


Sycamore Class Provision
Specialist Provision for Autism
Alderwood Primary School

THE
C  **MPASS**
PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

Walnut and Ash Class Curriculum

At Alderwood our specialist provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) enables children to be active learners, learning to effectively communicate needs, wants, and opinions, whilst moving towards independence. The curriculum provides the opportunities that are essential for learning and development. All children have special educational needs and face significant and complex barriers to learning which include autism, sensory impairments and speech and language and communication needs. Children within the classes have specific, diverse and individual needs and the curriculum models aim to reflect and meet these needs.

The curriculum is inclusive of and builds upon the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and meeting children's individual learning needs and priorities, with all pupils accessing both core and foundation subjects delivered at an appropriate level and in a style suited their individual needs and abilities. For some children who are not yet developmentally ready for 'subject specific' knowledge, the curriculum is used as a vehicle for a broad and balanced offer. Teachers work in collaboration with the relevant year group teacher to personalise the curriculum for each child. We aim for all children to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their developmental level and aim for them to integrate into their mainstream classes confidently. High expectations and aspirations for children are enshrined in the teaching of the curriculum models.

Our curriculum aims to provide the opportunities we think are essential for the learning and development of children at the DSP. Their primary needs are autism, moderate learning difficulties / dyslexia, and many have additional specific needs which include ADHD, sensory sensitivities or impairments and medical needs; e.g. epilepsy. Our curriculum aims to have a learner centered approach in which every child is encouraged to enjoy learning, make progress and achieve.

We recognise that children at the DSP have specific, diverse and individual needs and our curriculum aims to reflect and meet these. Our goal is that the children are enabled to be active learners who are moving towards independence, autonomy, control and choice and learning to effectively communicate their needs, wants, and opinions. Our curriculum addresses not only the learning needs of pupils with autism (including preferred styles of learning and uneven ability profiles) but also addresses their social, emotional well-being, their communication needs and life skills.

Aims

We aim for our curriculum to enable children to:

- Be able to communicate their needs, wants, opinions and thoughts through the most effective means for them
- Be active learners
- Develop their social skills so that they can engage and interact with others to the best of their ability
- Develop skills for learning
- To access learning opportunities that are relevant coherent, broad and balanced
- Opportunities of integration to mainstream classes
- Be active and live a healthy lifestyle

- Access a clearly structured day with routine which they can recognise and understand
- Develop their skills to promote fuller participation in home, school and community life
- Develop motor control and physical independence including the enjoyment of participating in a range of physical activities

Alderwood DSP have met and in line with the competencies of the four main area of the **Autism Education Trust Standards**;

- The individual pupil (how to understand and address their strengths and needs)
- Building relationships (with staff; parents/carers, other professions and peers)
- Curriculum and learning (adjustments to the way in which activities are presented, selection of priorities and modifications to the curriculum)
- Enabling environments (how to create good learning environments for pupils on the autism spectrum).

Implementation

The curriculum is implemented through:

- Our ethos and approach
- Our learning environments
- Positive relationships
- Lessons and lunchtime activities
- Routine / structured approach
- Special events
- Home-school partnerships
- Learning outside the classroom
- Multidisciplinary work
- Personalised learning
- Child-led approach
- Learning and development

Learning environments

As a school we believe that environment drives behaviour. Our learning environments are both inviting and exciting whilst also being structured to the children's needs. Our children live in a sensory world; therefore, we believe that our children should be exposed to displays and topics tables, in line with the mainstream classes. It is our role to support our children in interacting with them appropriately. Relationships between adults and children are key when supporting all children across the school and children are supported to work with a range of different adults.

Aspects of **TEACCH** (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children) are used in the DSP as these provide structure and routine to the day and help the pupils make sense of what can be a bewildering experience. Alderwood DSP places great importance on creating an

autism-friendly environment to facilitate pupil learning. The unit has been designed to ensure that pupils do not suffer from sensory overload:

- Displays are kept to a minimum to reduce visual confusion
- Displays to support daily routine, positive behaviour management and self-regulation skills.
- TEACCH approach implemented
- Personalised opportunities
- Workstations
- Book corner
- Sensory room

A calm atmosphere helps support the creation of an autism friendly environment as effective learning cannot occur when pupils are agitated or disturbed by others' disruptive behaviour. The setting uses a variety of cues (eg tactile, visual, auditory) to help pupils with autism understand and navigate the environment. The classes encourage staff to adopt a calm, empathic approach and to give pupils with autism time to process and respond to instructions. Both classes have clearly defined spaces / areas for personal equipment and places of safety for pupils with autism.

