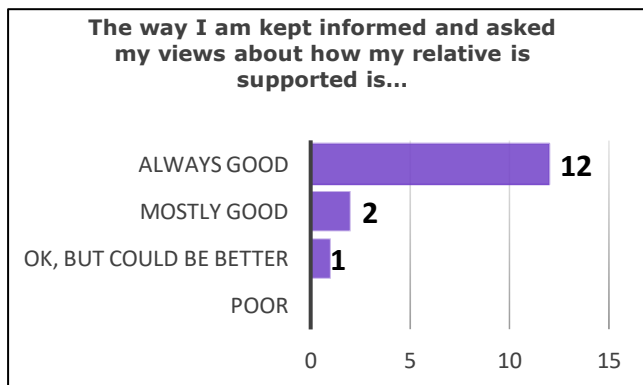
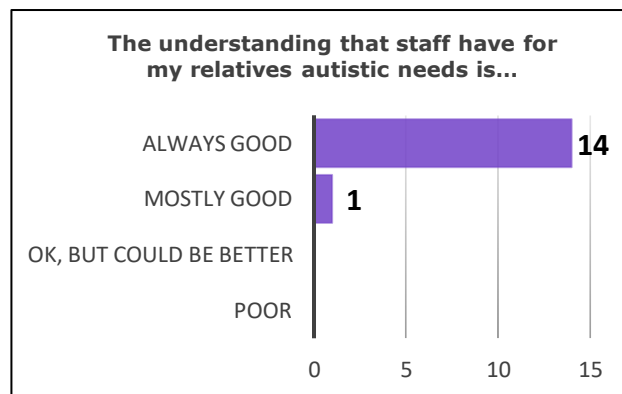
The school has recently commissioned services for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. Given that these are recent appointments they should continue to build on this collaboration.

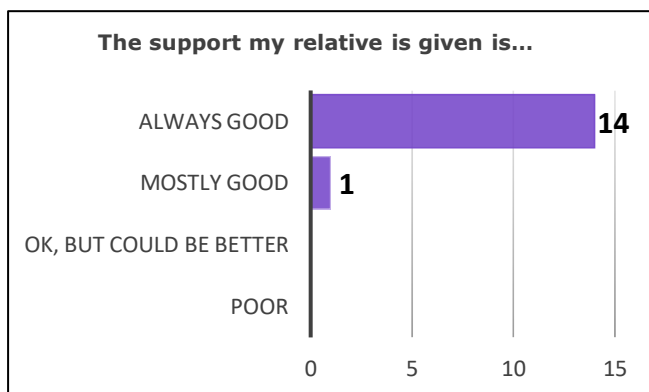
Birtenshaw School, Bolton are expanding with building works well underway, with this new venture due to open in September 2022.

There will need to be a focus on ensuring the additional staff appointments and working practices and the learning environment are developed to the same high standard of the current provision.

APPENDIX: SURVEYS

Families of Autistic Persons - Questionnaire Responses (15)





Comments

Since he started at Birtenshaw, my son has gone from being afraid of school and refusing to go, to being excited to start his school day and missing going in the school holidays. His class teachers are fantastic, firm but fair and kind and loving with him- exactly the approach that he needs and which he

thrives from.

Birtenshaw go above and beyond for my Daughter, and are always trying new things on how to teach her new things.

