



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent City Council

The Autism Spectrum including Communication and Interaction Needs Guidance.

The Autism Spectrum including Communication and Interaction needs Guidance.

The children and young people (C&YP) to whom this guidance relates will present with a range of communication and interaction differences which challenge their learning and social inclusion. Individual C&YP display a range of differences which will vary in severity and intensity and which may change over time. It is not expected that any C&YP will match all the descriptors listed below. C&YP who display social, communication and interaction differences but who are not diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder may share some of the difficulties in social imagination, inflexibility of thought and sensory differences seen in C&YP on the autism spectrum. The suggested provision and resourcing at the appropriate range will support effective teaching and learning for this group of C&YP.

Children and Young People with communication and interaction differences/ Autism may have differences in the areas specified below. Use these descriptors to identify the needs of an individual C&YP.

Communication and Reciprocal Social Interaction (Social Affect):

Difficulties recognising that they are part of a class, group or wider social situation.

Social situations present challenges resulting in emotional outbursts, withdrawal, social vulnerability and/or isolation.

Poor empathy, imagination and play skills which affects social understanding and impacts on learning in subjects such as English and RE.

Unusual eye gaze or eye contact. Facial expressions may be limited or reduced in range. May not use or understand non-verbal communication.

Difficulties with understanding spoken language or difficulties expressing their own wishes and feelings (expressive and receptive needs). Speech may be delayed or unusual and may have an odd intonation pattern with immediate or delayed repetition (echolalia).

Literal interpretations of language and learning with poor understanding of abstract language. Higher order language skills may be impaired, e.g. understanding and use of metaphor, inference and emotional language.

Issues interpreting and understanding whole class instructions and general information.

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Difficulties with the concept of time and sequencing of events significantly affecting every day activities.

Difficulties with personal space. May invade others space or find close group work difficult.

Little awareness of danger in comparison to children of their age. May run or climb with no regard to hazards. May be unaware of hurting others.

May have coping strategies that enable successful social interaction with peers. At times of stress or anxiety, however, responses will be unusual and socially awkward.

Restricted and Repetitive Behaviours:

Anxiety to small unplanned changes on the environment or learning tasks leading to reactions of outbursts or withdrawal.

Unusual or different behaviours or obsessions with everyday objects, people or toys. This can lead to difficulties with finishing desired activities. May display an intense interest in a topic that is explored with a high level of frequency and/ or inappropriateness to context or audience.

Difficulties managing transitions between managing different environments or tasks.

Inability to maintain focus and concentration age appropriately. May be easily distracted or may not switch attention easily.

Inconsistent patterns of behaviour across a spectrum from challenging or impulsive to extreme passivity.

Sensory Differences:

Unusual over or under responsiveness to sensory stimuli e.g. touch or noise which may affect access to everyday events or activities e.g. dining halls. May show signs of delayed hand/eye co-ordination and/ or fine/ gross motor skills or display unusual body movements such as flapping, toe walking, tics or unusual posturing. May eat inedible objects 'pica'.

May display unusual sensory responses to the environment at times of heightened stress. This may present as anxiety.

Sensory differences can affect physical milestones such as toileting and eating development. These can cause high anxiety in the child/ young person and those who care for them.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

| Range | Descriptor | Planning | Pupil Groups | Staffing | Differentiation | Resources |
|-------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| 1 | <p>1) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 1 will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on pages 13 and 14 of this document that may affect their access to some aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 1. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>C&YP may or may not have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder made by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Will be part of school/setting and class teaching and assessments.</p> <p>SENCO may be involved in more specific assessments and observations.</p> <p>Planning:</p> <p>Curriculum plans should include individual/ group targets.</p> <p>Family may be involved regularly and support targets at home provided.</p> <p>Pupil will be involved in setting and monitoring his targets, where appropriate.</p> <p>Information around specific C&YP will be shared with staff in setting at pupil progress meetings.</p> | <p>Must be included in mainstream class with specific targets which involve communication and interaction.</p> <p>Should be offered opportunities for small group work within the usual classroom planning and management.</p> | <p>Flexible use of resources and staffing available in the classroom.</p> <p>Support from colleagues within setting including the SENCO.</p> | <p>The use of Quality First teaching to support the development of social communication and interaction skills.</p> <p>Must have full inclusion to the National Curriculum.</p> <p>Flexibility may be required to enable the C&YP to follow instructions and/ or record work.</p> <p>Instruction may need to be supported by use of visual and written cues.</p> <p>Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required.</p> <p>Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions, may be required.</p> | <p>Flexible use of resources and staffing available in the classroom.</p> <p>Support from colleagues within setting including the SENCO.</p> |