A positive learning environment is created by:

- Placing pupil achievement at the heart of the DSP and the school.
- Giving pupils ownership of their behaviour.
- Using predictable daily routine, reward system, 'working for' to encourage good work and positive behaviour.
- Setting high standards of behaviour that are clear and explicit.
- Staff working to support positive outcomes for individuals.

High quality planning and teaching

Planning and teaching in our provision is a collaborative process between both the lead teachers, the Inclusion leader and other professionals. We are also supported by teachers from Willow Dene when planning, evaluating and tailoring the curriculum to the children's needs.

The DSP involves pupils, where possible, in formulating their long-term goals and ambitions and all staff have high aspiration for these pupils.

Our setting ensures that pupils with autism are effectively and regularly consulted on all aspects of their education and experience at school.

The EHC Plan Annual Review outlines the children yearly targets and these contribute into their termly IEP's. The children contribute into both documents using their pupil voice and are clearly aware of what their targets and next steps are.

Learning outside the classroom

Children who access both Ash and Walnut class have regular opportunities during the week to learn outside the classroom. The children attend weekly swimming lessons, trips on the bus (travel training), visits to the shop, park and horse riding with occasional 2 / 3 days camping events. Regular yearly trips to the seaside, educational trips and trips with mainstream classes.

Play and free time;

Play can be qualitatively different in a child and young person with ASD. Play can be limited, repetitive and often solitary. It is frequently based around special interests and obsessions or sensory seeking play. The play of children with ASD often does not match their chronological age. The higher stages of social play are very challenging

for children with ASD because they require individuals to have good communication and interaction skills as well as imaginative ability.

Alderwood DSP aims to enable children to develop their ability to interact and play with others. Staff who work with children with ASD to ensure that their response to the child is based on sound knowledge of the play stages and a thorough understanding of the individual child, their interests, motivators, social awareness and sensory sensitivities. The role of the adult is to facilitate and develop, scaffold, enhance and extend a child's play skills and have fun.

Routine / structured approach

Across both classes we utilise the whole school visual timetable. This supports children when they are accessing their mainstream classes, ensuring there is consistency and a familiar point of reference.

Our setting provides individualised visual supports to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is understandable and predictable. We have activities that are well organised, structured and planned for and ensures that, where possible, advance warning is given (to both pupil and parent/carer) of any changes to familiar routines in a way that is meaningful and helpful to the pupils with autism and their families. At the same time, we are able to demonstrate flexibility in making adjustments to activities, lessons, timetables and their delivery, as necessary, for pupils with autism.

We set clear rules and boundaries to demonstrate what is acceptable and expected from pupils with autism. These are consistently applied, except where staff have good reasons to know that a focus on rules and routines may be distressing for some pupils with autism.

Learning and development of staff

Regular opportunities for staff development are available. We work closely with ASD outreach, speech and language, and Willow Dene to support our staff planning and support of individual children and the provisions. Staff regularly attend Borough training led by ASD outreach on specific strategies; e.g. attention autism, sensory integration or analysing behaviour. In addition to this staff have opportunities to observe and learn from placements with Willow Dene school.

Home-school partnerships

Our setting establishes strong relationships between staff and pupils and their families, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being. We understand that in order to build effective relationships it needs to actively listen to pupils, parents and carers and promote opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas. This will enable families to feel that staff are open and approachable to discussions.

We recognise that a large factor in children's progress lie in positive home/school relationships. We regularly hold sessions for parents to work alongside their children as well as meet other parents whose children access the provision. In Ash and Walnut class parents are invited to attend coffee mornings and parent workshops throughout the term to explore strategies and share information such as E-safety, Greenwich Local offer and behaviour. Reading records and homework are also used to work in partnership with parents and carers. Parents are also supporting outings to the seaside or mainstream class' trips. Homework is problematic for many pupils with autism who can insist that home and school are to be kept separate. However, we recognise that homework is important to support independent learning

and is to be encouraged. The weekly homework supports subject knowledge and it is at the appropriate level for independent learning.