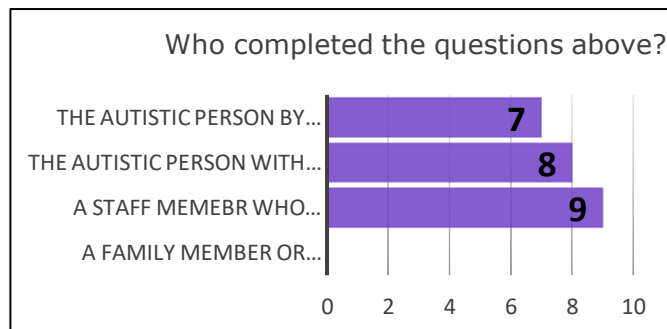
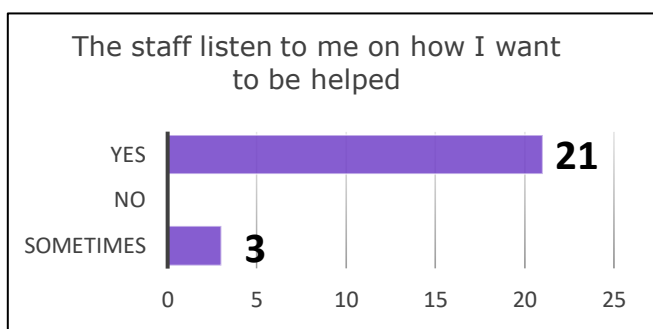
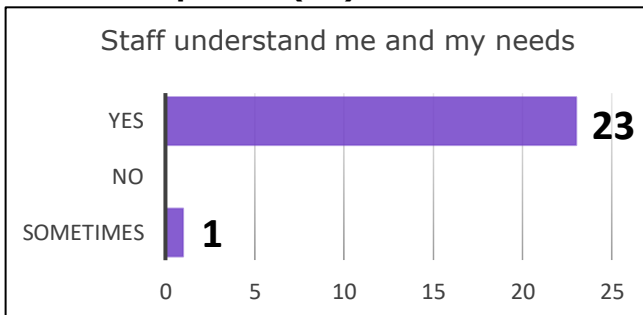
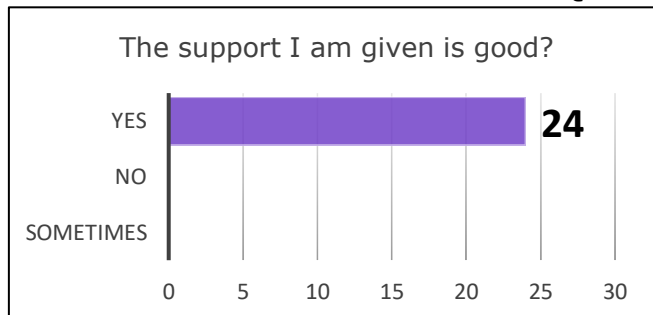
Birtenshaw staff know my child's every need. In my opinion they are an outstanding provision. My child is always happy in school and has made excellent progress

My child has come on so much since moving schools to Birtenshaw. It's amazing to see the change in him.

My child has attended Birtenshaw for 6 years. The structure and routine are an essential part of his life. His sensory needs are met and adjusted to keep him regulated and focused and staff are just amazing, always available to listen to concerns and make accommodations to help. A daily communication book keeps me informed of everything done in the day and helps me communicate with my child in an evening about how his day's been as he wouldn't tell me himself. Any concerns or developments in his behaviour at home can be written in his book or I can email staff who always respond promptly. My child loves school, he gets chance to experience so many activities such as pony riding, swimming and the gym that keep him active and help his sensory needs. During the pandemic they were amazing and I was so grateful for them keeping open and doing everything in their power to keep things as structured and safe as possible. Nothing is ever too much trouble. The school is a lifeline to my child and I am proud and thankful for everything he achieves and to the staff that make it such a welcoming and happy place.

The relevant staff members who look after my child are aware of her needs and try to accommodate the best way they can.

Autistic Person - Questionnaire Responses (24)



Comments

1	anonymous	Thank you
2	anonymous	Thank you
3	anonymous	Thank you
4	anonymous	Thank you
5	anonymous	Thank you

6	anonymous	Thank you
7	anonymous	Thank you
8	anonymous	Thank you
9	anonymous	Thank you
10	anonymous	i like my school because people are nice and we are always here for each other- Damien
11	anonymous	i like the PE satff from Luke
12	anonymous	i like working with different staff.
13	anonymous	i like school because i get to read and i get to cook- Jack
14	anonymous	this is the best school i have ever been to, and the staff understand me.- Jaydon
15	anonymous	my school is nice because my teacher is the best- Patrick
16	anonymous	i like my school dinners- zakir

Paste Responses here

APPENDIX: INFORMATION FROM THE PROVISION

Type of provision e.g., special day school; residential care home etc

Birtenshaw School is a non-maintained specialist school for children aged 3 to 19 with SEND. All pupils have an EHCP. Birtenshaw School is part of The Birtenshaw Group.

