

Autism Friendly Schools Initiative



Wolverhampton Outreach Service
Supporting Schools. Enabling Inclusion

Introduction

Wolverhampton City's Autism Strategy (2016-21) identifies that 'all schools are likely to include pupils on the autism spectrum' (p.12) and as a result encourages schools to become 'autism aware and autism friendly'. The strategy acknowledges that 'a one size fits all approach to education for pupils with autism will not be appropriate' (p.14) and urges agencies within the City to support schools to develop a 'consistent, evidence-based graduated response to supporting the needs of pupils with autism' (p.14)

Wolverhampton's 'Autism Friendly Schools' (AFS) initiative is a self-evaluative tool developed and supported by the City's Outreach Service. The initiative aims to support schools in identifying their strengths and next steps in provision for their learners with autism and to facilitate positive developments in this area.

The initiative outlined here is purposefully designed to be accessible, succinct and manageable in order to aid completion by already busy schools. The initiative will also be supported by direct link to a designated member of Outreach staff, who will assist schools in recognising their own strengths and areas for development and support the school in implementing desired changes.

Procedure and support

Once a school has completed the self-evaluative element of the document, Senior Leaders should email the draft version of this document to the Outreach Service Coordinator. This will trigger the allocation of support to a member of Outreach staff. The allocated member of staff will then contact the school to support the reflective process and the implementation of agreed actions.

In order to facilitate completion of this Autism Friendly School (AFS) document, Outreach staff will offer the following support:

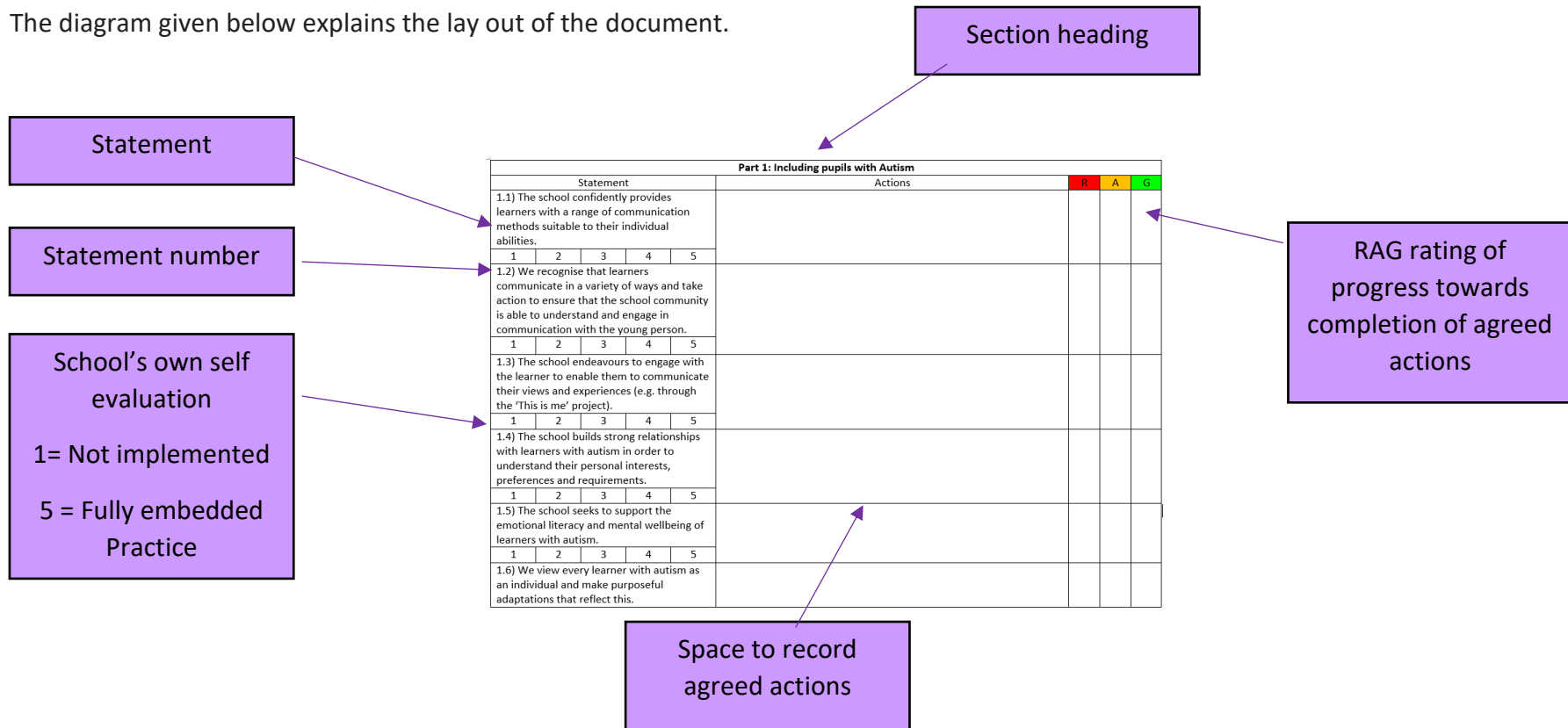
- Support with the self-evaluative process (including observations of individuals or class groups with feedback)
- Assistance with the identification of key actions for the school or for individuals within it
- Targeted evaluation of the provision being made for individual learners with autism
- Advice and support for individual teachers or TAs
- Support with the development of personalised resources
- Assuming the role of a critical friend, particularly when the schools is evaluating its progress towards the implementation of key actions.
- Celebrating the achievements and progress of individuals and the school as a whole

