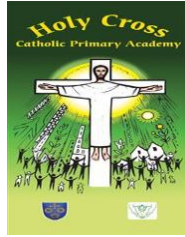


Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy School ASC Policy



Mission Statement

Where Jesus is the centre of our lives, our learning and friendships, in a safe, happy and caring community where all are welcome.

“Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world.” (National Autistic Society)

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

There are four main 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. For further information please visit: <https://autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>

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The social interaction and emotional understanding difficulty may result in a child appearing withdrawn and ‘difficult to reach’ and there may be limited motivation to interact with others.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 Condition.

These difficulties in communication mean that pupils may struggle 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 difficulties 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.

Our 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.

Provision for children on the Autism Spectrum

Where a pupil has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC) they may have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) based on needs, or One Plan based on needs and they will have a One Page Profile. Admissions are independent of the school's admissions policy where an EHCP is placed and will be controlled by Essex County council in conjunction with SENDOPS (Special Educational Needs Operations Services).

Staffing

Staff are allocated depending on the skills they have to meet a particular set of pupils needs. Where a child presents with more complex needs, they may require a higher level of staffing in order to enable us to meet those needs allowing them to progress in their learning and life skills; which will be supported by the schools initial expected resourcing funds and extended by top-up funding granted by SENDOPS – as identified within an EHCP. We value the need for continued professional development and support staff to develop their skills and knowledge through specific training. The importance of a consistent approach by all staff is also recognised as good autism practice and we strive for consistency throughout the whole school. In order to support staff, the children and families the SENCO maintains good links with Specialists including Speech and Language Therapists. Specialists can provide staff training, undertake observations and assessments and provide expert skills and recommendations.

Intervention

The teaching philosophy 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 with 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 a provision of a structured, positive, empathic and where needed – a 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
- ❖ Social Communication Groups
- ❖ Structure, visual systems, independent work areas (where beneficial) and routine.
- ❖ Picture Exchange communication System (PECS)
- ❖ Makaton
- ❖ Attention Autism
- ❖ Social Stories and Comic Book Conversations
- ❖ Sensory activities
- ❖ 1-1 teaching sessions, group sessions and support as needed for whole class learning.
- ❖ Play and Interaction
- ❖ Musical communication

Curriculum

There are two main strands to the curriculum in the provision.

1. A Core Curriculum which is further individualised to meet the needs of each young person, aiming to keep their interests at the heart; to increase engagement.
2. A broad and balanced curriculum that incorporates the National Curriculum and is accessible to pupils below expectation.

1. The Core Curriculum

The needs of our pupils mean that we have identified the following as our core curriculum. Areas may be identified in the pupil's desired outcomes within their EHCP, which in turn informs planning.

- ❖ English
- ❖ Maths
- ❖ RE

As we have a range of needs within any class, planning has to be flexible and creative to meet the needs of all pupils. The class teacher/s and support staff, along with SENCO & specialists as needed will work together to ensure that planning meets individual needs to the best of their ability; ensuring access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which considers the child's needs and interests – based around their EHCP or needs highlighted within their One Page Profile or any other documentation designed to recognise individual needs. Parents gain regular updates and along with the child are kept central in informing how to best meet needs and maintain consistency.

2. A broad and balanced curriculum.

We consider topic work as an appropriate way of making the subjects of the National Curriculum meaningful to pupils with autism. The topic planning covers

- ❖ History, Geography, Science and Design and Technology. These may all be under the heading of Understanding the World.
- ❖ Music and Art or Expressive Arts and Design.
- ❖ Computing
- ❖ PSHE

Within the curriculum, pupils also have access to:

- ❖ The Learning Zone, The Nest and Nurture Spaces which offer nurture and sensory space alongside learning and social skill support.
- ❖ The Cookery room and Library
- ❖ Outdoor play area, including our Forest School Area
- ❖ A Computer and Interactive board in every classroom
- ❖ iPads or Laptops
- ❖ Relaxation boxes
- ❖ A Motor skill development equipment box
- ❖ Social skill programmes
- ❖ Workstations as needed ~ either in or out of the classroom
- ❖ Space to work in a quiet environment for explicit teaching on 1:1 or small groups
- ❖ Relaxation and meditation
- ❖ Sensory diets or heavy workload activities
- ❖ Staff support guidance and deliver programs for speech, occupational therapy or other health guidance/programs.
- ❖ Colour monsters or alternative emotional visual rating scales e.g the zones of regulation
- ❖ Regular movement breaks, reward / brain breaks.
- ❖ Adjusted hours if needed
- ❖ Alternative arrangements for entry and exit to reduce over stimulation from social crowding.

Inclusion

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

- ❖ Mainstream inclusion with support to day to day learning in and out of the classroom
- ❖ Lunchtimes and playtimes in the hall and outside with the rest of the school; with an appropriate level of support, where access to such environments is considered safe for them.
- ❖ Assemblies and whole Key stage or school celebrations or joint activities.
- ❖ Class trips and experiences on and off site – including residential trips within Upper KS2, where reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate needs.
- ❖ PE and swimming activities – where the child is able to participate with or without reasonable adjustments
- ❖ Access to clubs – where the child is able to participate with or without reasonable adjustments
- ❖ Access to the SEMH Coordinator to support emotional well-being, which is supported by all staff within the school.

Behaviour

Behaviour is often a means of communication and we endeavour to understand the function behind the behaviour. This is supported by using a 5 Step Plan; built on detailed observations of a child's behaviours – with input from family and staff. Specific strategies are used to reduce anxiety and promote feelings of well-being and to modify unwanted behaviours and promote more appropriate ones, in order to ensure that the child is able to gain the most out of experiences in a supportive environment. Consistent management plans can also be placed – identifying needs and triggers and strategies to place by all staff to ensure consistency in approach. Holy Cross are embarking on their journey with Trauma Perceptive Practice and staff are encouraged to engage in training around trauma response approaches continuously.

Family/Carer support

Working in partnership with parents is vital, sharing information is crucial and pupils are likely to have access to a home/school diary which school staff write as often as necessary. Parents are encouraged to use the book to share information as often as possible. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school about any worries or concerns they have via the home/school diary or via telephone/email. There is usually a verbal handover each day and reviews take place at least 3 times a year. Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any changes in the child's needs/behaviours and share positive steps and progress as well as concerns; allowing a holistic and consistent approach for the child.

Links (to name a few key documents)

Holy Cross SEN Information report
SEN Policy
Intimate Care policy
Positive relationships and behaviour policy
Positive handling policy

Essex Local Offer - <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/>

Autism Education Trust <http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>

National Autistic Society <https://www.autism.org.uk/>