How many people are supported by the provision?

There are 56 pupils on roll with three pupils in transition. The school is registered for 60 places currently. This number will increase to 132 in September 2022 with the additional of a new building.

How many of this number are autistic?

47 of pupils on roll have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition.

What is the range of autistic people supported by the provision? e.g., age; learning disability; verbal or non-verbal etc.

Currently there are 47 pupils on role with a formal diagnosis of Autism. The spectrum of Autism here at Birtenshaw School, Bolton is extremely varied. Some pupils are working towards GCSE's and will live independently in their adult life, others need an intensive support throughout the day to meet their basic needs, keep them safe and to make progress.

Information about the pupils;	Total
Number on roll	56
Number with an EHCP	56
Number who are looked after	16
Number in EYFS	0
Number in KS1 (Years 1 and 2)	0
Number in KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)	9
Number in KS3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)	13
Number in KS4 (Years 10 and 11)	15
Number in KS5 (Years 12 and 13)	14
Number Post 18	5
Communication	
Spoken - partial	17
Spoke – fully competent	20
Signalong	2
PECS – partial	8
PECS – fully competent	4
Proloquo2go	1
Gestural	5
Primary diagnosis	
ASC	28
ASC and ADHD	12
ASC plus other diagnosis	7
Learning disability	5
Global development delay	3
Smith Magenis Syndrome	2

The structure of the school is made up of Route One, Route Two and Sixth Form. Route One is for pupils working between levels P1 and P4. Route Two is for pupils working from P5 and Sixth Form is for pupils aged 16-19. Route One has a key focus of communication and sensory needs, building pupils' tolerances, community access and independence skills. Route Two provides a broad and balanced curriculum and works towards a number of accredited qualifications. Sixth Form is personalised to each individual pupil. The curriculum is built around individual outcomes and long-term aspirations to ensure that all pupils are working towards and building their skills for adulthood and employment. With a range of qualifications, independence and work experience placements pupils are provided with the skills to live as independently as possible in their adult life.

Outcome of last statutory inspection if applicable.

Body	Date	Outcome
OFSTED	June 2017	Good

Please include a hyperlink to the report:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/105280>

What are the main specialist approaches used in supporting autistic people in their social communication and sensory regulation and promotes their independent and well-being?

Birtenshaw has Occupational Therapy provided by 'Shine Therapy'. We have two Occupational Therapists based at Birtenshaw, who work closely with pupils; particularly during the first 12 weeks. In those first 12 weeks the OTs complete many different assessments through observation and feedback from staff, parents and carers as well as any other professionals involved. The observations from the 12 week assessment then help create a Sensory Diet for each child which is detailed in a therapy report. For some children this may lead to additional equipment to support their sensory needs in and out of the classroom, additional hydrotherapy or rebound therapy as well as individual activities throughout the school day for the staff working with the child to follow. The OTs also link closely with parents to support sensory processing needs at home which results in a holistic approach. The OTs work very closely with the Speech and Language therapists. SaLT is provided by 'Communicate' and we have two SaLTs and a SaLT assistant. SaLT provide group sessions as well as one to one sessions. They also facilitate lego therapy sessions. They also complete a 12 week assessment and the two therapy services complement each other really well. There are four Learning Support Assistants who are also trained Communication Assistants in school who complete weekly training sessions with the SaLT team and help to cascade information to the staff team.

As well as the support from the therapists we have:

- The sensory integration room (swing room) and Soft play (ball pool) and pupils can access these at any point during the day to help meet their proprioceptive and vestibular sensory needs.
- The Immersive Room (dark room) again can be accessed at any time. There are many features in this room to help calm, regulate and relax pupils.
- There are four safe spaces which are padded quiet rooms for pupils to go to when they need to calm. Some pupils who present with self-injurious behaviours use these rooms to ensure their safety.
- Every classroom has at least one independent room / quiet room which can be used by pupils when the main classroom becomes too overwhelming.