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| <p>2</p> | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 2 will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on page 1 of this document that affect access to a number of aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 2. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>C&YP may or may not have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder made by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>As range 1 plus:</p> <p>Use of more detailed NC assessment tools.</p> <p>Could also include other assessments relating to need, e.g. advice from SALT or OT advice where applicable.</p> <p>Planning:</p> <p>Curriculum plans will reflect levels of achievement and include individually focussed targets, especially in the area of Speech and Language and PSHCE.</p> | <p>Will be mainstream class based and will have opportunity for small group and individual target work to target specific needs relating to communication and interaction needs.</p> <p>May need adaptations to the working environment such as a quiet area within the classroom for individual work.</p> | <p>As range 1 plus:</p> <p>Setting:</p> <p>Will need additional professional support from skilled colleagues e.g. SENCo, to aid curriculum modifications.</p> <p>Will need additional professional support from skilled colleagues to develop strategies to address social interaction, social communication and social understanding.</p> <p>Will need use of additional school support specific materials, approaches and resources as appropriate.</p> | <p>As range 1, plus:</p> <p>Setting:</p> <p>Curriculum access will be facilitated by using a structured approach to provision which should involve: using visual systems or timetables; reducing language for instructions/ information giving.</p> <p>Teaching approaches should take into account the difficulties identified within range descriptors.</p> | <p>As range 1 plus:</p> <p>The use of Quality First teaching approaches.</p> <p>Flexibility will be required to enable C/YP to follow instructions and/or record work.</p> <p>Clear use of visual and written clues will be useful to support instructions.</p> <p>Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required.</p> <p>Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions, will be required.</p> |

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| <p>3</p> | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 3 will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on page 1 of this document that will affect their access to some aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life. This will be especially true in new and unfamiliar contexts.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 3. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>The pervasive nature of the Autism/ C&I needs is likely to have detrimental effect on acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore, on the result of any assessment.</p> <p>C&YP may or may not have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder made by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>As range 1 and 2 plus:</p> <p>More specialised assessment tools in relation to specific descriptors to include PSE level assessments.</p> <p>Accurate and up to date assessment of independent levels must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family.</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Curriculum plans will reflect levels of achievement and must include individually focused IEP targets.</p> <p>Planning may need to incorporate adaptations such as rest breaks, time allocated to sensory difficulties and processing needs.</p> | <p>As range 1 & 2 plus:</p> <p>Inclusion within the mainstream classroom. However, there will be a need for an enhanced level of individual support.</p> <p>Targeted support will be needed which may include unstructured parts of the day e.g. start and end of the school day, breaks, lunchtimes and trips out of school.</p> <p>Support for areas of sensory needs which may include 'time out' space and other environmental adaptations to reduce stress and anxiety.</p> | <p>As range 1 and 2 plus:</p> <p>Teaching approaches must take account of difficulties identified within the range descriptors.</p> <p>Key member of staff should be available to work with a member of staff where re-referrals are made.</p> <p>Staff working directly with pupils must have knowledge and training in good practice when working with C/YP with communication and interaction needs/ autism.</p> <p>Schools should consider using the Autism Education Trust staff competencies to support development of specialist skills.</p> | <p>As range 1 and 2 plus:</p> <p>May need to make noticeable adaptations to the curriculum to aid access and reduce anxiety.</p> <p>Will need differentiation by presentation and/ or outcome.</p> <p>May need enhanced PSHCE teaching to ensure skills are embedded.</p> | <p>As range 1 and 2 plus:</p> <p>The use of Quality First teaching approaches.</p> <p>Flexibility will be required to enable C/YP to follow instructions and/or record work.</p> <p>Clear use of visual and written clues will be useful to support instructions.</p> <p>Preparation for change and the need for clear routines will be required.</p> <p>Reduction of complex language, especially when giving instructions and asking questions, will be required.</p> |