Whole school activities and independence

The curriculum models place the development of independence at the heart of all that we do. Enabling children to develop autonomy, control and a sense of agency in a manner that is meaningful to them. Children in Ash and Walnut classes are very much part of the school community and are supported to take part in whole school activities such as sports day, choir, assemblies, playtimes and whole school projects. We recognise that for some of our children whole school events may cause some distress and for these children we would offer activities within the provision and strategies that will help them to integrate confidently in the future.

Sensory integration

We recognise that children need to be in a ready state for learning and view sensory integration as integral to any learning to meet their personal sensory needs.

Children's sensory needs are prioritised and addressed to help them achieve a state of readiness for learning. Sensory integration is an integral part of learning for children in Ash and Walnut. It is embedded in discreet and planned sessions to teach and support children to process sensory information. Children who need support with regulation and modulation have planned opportunities to develop strategies to help them to self-regulate and process sensory information through routines and individualised programs.

We follow a 'Whole Class Sensory Diet Approach'. It is a planned and scheduled program of activities designed to provide the "just right" combination of sensory input to achieve and maintain optimal levels of arousal and performance in the nervous system. That is, by including a good mix of sensory motor activities throughout the day students will be in a better state of focus to work in class.

Although all of our students have their own unique sensory needs there are very good reasons to provide a class-based group sensory diet. Not only is it impractical to have each student on an individual sensory timetable throughout the day but as there are certain types of sensory input that work for nearly everyone therefore the whole class approach is very effective.

Communication

Elective and assistive communication is incorporated into every area of the curriculum. The provisions promote a total communication approach through the child's environment, which include strategies such as visual supports, objects of reference, PECS, colour coding signing and verbal language. The curriculum promotes children's pre-intentional and intentional communication skills through approaches such as Attention Autism, intensive interaction, social skills and structured play. Focused communication sessions are planned throughout the week to ensure that key areas of communication have a clear focus such as developing anticipation, sharing information, reciprocity, social awareness and supportive strategy skills. These sessions are taught in fun and motivating ways to ensure all children have an irresistible invitation to extend their communication.

Staff is expected to use a range of techniques to support communication and learning. The Speech and Language Therapist advises all staff on good practice and a range of strategies to support teaching. Reducing "teacher talk" is part of this practice. Teachers must not overload pupils who may have an impaired ability to process verbal information.

Learning skills

We follow and in line with the Quality First Teaching for children with a diagnosis of an ASD document.

Teaching skills for learning is fundamental to children's growth and continued independence. Across the curriculum children are taught the skills that are required to be able to acquire knowledge and take care of themselves. Social skills opportunities to develop social skills are threaded throughout the day. Planned and integrated teaching of this area facilitates an awareness of self and others. Social skills are taught through planned opportunities to develop social awareness and an understanding of simple social rules. Motivational social communication and play activities in and out of the classroom environment help to develop an awareness of others and build relationships. This approach enables skills to be practised in a meaningful way.

We support the needs and enhance the strengths of children and young people with flexibility of thinking difficulties.

Strategies to support flexibility of thinking

- Intensive interaction
 - Strategies to support transition
 - Visual strategies to teach play and games and support social interaction such as waiting and turn taking
 - Using visual supports such as schedules, timetables (TEACCH™ style strategies) and social stories™ to support children to cope with change and unexpected events
 - Using TEACCH™ strategies to create structure and meaning in environments
 - Social thinking and doing activities and resources
 - Visual support strategies such as Social Stories™ and social mapping to explain social context and give alternative perspectives
 - Develop skills that will help to understand other people's thoughts, feelings, intentions and behaviours.
 - Training about communication and difficulties in ASD relating to flexible thinking e.g. tell the person what to do rather than what not to do
 - Training for staff teams to recognise signs of anxiety and alleviate it with appropriate strategies for children and young people with AS
- Regular Chess and Logic sessions to encourage flexible thinking through a playful activity.

