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AUTISM STANDARDS



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Introduction

The AET schools autism standards have been updated to reflect key legislation and aspirations in the new SEND code of practice 0-25 (2014) and the Common Inspection Framework (September 2015). The standards have remained the same as they were within the original document: AET national autism standards for schools and educational settings, but in this updated version they have been mapped against the expectations of the SEND code of practice 2014 and the OFSTED Framework (2015) to enable schools to make informed choices when they are deciding which of the standards will support the priorities within their school improvement plans. The recording documents and exemplification resources are available here. The complete set of standards are available to 'see at a glance' here.

The following documents provide the case for schools being made aware of and working towards some, many or all of these standards to enhance their provision and outcomes for pupils on the autism spectrum:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability code of practice 0-25 (DfE 2014)
- School Inspection Handbook (OFSTED Draft until Sept 2015)
- What works well in promoting well-being and responding to mental health problems in school : NCB (Advice for Schools and Framework Document: Professor Katherine Weare)
- National Award for SEN Co-ordination: Learning outcomes (National College for Teaching & Leadership)
- Teachers' Standards, July 2011
- Equality Act 2010: Departmental Advice (May 2014)

Other documentation referred to provides examples of how Local Authorities and schools can begin their work on the standards eg

- A guide to the use of the AET programme materials by local authorities, support services and schools (Birmingham City Council)
- Interviews with staff and pupils from Bulwell Academy in Nottingham

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The standards are statements which reflect good practice for those on the autism spectrum.

The adage 'what is good practice for those with SEN is also good practice for all pupils' is clear when you map the standards against the expectations from the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement (2015), the new OFSTED Framework (September 2015) and the SEND code of practice (June 2014). For example schools which are working towards standard 9 under **Curriculum and learning**: *Your setting involves pupils, where possible, in formulating their long-term goals and ambitions, and all staff have high aspiration for these pupils* - will be gathering evidence to demonstrate how they communicate these high expectations to pupils on the autism spectrum and their families. This standard links well with Chapter 4 of the **National Curriculum: A framework** where it sets out the expectations for inclusion that all schools must work towards. The first statement 4.1 *'Teachers should set high expectations for every pupil'* is also reflected in the expectations within the OFSTED Framework (September 2015) where under **Teaching, Learning and Assessment** it requires that *'teachers, practitioners and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each child or learner can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged'*.

A further example of how working on the standards can support schools to meet their statutory duties may be seen in the expectations within the **National Curriculum : A framework** (September 2015) which reflects the key message of high quality universal teaching in the SEND code of practice (2014) *'With the right teaching, that recognises their individual needs, many disabled pupils may have little need for additional resources beyond the aids which they use as part of their daily life. ...Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work'* (Ch 4.4 National Curriculum: A framework)

Schools working towards standards 1,2,3 and/or 5 under the theme of **Enabling environments** should be able to demonstrate the reasonable adjustments that they are making to enable pupils on the autism spectrum to learn effectively in the classroom.



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How to use the autism standards

These standards have been written for all schools and educational settings for pupils with autism aged between 5 and 16 years. This includes mainstream schools; special and specialist schools and colleges; autism specific units, alternative educational settings and programmes.

For Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinators (SENDCos) and other lead professionals in mainstream, special and specialist schools, work on these standards could be linked to the monitoring aspects of their role (e.g. carrying out an autism-focused learning walk). This could also involve an advisory teacher from a support service specialising in autism, adults with autism from the local area, parents and School Governors.

The standards can be completed by an individual member of staff, by a small group of staff, by the whole staff and/or by an external professional (e.g. autism outreach service; educational psychologist). They could also be analysed by a group of pupils with autism and by parents/carers or Governors and their responses fed back to the senior leadership team (SLT).

Initial feedback from users indicates that the standards are most useful to school development when a member (or all) of the SLT is involved.



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There are 40 standards in total and it is highly unlikely that any college, school or setting - even a school which specialises in autism, will have all these standards well established, as it takes time for staff to discuss, develop and resource these. The aim is that over time, a school or setting will increase the number of standards rated as established and enhanced. Work towards these standards could be included in any school's improvement plan.

Each standard is linked to resources which demonstrate examples of how a school or setting might evidence the standard.