- The play area has been designed alongside the occupational therapists to ensure that pupils sensory needs are met outside the classroom.
- Pupils access hippotherapy (horse / pony therapy) once a week
- The hydrotherapy pool and trampolines are timetabled for classes as well as one to one session but can be used as and when required if they are free.
- Therapeutic support is given to all pupils. Therapist assessment and monitor pupils progress and share information and consistent approaches through written documents and annual review reports. Therapist also offer a bespoke and personalised approach to all pupil's as and when required (change in behaviour, need, lifestyle etc)

What training or support do staff receive in delivering these approaches?

All staff are provided with an intensive support package when they first start. As well as the mandatory training such as: Health and Safety, Fire Training, Safeguarding, staff also access additional sessions including:

- Managing Challenging behaviour
- Autism Training
- Team Teach
- PECs and communication
- Safeguarding
- Recording and reporting

All staff receive the training package at the start of their employment. Bespoke, responsive and personalised training is also sourced and provided as and when required. This is to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to support all pupils to the best of their ability. All therapist and other trainers are also on hand to support staff when required (SALT, OT, Team Teach) this ensures a full team approach and supportive environment for all staff.

What processes are in place to ensure that each autistic person has a regularly reviewed personal support plan that identifies strategies and sets targets in their social communication and sensory regulation and promotes their independent and well-being?

All pupils when joining Birtenshaw go through the process of a 12-week assessment period. During this period pupils undergo an intensive assessment from both the SALT and OT. This assessment is then communicated to supporting staff and targets and consistent approaches are created. Documents around behaviour management, risk

assessment and other key documents are created and updated throughout the 12-week assessment period whilst staff gain knowledge and understanding of the pupil. All pupils are also set termly ILP targets that are linked to their EHCP long term outcomes and aspirations. This is to ensure that all targets are SMART, achievable and purposeful for all pupils.

Pupils are set termly or half termly ILP's to work towards. Targets are SMART and measurable and are all linked to individual EHCP outcomes and long-term aspirations. This ensures that pupils targets are personalised and purposeful for them and their future goals.

All documents are then reviewed and updated (where necessary) termly.

How are autistic people consulted in the support they receive?

Pupils are invited to attend their reviews to share their views and can do so in person or via questionnaires completed beforehand.

Pupils are never forced to participate in learning or therapies and our priority is for pupils to engage in their learning in a positive, calm and regulated state. Pupils are able to choose what activities they want to complete in between lessons and social interaction opportunities are built around these choices.

In sixth form pupils are able to opt in to their own Enrichment and Health and Wellbeing sessions. The Sixth Form curriculum is wholly designed around each child's long-term aspirations.

How are the family who represent the best interests of the autistic people consulted about the support their relative receives?

Parents and carers are consulted on a regular basis about their child's progress and support. This is done in daily handovers, termly reports and annual reviews. Parents and carers receive detailed information on approaches and strategies in place and are regularly updated of any changes. This also supports them in the consistency of these strategies in the home and other areas of the pupils' life.

Parents and carers thoughts and opinions are valued and taken into consideration when building support plans and strategies.

What do you consider to be the main areas of development for the provision?

The implementation of the new curriculum has involved the biggest change in classes / rooms, curriculum topics and teachers and over the next few months we need to work collaboratively to continually reflect and analyse the impact so far, identifying any outstanding actions needed to Improve.

The introduction of the new building will lead to an additional 72 pupils and 70+ members of staff. The challenge will be to ensure that the two sites are working as

one team and to ensure the quality of provision is not affected by the growth. The introduction of Early Years Provision will bring new teachers into the team and it is vital that the values, approaches and strategies are consistent across each of the two sites.

What do you consider to be the main areas of strength for the provision?

Pupils flourish at Birtenshaw because they are supported by a Total Communication approach, encouraged to be themselves, learn in a way that suits their learning styles and access therapeutic input throughout the day. We avoid imposing potential barriers and a one size fits all approach. For example; pupils are not expected to wear a school uniform, we encourage pupils to be comfortable when they come to school. We also do not have school bells or whole school timetables to reduce the hectic build up of people in corridors that many schools struggle to manage. Staff are incredibly proactive in managing strategies around behaviour and we work collaborative as a team, alongside parents, carers, therapists and professionals to ensure a wrap around approach. We have a no exclusion approach.