Self-help skills

Self-help skills, such as eating, drinking, personal care routines, dressing and undressing are learning experiences that are planned for. Children's dignity, agency and independence are fostered by practicing and developing these skills.

Contexts for Learning

Contexts for Learning are planned and delivered on a half-termly basis. Teachers craft relevant, motivating and challenging learning opportunities and use contexts as vehicles for developing motivating, engaging and stimulating learning. Teachers use assessment of children's prior knowledge, skills and understanding to plan next steps and define learning sequences. Contexts for learning may also be determined by local, national or international events or occasions. Coverage of curriculum areas, as well as key texts and books are outlined in the whole school curriculum

maps. The context of this is determined by the learner profiles of children in the class and their prior knowledge and skills.

Teachers use a clear and explicit structure for each lesson. Using symbols and written text – Learning intentions - to set out the steps of learning will inform pupils of what they will be doing in the lesson.

- Each lesson or learning activity has a Learning Outcome so that pupils understand the focus of learning for the session. The Learning Outcome is based on an area of knowledge or understanding or a skill which pupils will learn about or how to do in that lesson. Teachers establish pupils' prior learning/understanding in order to judge pupil progress accurately.
- Main body: this is broken down into two or more activities to ensure that the 30 - 50-minute lesson has pace and rigour. Experiential and active learning is good learning.
- My Learning: this provides an opportunity for teachers to draw the lesson together and for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt. Pupils use a sticker with three choices to self-assess progress against the Learning Outcome. Pupils also reflect on their learning with their peers and the teacher.

Assessment and learner profiles

The curriculum models enable learning to be tailored to meet the developmental needs of differing learner profiles. These are assessed against the Compass Reading, Writing, Maths and Subject Progression and Assessment Frameworks. Children who are working a pre national curriculum levels are assessed using PIVATS

Pupil friendly targets based on EHC Plan long term targets, Annual Review targets, IEP targets, PIVATS and the mainstream assessment grids.

Feedback is formative and given during each teaching session. Comments need to be positive, clear and simple and linked to the Learning Outcome and/or individual need. Teachers ensure that pupils' work is marked regularly, and that marking is kept up to date in order to provide support and guidance for progress. Developmental steps are provided, and the work is levelled termly. Teachers ensure that TAs annotate the level of support they have provided for each piece of work.

All feedback is positive and sensitive to the needs of the pupil and we avoid over invasive marking. Teachers ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to respond to "next steps" guidance and then demonstrate that they have understood this.

Monitoring by SLT

- The school monitoring timetable shows where target-setting, evaluation, moderation and review take place throughout the year forming a cycle of improvement.

Monitoring by parents

- DSP has a Parents' Evening, at the beginning of each terms. This provides an opportunity for parents to review their child's work and talk to their teachers about progress. Parents review the targets set in IEP's, discuss new targets and sign the document. Parents also discuss the Episode Plan set by SALT.
- During the EHC Plan Annual Review the class' teacher discusses the targets from the previous year and the new targets for the following year with the parents.
- Parents are regularly informed of any additional achievements. These include Phonic screening, SATS results and other relevant achievements.

Depth and progression

Through careful and bespoke planning, children make progress from their individual starting points by accessing a rich curriculum. Children's learning across the curriculum is strengthened and deepened as they progress through the school. The curriculum offers all children appropriate opportunities to practice, rehearse and generalise. Progress is often lateral and is about transferring knowledge and skills to new contexts. The purpose of our spiralled and interleaved approach is that it allows children to generalise their understanding and commit learning to their long-term memory. Emphasis on routine and structure enables children to use more of their working memory in order to undertake learning tasks. Children working at basic concept and applying knowledge levels have opportunities for building and consolidating knowledge and associated skills in each area of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to apply their understanding, experience, knowledge and skills to their learning in order to strengthen cognitive connections. All children build on the foundations of their prior learning in order to be able develop a greater depth of understanding or transfer learning to new contexts.

Responsibility:

ALL staff members have a responsibility for delivering work and activities in a meaningful way for pupils with autism spectrum conditions. This ranges from the personalisation and delivery of the curriculum to the modelling of appropriate behaviour and attitudes.

Pupil Voice

Our setting ensures that pupils with autism are effectively and regularly consulted on all aspects of their education and experience at school.

