

Model of Education Practice Statement

Ambitious about Autism Purpose

Ambitious about Autism is the national charity for children and young people with autism. We provide services at our schools and colleges, raise awareness and understanding, and campaign for change. Our mission is to make the ordinary possible for children and young people with autism. This document explains our innovative approach to education across our education services.

Beliefs and Values

Our core beliefs and values provide the foundation for our approach to service delivery. We believe that all children and young people have the right to access a rich, enjoyable and meaningful full time education, which will effectively prepare them for adult life. Education has the power to transform the lives of children and young people with autism, to help them reach their best possible outcomes and to raise expectations for their future. We are committed to providing the highest quality teaching and learning support in order to improve the life choices of those we engage with. We believe that the needs and views of children and young people should shape their educational experience and, because these needs and views will vary, it is essential that a range of educational provision is made available. We recognise the vital role that parents and carers play in supporting young people to learn and make decisions about their future. We are committed, therefore, to ensuring that we work closely with children and young people with autism and their families.

Our values are reflected by our commitment to education services which:

- Focus on the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families, based on their needs, aspirations and priorities;
- Adopt a person centred approach, which ensures that the voice of the young person is at the centre of all we do;
- Provide outstanding teaching, learning and support through evidence based positive behavioural approaches;
- Ensure high quality provision through practice, which is reflective and evidence based;
- Work in the best interests of the individual and their family through an effective transdisciplinary approach;
- Secure better life choices for children and young people with autism by developing partnerships, which support effective education and transition to a range of appropriate pathways into adulthood.

Autism

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability, which affects approximately 1 in 100 people in the UK. It affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them. Autism is described as a spectrum condition. This means that while people on the autism spectrum may share certain characteristics, they will be highly individual in their needs and preferences. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives



but others may face additional challenges, including learning disabilities, which affect them so profoundly that they need support in many areas.

Vision and Outcomes

Our aim is to provide children and young people with the skills they need to translate their personal aspirations into positive outcomes. Our vision is to provide the education and support children and young people need to take part in the types of everyday activities many of us take for granted; whether that be related to practical independence, social, leisure or employment opportunities. Children and young people with autism should have choice and control over the direction of their lives and the skills to be able to exercise that choice.

Our approach is truly person centred in order to reflect the unique qualities of each individual. Learning is individualised to ensure that it is accessible, enjoyable and takes into account the particular needs, skills and interests of each child and young person with autism.

Our learning goals are outcome focussed. By that we mean they prioritise the development of the skill an individual most needs in order to achieve the life he or she chooses. This will vary depending on what is important to the child or young person and their family at any given stage of their life.

For example, a good outcome for:

- Sam is that he will enjoy a story with his siblings;
- Aisha is that she will join in with family celebrations by eating in a restaurant;
- Joe is that he is employed to work at his local garden centre;
- Priya is that she will use public transport independently to visit her sister;
- Maria is that she will go to the college of her choice;
- Femi is that he will use his local gym and leisure facilities to attend exercise and sport classes.

Our Approach

Our approach is focused on providing positive learning environments for all children and young people. We offer an academic and vocational curriculum, delivered by a transdisciplinary team, with a focus on preparation for adult life and high quality outcomes. We do this through a service-wide framework of learning support, underpinned by evidence-based behavioural approaches and other approaches that are shown to improve the experience of the young person. This approach supports our education services to create an effective, efficient and equitable learning environment that is positive, predictable, consistent and safe.

Shared Values

We will achieve this by the identification of a common set of values appropriate to each education service and ensuring that these values are defined, understood and accessible for all children and young people, their parents, carers, our trustees, governors, staff and partners. By creating predictable routines, modelling positive behaviour and regularly communicating high expectations for learning outcomes, we will explicitly teach our children and young people how they can engage with the positive values and expectations that support their learning.

Individual Learning Plans

Through our transdisciplinary team, we assess and design teaching, learning and support strategies. Long, medium and short term goals are broken down to create Individual Learning Plans for each child and young person. These are based on the outcomes set out in the Education, Health and Care plans and are developed by the transdisciplinary team.

Assessment and Planning

The acknowledgement that behaviours described as ‘challenging’ serve a clear purpose for the individual concerned enables us to embed a positive behavioural approach by ensuring that all behaviours are assessed, analysed and understood. The use of robust approaches to the collection and use of data will allow us to continuously reflect on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and support strategies for each individual and to ensure that all children and young people receive effective support.

Transdisciplinary and Partnership work

As an organisation that continues to learn, improve and develop our approach and is subject to both internal and external audit, our current approach is one that has developed over time, based on evidence on what has been effective. The embedding of transdisciplinary expertise within our approach, underpinned by a rigorous competency- based training programme, serves to ensure that staff continue to develop their expertise through a programme of continual professional development. We also recognise, however, when and where additional expertise is required and build partnerships with other providers and professionals with complementary skills, experience and approaches who share our beliefs and values.

As a reflective organisation we will continue to use behaviourally-based approaches to support teaching and learning because we have seen the positive outcomes that this has achieved for children and young people with complex educational needs. We also seek to work with others to further develop our approach and to develop understanding of autism education.

We believe that behavioural approaches can be more beneficial as part of a service-wide, framework, that provides clarity and accountability for the design and implementation of positive learning environments for all children and young people, all of the time.