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| 4a | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 4a will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on page 1 of this document that severely affect access to a number of aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 4a. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>The pervasive nature of the Autism/ C&I needs is likely to have detrimental effect on acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore, on the result of any assessment.</p> <p>C&YP may or may not have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder made by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> <p>C/YP will have an uneven learning profile but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-3 plus:</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Should include assessment advice from other agencies e.g. SALT or OT.</p> <p>Planning:</p> <p>Increased level of understanding by teaching and support staff will require plans for developing whole school understanding of pupil's needs. To include all setting staff that may come into contact with C/YP on a daily basis.</p> <p>Planning must adhere to the targets set within statutory assessment document (EHC Plan) to include adaptations to curriculum to ensure the development of independent learning and life skills.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-3 plus:</p> <p>Robust planning to meet objectives defined in EHC plans.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-3 plus:</p> <p>Setting:</p> <p>All staff aware of de-escalation strategies.</p> <p>Additional training of mainstream staff to support curriculum modifications and social interaction, social communication and social understanding.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-3 plus:</p> <p>Must implement all recommendations.</p> | <p>As range 1-3 plus:</p> <p>To reflect EHCP</p> <p>Significant adaptations to curriculum, teaching methods and environment needed to access the curriculum. These will include: Conceptual understanding of everyday language and subject specific vocabulary; pace of delivery; significant pre-learning and over learning of concepts and functions and use of alternative recording methods.</p> <p>Where appropriate, an alternative curriculum must be offered to develop independence and life skills.</p> <p>Will need enhanced PSHCE and SRE programmes to ensure skills are embedded, these are likely to need some element of individual work.</p> |

| Range | Descriptor | Planning | Pupil Groups | Staffing | Differentiation | Resources |
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| <p>4b</p> | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 4b will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on page 1 of this document that severely affect access to a number of aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 4b. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>The pervasive nature of the Autism/ C&I needs is likely to have detrimental effect on acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore, on the result of any assessment.</p> <p>C/YP at range 4b may be in the following settings:</p> <p>Special</p> <p>Attainment profile is below expected NC level, the majority of attainments within the P level range.</p> <p>Mainstream:</p> <p>C/YP will have an uneven learning profile but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum. C/YP will require significantly more support than is normally provided in a mainstream setting. Pupils within Designated Special Provisions will have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> | <p>Assessments:</p> <p>As ranges 1-4a plus:</p> <p>Must include detailed assessment for PSHCE, life skills and sensory needs.</p> <p>Risk assessments must be carried out and shared with all staff and family.</p> <p>Planning:</p> <p>Where needed, positive behaviour plans must be completed and shared with family.</p> <p>Must include planning for the whole day, including unstructured times.</p> <p>Planning must take into account C/YP's learning styles, identified strengths and learning needs.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-4a plus:</p> <p>Access to a quiet area within the classroom that must be available when needed to offer opportunities for distraction free learning.</p> <p>A variety of groupings must be used to ensure learning, including time in a quiet, distraction free environment.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-4a plus:</p> <p>Setting</p> <p>Flexibility of staffing available to accommodate need, especially during unstructured times such as start and end of day, break and lunch times and trips out of setting.</p> <p>Key staff must have accredited training in Autism/C&I needs.</p> <p>Additional training of mainstream staff to support specific curriculum modifications in relation to needs identified in the range descriptions.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-4a plus:</p> <p>Curriculum modifications must be selected to engage C/YP with C&I needs/ Autism in relation to curriculum content, peer group.</p> <p>Therapeutic approaches will be integral to curriculum delivery and used to support the emotional well-being of the C/YP.</p> <p>Planning for unstructured times must be provided.</p> | <p>As ranges 1-4a.</p> |