Completion of the documentation

The AFS initiative is broken down into 5 key areas:

- Part 1: Including pupils with Autism
- Part 2: Adapting the environment
- Part 3: Responding to behaviour
- Part 4: Engaging with others
- Part 5: Staff Development

The diagram given below explains the lay out of the document.



| Part 1: Including pupils with Autism | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|--|---------|--|---|---|---|
| Statement | | | | | Notes / Evidence | | Actions | | R | A | G |
| 1.1) The school confidently provides learners with a range of communication methods suitable to their individual abilities. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1.2) We recognise that learners communicate in a variety of ways and take action to ensure that the school community is able to understand and engage in communication with the young person. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1.3) The school endeavours to engage with the learner to enable them to communicate their views and experiences (e.g. through the 'This is me' project). | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1.4) The school builds strong relationships with learners with autism in order to understand their personal interests, preferences and requirements. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | |
| 1.5) The school seeks to support the emotional literacy and mental wellbeing of learners with autism. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | | | |
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| 1.6) We view every learner with autism as an individual and make purposeful adaptations that reflect this. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.7) We evaluate and plan for the sensory preferences and behaviours displayed by the learner. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.8) Structures are in place that enable us to take a consistent and measured 'plan, do, review' approach to managing the individual behaviours of the learner. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.9) We use pupil passports or one page profiles to communicate effectively about the needs of a learner. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.10) We take a proactive approach to the academic and social inclusion of learners with autism. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.11) We make adaptations to our school curriculum to ensure accessibility for learners with autism. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.12) Staff differentiate in ways that reflect individual needs and preferences. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |

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| 1.13) We are considerate of the difficulty that some learners with autism may have to participating in major school events (e.g. unstructured days and trips out of school) and make the necessary preparations to ensure their inclusion. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.14) Our learners with autism can find things to excite and engage them in our curriculum and their learning is facilitated by the approaches that we use. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.15) Our assessment systems carefully monitor and celebrate progress over time, whilst enabling learners to demonstrate their individual potential. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 1.16) We guarantee that successful strategies are shared, consistently applied and passed on through purposeful transition planning. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |

Part 2: Adapting the School Environment

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| 2.1) The classroom environment is structured in a way that facilitates the learner's personal learning preferences (this may include the use of timetables, schedules, work stations, visual supports etc.). | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2.2) We have made environmental adaptations that enable us to provide for the sensory preferences and behaviours displayed by the learner. | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2.3) We are mindful to manage sensory stimuli in our school, particularly in our learning spaces (e.g. reducing noise, colour, clutter etc.) | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2.4) We provide quiet, safe or sensory reduced spaces across our school including in classrooms as required. | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2.5) We have structured unstructured times (e.g. by using zoning at play time or introducing lunch time clubs). | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2.6) We use clear, accessible and consistent labelling and signposting throughout our school (e.g. for routes, rooms or resources). | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

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| 2.7) Where a pupil requires visual support this is used with equal consistency inside and outside of the classroom. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 2.8) We have carefully considered the arrangements in our dining space to make them as inclusive as possible (e.g. furniture arrangements, seating plans, visual labelling, routine, pathways and expectations). | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 2.9) We have carefully considered the arrangements for our assembly times to make them as inclusive as possible (e.g. seating plans, exit routes, opt out support, sensory resources). | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 2.10) Where required we have made adaptations to the structure of significant transition points in our school day (i.e. points of entry to the school, start, finish, lesson change etc.) | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |

Part 3: Responding to behaviour

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| 3.1) The school is aware of the 'Getting it Right' approach and follow the pathway outlined within. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.2) The school use the iceberg model and ABC(D) charts to unpick the functions of behaviour. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.3) A key worker or mentor is identified. This individual works to proactively build relationships with the learner and supports the development and implementation of personalised interventions. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.4) Risk assessments are used to target, reduce and prevent the most risky or concerning behaviours. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.5) Staff observe for sensory seeking behaviours, making suitable sensory replacements and implementing a personalised sensory diet where required. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.6) Staff view behaviour as communication. They listen carefully to | | | | | | | | | |

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| learners to attempt to understand what is being communicated. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.7) Staff develop personalised reward approaches that reflect the special interests of the learner. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.8) Safe, quiet, sensory reduced spaces are readily available when escape behaviours are observed. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.9) A range of strategies are used to enable staff and learners to reflect on behaviour. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.10) We use IBPs, MESP's and risk assessments to ensure that a consistent approach is taken in response to risky or inappropriate behaviours. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.11) We proactively teach desirable behaviours. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3.12) We recognise that young people have preferred ways of self-regulating and make every effort to facilitate this at times of stress. | | | | | | | | | |
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Part 4: Engaging with others

4.1) We engage purposefully with parents to best understand the needs of their child with Autism.

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4.2) We support our learners with autism in engaging with their peers and where appropriate this includes facilitating discussions about their diagnosis.

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4.3) The school deliberately raises awareness of Special needs and disabilities, including Autism.

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4.4) The school engages with a range of professionals from across the city to enhance the provision of, and support for, learners with autism.

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Part 5: Staff Development

5.1) Staff are offered regular professional development related to Autism and there is a qualified Autism Leader in our school.

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5.2) Our staff are aware of barriers to learning that can be faced by pupils with autism. They have received CPD relating to the pedagogical approaches that are most often suitable to these learners and adapt their practices accordingly.

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5.3) Staff have received Level 1 and Level 2 Autism Awareness training from the Wolverhampton Outreach Service.

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5.4) Selected members of staff have completed the Autism Practitioners Award.

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5.6) Staff are aware of a range of agencies that can offer them further CPD relating to Autism.

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5.7) Staff have an awareness of support strategies perceived as beneficial to learners with Autism (e.g. TEACCH, PECs,

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| Makaton, Intensive Interaction, Rebound etc.) and know how to access training in these areas if required. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |

Thank you for completing Wolverhampton's Autism Friendly School's initiative. For Outreach support, please email a copy of your completed self-evaluation to Dr Eve Griffiths (Outreach Service Coordinator) on egriffiths@pennfields.com