We are committed to ensuring the voice of every child is heard. Provision is child-centred, so it is essential that children have a role in ensuring it meets their needs. Children have diverse ways of communicating and staff teams are dedicated to understanding and helping them to express their needs, thoughts, feelings and opinions. Staff work closely with children to ensure that they are acting as an advocate or listening for the underlying message, so that all children are able to effectively share what they want to express.

Emotional well – being

Our setting safeguards the well-being of pupils with autism by recognising that they are vulnerable to high levels of stress, anxiety and depression and that these can be prevented or reduced if needs are recognised early and met. We recognise the vulnerability of pupils with autism and we safeguard against actual and perceived episodes of teasing and bullying, including cyber bullying.

The DSP places value on a knowledge of autism and accepts that this underpins the analysis and interpretation of a pupil's performance and behaviour to inform effective strategies. We ensure the staff to know that physical intervention is particularly difficult for pupils with autism and ensure that staff understand the legal framework of positive handling intervention to respond in an appropriate way when managing behaviours that challenge.

In the DSP all children have an Individual Behaviour Support Plan. The plan is updated at least once a term or when appropriate. The plan is shared with, followed and signed by all staff members of the DSP, the SLT team and the parents / carers.

Impact

Attendance

In line with their diagnosis, our children are more vulnerable to illnesses, stress and anxiety. The children attend increased number of medical appointments and also appointments to see other professionals involved.

Occasionally there can be a disruption in the morning that delays the arrival time to school. Our families also seek for opportunities for family holidays when resorts are quieter and more suited to their children's needs.

Most of our children arrive to our special provision with poor attendance from their previous setting. With a well-balanced daily structure that meets the children's individual needs, the children settle well into their new setting and are able to access full time education on the daily basis. They are very happy to come to school and this has a very positive impact on the daily life of our families.

Pupil voice

'I can ignore bad choices'

'I eat my lunch in the dining hall with my mainstream friends'

'I attend after school clubs'

'I play with my mainstream friends in KS2'

'Year 5 PE is going well'

'Horse riding is going well'

A letter to my mum:

'Dear Mum, this week in school I have enjoyed like everything. Thanks for putting me in this school'

'Swimming with Year 5 is going well'

'I like reading in Year 5'

'I'm being kind to my friends'

'Well, I think Year 6 PE is going well for me. I also think eating in the dining hall is going good'

Social skills, speaking and listening

Social competency and resilience are fundamental to living and communicating with others and these life skills enable the children to understand the thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions of others and adapt their behaviour accordingly. We consider these as an ability to think flexibly and to have appropriate expressive and receptive verbal communication skills.

All children with ASD experience challenges navigating the social world to a lesser or greater extent because of associated difficulties with social communication, social interaction, flexibility of thinking and limited expressive and receptive verbal communication skills.

This inflexible thinking often leads to difficulties with interpreting the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others and of predicting their actions. We often refer to these difficulties as difficulties with theory of mind. There is also a limited ability to make sense of the whole picture from the information available. Children with ASD tend to focus on the detail and have a weak drive towards central coherence. At Alderwood's DSP, we are committed to enabling social competence and building social resilience.

- Identifying strengths and needs in social competency of each individual with ASD.

- Teach the strategies to learn and then use social skills that relate to the level of social understanding of each individual child.
- To use the interests and strengths of individuals to support and develop social understanding and resilience.
- Using concrete visual strategies to support social understanding, and the perspective of others.
- To teach explicitly the social thinking skills necessary to develop social competence e.g. predicting, inferring, problem solving.
- To generalise learning from 1:1 working, group sessions and whole class learning to real life situations and experiences.
- To work directly with individual children, groups of children in order to model the teaching specific social communication and interaction skills.

Strategies and Resources – we develop these skills through:

Comic strip conversations

Social Stories

Social Eyes

LEGO Therapy

Superflex

Turn taking activities

Chess and Logic

Alex Kelly / Talkabout

People games, Social skills and anger management games

SALT / Social thinking

Regular outside of school visits

Language for Thinking

Minecraft Social Skills program

Structured play / game activities and groups

Parent comments

'I always tell my friends that this is the best DSP because the children get to do lots of things like horse riding, swimming, park, we have coffee mornings and we take the children to the seaside'.