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| 5 | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school:</p> <p>C&YP at range 4b will have communication and interaction needs identified by the rangedescriptors on page 1 of this document that profoundly affect access to a number of aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 5. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>The pervasive nature of the Autism/ C&I needs is likely to have detrimental effect on acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore, on the result of any assessment.</p> <p>C/YP at range 5 may be in the following settings:</p> <p>Special</p> <p>Attainment profile is below expected NC level, the majority of attainments within the P level range</p> <p>Mainstream:</p> <p>C/YP will have an uneven learning profile but their attainment levels suggest they can access a differentiated mainstream curriculum. C/YP will require significantly more support than is normally provided in a mainstream setting. Pupils within Designated Special Provisions will have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> <p>C&YP may or may not have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder made by an appropriate multi-agency team.</p> | <p>As range 1-4 plus:</p> <p>Must include detailed assessment for PSHCE, life skills and sensory needs. In addition, the assessment of behaviour and medical needs to inform the planning process where required.</p> <p>Where needed: risk assessments, behaviour support plans and positive handling plans must be carried out and shared with all staff and family.</p> <p>Must include planning for whole day, including unstructured times.</p> <p>Accurate and up to date assessment of independent levels must be kept as a working document to aid planning and to share with family.</p> <p>Long term involvement of education and non-education professionals is likely to be needed.</p> | <p>As range 1-4 plus:</p> <p>A variety of groupings must be used to ensure learning, including time in a quiet distraction free environment.</p> <p>C/YP in mainstream/DSP will have access to a quiet area within the classroom / DSP available when needed to offer opportunities for distraction free learning.</p> <p>Daily opportunities for C/YP to manage their own anxieties by graded access to a range of environments.</p> | <p>As range 1-4 plus:</p> <p>High staffing ratio to support teaching and learning with sustained opportunities for 1:1 support.</p> <p>All staff trained and experienced in working with pupils.</p> <p>Key staff must have advanced training in C&I needs/ autism.</p> <p>Additional training of mainstream staff to support specific curriculum modifications in relation to needs identified in the range descriptors.</p> <p>C/YP are likely to need consistent home school transport provision.</p> | <p>As range 1-4 plus:</p> <p>Curriculum modifications must be selected to engage C/YP with C&I needs/ autism in relation to curriculum content. Peer group etcetera.</p> <p>Therapeutic approaches must be part of the curriculum and used to support the emotional wellbeing of the C/YP.</p> <p>Access to specialist approaches and equipment as part of a holistic package to meet the individual's sensory, social communication and understanding need.</p> <p>May use a range of alternative augmentative communication to support social and functional communication skills to enhance interaction and understanding e.g. PECS, Makaton, Electronic voice output communication aids (VOCA).</p> | To reflect EHCP |

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| 6 | <p>1)) Use pages 12 and 13 of this document to identify the relevant descriptors for the C/YP with whom you are working.</p> <p>2) Consider whether the following statement describes how the C/YP is affected within the school: C&YP at range 6 will have communication and interaction needs identified by the range descriptors on page 1 of this document that profoundly affect access to a number of aspects of the National Curriculum including the social emotional curriculum and school life. Even in known and familiar contexts and with familiar support/ people available.</p> <p>3) If this statement accurately describes your child or young person use the advice given in range 6. If not you will need to consider descriptor for other levels.</p> <p>The pervasive nature of the Autism/ C&I needs is likely to have detrimental effect on acquisition, retention and generalisation of skills and therefore, on the result of any assessment.</p> <p>Pupils with the C&I specialist setting or enhanced DSP setting need an environment where interpersonal challenges are minimised by the adult managed setting.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Targets must be individualised, short term, specific reviewed.</p> <p>Detailed NC assessments (e.g. PIVATS, Bsquared) to inform planning/ target setting.</p> <p>On going teaching assessments including social communication skills, emotional skills, emotional wellbeing, life skills, including, as needed, preparation for adulthood.</p> <p>Long-term involvement of educational and non-educational professional as appropriate in assessment and planning.</p> <p>Assessment of emotional regulation, sensory needs, individual behaviour needs and medical needs must be used to inform planning.</p> <p>Curriculum planning closely tracks levels of attainment and incorporates individual targets and therapy programmes.</p> <p>Individual care plan/ protocol to be in place.</p> <p>May have a positive handling plan.</p> <p>Will have Behaviour Support Plan and risk assessment.</p> | <p>Robust planning to meet the objectives in the EHCP.</p> <p>Small groups within a specialist provision for communication and interaction needs.</p> <p>Specialist educational setting.</p> <p>Daily opportunities for small group and 1:1 teaching and learning.</p> <p>Where possible graded access to mainstream learning activities and leisure opportunities.</p> | <p>High staffing ratio to support teaching and learning and learning with sustained opportunities for 1:1 support.</p> <p>All staff trained and experienced in working with pupils with AS.</p> <p>All staff trained and experienced.</p> <p>Consistent staff team experienced in AS.</p> <p>Consistent home school transport provision e.g. staff vehicle.</p> <p>Access to specialist approaches, equipment and therapeutic services as part of the curriculum.</p> | <p>Curriculum access will be facilitated by using a predictable approach which may involve: using visual systems or timetables; reducing language for instruction/ information giving; teaching strategies should give consideration to difficulties with transfer of skills; teaching approach should take account of difficulties in understanding the social rules and expectations of the classroom.</p> <p>May use a range of alternative augmentative communication to support social and functional communication skills to enhance interaction and understanding e.g. PECS, Makaton, VOCA.</p> <p>Use of adapted teaching materials, resources to support teaching and learning for those sensory and/ or physical impairment.</p> <p>Will need enhanced PSHCE/ life skills and SRE programmes to ensure skills are embedded.</p> | To reflect EHCP |