'My child is understood here'.

'My son said that he went into a big meltdown in school yesterday and he was so lucky to have one of the teachers with him, who exactly knew how to help him and she massaged him exactly how I would' My son added, 'I don't know what I would have done without her, I was so lucky that she was there'.

Prior secondary transition parent to teacher: 'I have visited most of the secondary schools, but I am not sure... I would you like to open up a secondary school and we can all come?'

'He is a different child now'.

'I can take him shopping now and he will travel on public transport'.

'We can go out as a family'.

'He wouldn't even hold a pencil before and now he is writing and asking for colouring at home'.

'She loves books and reads a lot at home'.

'Homework is not a problem anymore, can we have more, please?'

'We went to a mansion on our family holiday and my son showed so much awareness of the historical things he had seen in the building, that one of the owners kept highly praising him, and was amazed how he knows so much'.

Transition

Transition is defined as change in the focus of attention from one activity, environment or situation to another. Children with autism can have challenges with their communication, social interaction, flexibility of thought and sensory processing/motors skills. All change can be stressful for pupils if not carefully managed according to their individual needs. Throughout life there are many changes that involve transitions. These transitions can be minor or major in rules, routines, boundaries, procedures, people and settings.

Alderwood DSP aims to:

- support families, children and the community around the child to understand the importance of planning and preparing for all transitions.
- Support the use of appropriate and effective strategies to help transition.
- Support the key people create a transition package that is personalised to meet the needs of each individual.
- Support pupils with transitions to facilitate independence by using symbols, social stories™ and other visual strategies.
- Support the key people around the child to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to facilitate transitions.
- Ensure that the child's voice is heard, recorded and respected.

Key Transitions for children with ASD:

Between year groups and key stages including exams preparation

From school to school

From primary school to secondary school

Personal life transitions:

Bereavement

Divorce and relationship break-ups

Moving to a new house

New sibling

Family outings / holidays

Daily Transitions:

Home to school to home

Session to session

From DSP to mainstream

Task to task and activities within a task

Movement around the building

Movement between structured to unstructured times

Changes of routines (temporary and permanent)

Changes to staff (temporary and permanent)

Offsite visits; horse riding, swimming and park

Educational visits and school trips

Strategies to support successful transitions:

We aim to advise the child and all key people around the child on strategies that support carefully planned transitions using a range of appropriate methods to accommodate the individual needs of the student.

Daily Transition Strategies:

Visual or written timetables

Symbols

Social Stories TM

TEACCH Approach

Timers & countdowns

Now & Next. Now, Next and Then

Concept of 'Finished'

Motivators and reward (working for)

Labelling

Applaud, acknowledge achievement and success

Transitions between schools and key stages:

Transition Planning meeting to include the child (where appropriate) and all key people around the child

All About Me book & Passport Book

Planned visits

Liaison with all the key people around the child

Sharing good practice and what works

Pre and post transition observation

Transition from primary school to secondary school:

Transition reviews where professionals identify the most appropriate routes and support systems that are required for the student to reach outcomes they have identified.

Detailed transition plan set by secondary school and carefully considered by primary school professionals and families.

Personal Life Transitions:

Parent Groups

Individual discussion and support for families where appropriate

Data

Data taken from PIVATS assessments each term and compared to PIVATS outcomes from the previous term. At Alderwood expected progress for our complex need's children would be one PIVAT level per term.

Autumn 2018 to Summer 2019 progress

Number of children: 8

	Reading	Writing	Maths
% making 1 PIVAT progress	50%	37.5%	50%
% making 2 PIVAT progress		12.5%	12.5%
% making 3 PIVAT progress			
% making above expected progress	12.5%		

Data taken from national curriculum assessments each term and compared to outcomes from the previous term. At Alderwood expected progress for our mainstream children would be one point per term.

Autumn 2018 to Summer 2019 progress

Number of children: 8

	Reading	Writing	Maths
% making 1 Point progress	62.5%	25%	
% making 2 Point progress	12.5%	37.5%	62.5%
% making 3 Point progress	12.5% Teddy		
% making above expected progress			