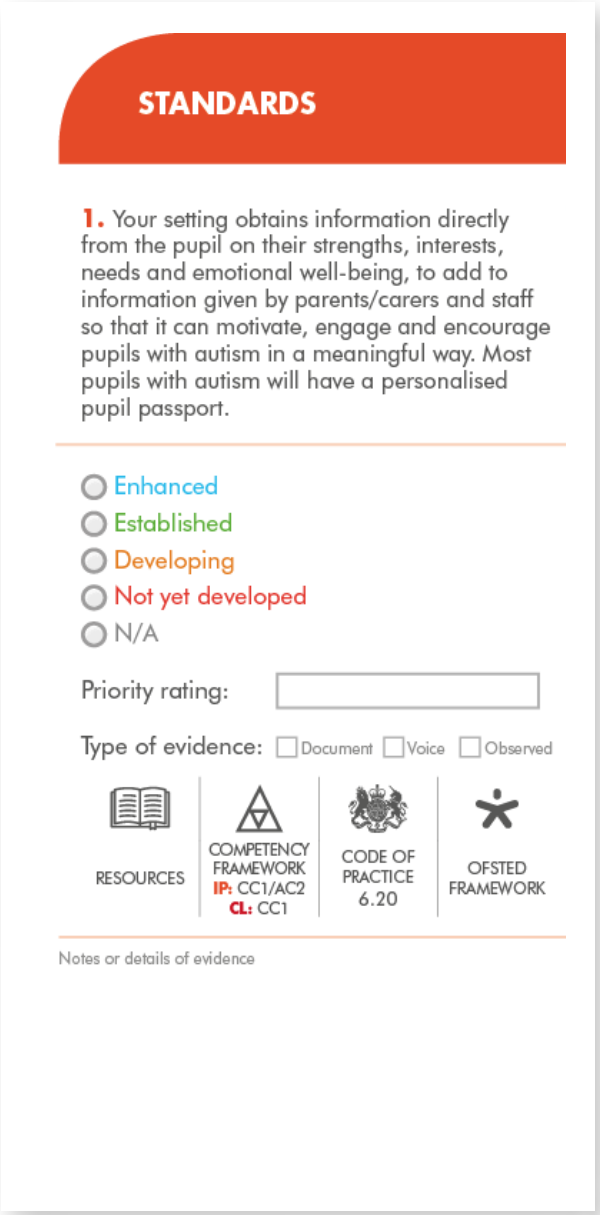
To view these resources please click on the resources button under each standard.

Resources and references
Examples and key documents related to each standard

Competency framework
IP =Individual pupil
BR=Building relationships
CR=Curriculum and learning
EE= Enabling environments
e.g. IP:CC1/AC2 = Individual pupil core competency1/advanced competency2

Code of practice - section referred to

Ofsted framework - cross-referenced to each standard



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Rating the standards

For each standard, the user can evaluate the extent to which this standard is in place within the school/setting using the ratings:

- **Not appropriate**
- **Not yet developed**
- **Developing**
- **Established**
- **Enhanced**

Definitions of these headings

Not appropriate

This category can be used for one of two main reasons. In schools or settings where there are only one or two pupils with autism, some aspects of practice might not be necessary or relevant to those particular pupils, or staff may have good reasons to know that a focus on this may be a source of distress and anxiety for these pupils. Whenever this box is ticked, staff need to provide the rationale for this decision.

Not yet developed

Work will be done to consider how to develop practice in this area.

Developing

Work has started on this area of practice.

Established

This is established in some areas and is now being spread across the whole setting.

Enhanced

Work is well established across the whole setting and being shared with other settings.



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In deciding the extent to which a standard is met, staff should aim to show

- **(D)** documentary evident (e.g. policy documents, accounts from pupils, staff or parents/carers, record on training events)
- **(O)** relevant practice that is observable and obvious
- **(V)** where staff , parent/carers and pupils can talk about policies, procedure, cultures and systems within their own setting

It is possible to ask an external professional to evaluate some of the standards to provide a more independent and objective view. The standards should be used to evaluate whole school development. They are not intended to assess individual skills and knowledge of staff (the AET Competencies may be used for this purpose).

D = Document

O= Observed

V= verbal accounts from pupils, parents/carers & staff

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Next steps after the completion of the autism standards

Staff could discuss and decide which standards are:

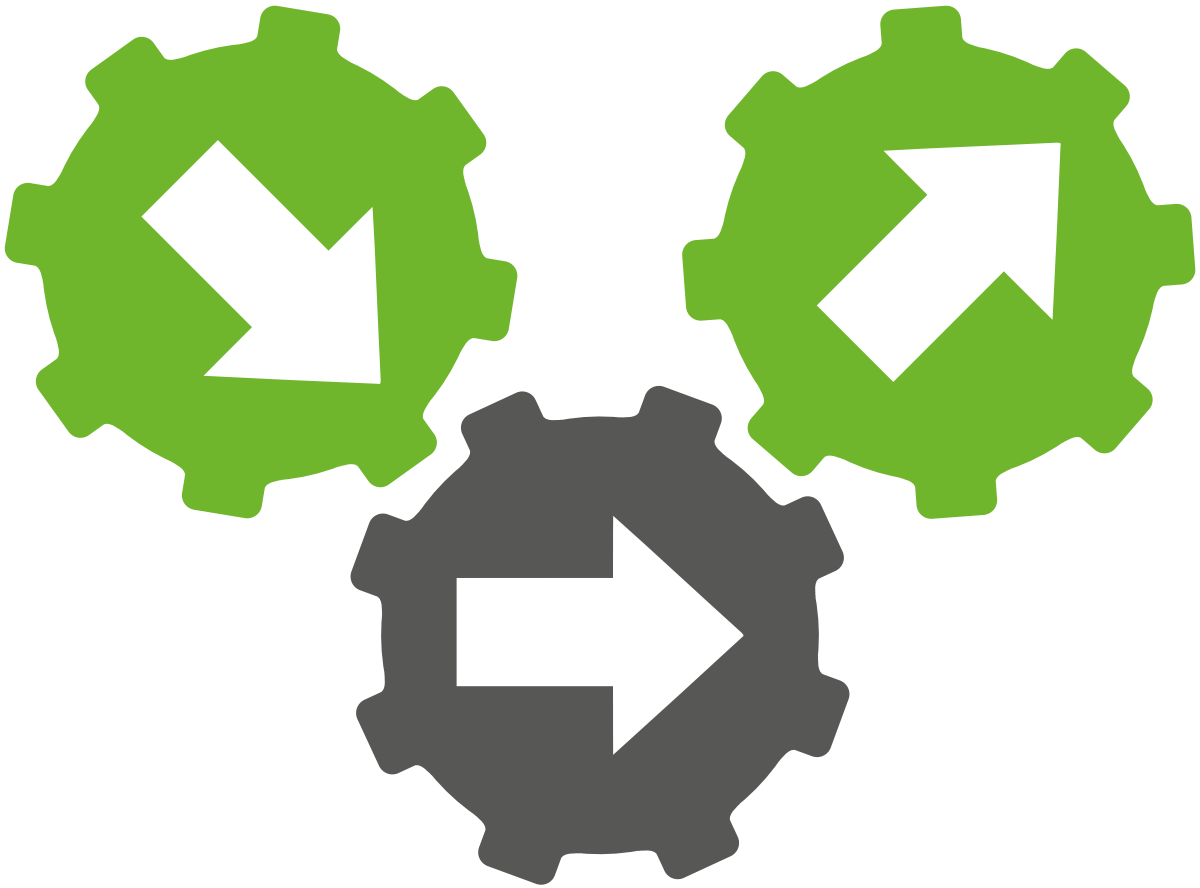
- well established but require regular review
- not yet fully in place

They could prioritise which standards in the latter group could take priority ie those where changes in practice could provide the most benefit to pupils with autism. Under each of the standards is a drop box to enable staff to enter the priority level for the work on the standard based on the needs of the current population of pupils on the autism spectrum and the current rating of the standard, as follows;

H = High

M =Medium

L = Low



STANDARDS

1. Your setting obtains information directly from the pupil on their strengths, interests, needs and emotional well-being, to add to information given by parents/carers and staff so that it can motivate, engage and encourage pupils with autism in a meaningful way. Most pupils with autism will have a personalised pupil passport.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC1/AC2 **CL:** CC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.20 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Notes or details of evidence

2. Your setting recognises the particular vulnerability of pupils with autism and safeguards against actual and perceived episodes of teasing and bullying, including cyber bullying.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC7 **BR:** CC7 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.79 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Notes or details of evidence

3. Your setting understands that pupils with autism often have additional needs arising from other conditions (eg visual or hearing impairment, dyslexia, dyscalculia, learning disabilities, dyspraxia, ADHD, OCD, PDA and speech, language and communication difficulties, Tourettes…) Staff know how to access advice and guidance on these.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC5&6 /AC3 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.27 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Notes or details of evidence

4. Your 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.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC4 **EE:** CC7 | CODE OF PRACTICE 11.79

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

5. Your setting 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.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC2&8 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.37

Notes or details of evidence

6. Your setting trains staff to know that physical intervention is particularly difficult for pupils with autism and ensures that staff understand the legal framework of positive handling intervention to respond in an appropriate way when managing behaviours that challenge.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** AC4 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.32

Notes or details of evidence

7. Your setting teaches and supports pupils with autism to develop and use an effective communication system.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.27

Notes or details of evidence

8. Your setting provides opportunities for pupils with autism to meet others with autism to share interests and experiences.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** AC6

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

9. Your setting has a life long holistic learning perspective, including an understanding of adolescence in autism and sexual health and aims for an effective pathway to fulfilled adult lives.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** AC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 8.1 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Notes or details of evidence

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

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** AC5 **BR:** CC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.79

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

1. Your setting establishes strong relationships between staff and pupils with autism, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being.	**2.** Your setting understands 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.	**3.** Your setting has a named and experienced member of staff (autism champion/lead practitioner/ SENCO) with general information on autism and specific information about individual pupils (This is easily accessible for all relevant staff on the school's management information system).	**4.** Your setting is aware of the referral pathway in the local area (through the Local Offer) for pupils without a diagnosis who may have autism.
○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A
Priority rating:	Priority rating:	Priority rating:	Priority rating:
Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed
RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC2 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.39 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK	RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC4 & 7 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.55/6.64/6.65/ 6.67/6.70 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK	RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC8 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.89 / 6.90	RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** AC2 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.58 / 6.59
Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

5. Your setting proactively develops links with other settings and is active in disseminating its expertise in autism to other practitioners.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** AC6 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.90

Notes or details of evidence

6. Your setting knows how to access professionals in health, social care and the voluntary and independent sectors and works effectively with them. This is described in your school SEND Information Report.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** AC5 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.90

Notes or details of evidence

7. Your setting provides training about autism at different levels for all teaching and support staff (eg, office staff, drivers, escorts and lunch-time supervisors) and has a system that informs and supports supply staff and new staff about the needs of pupils with autism through an induction programme, ensuring that these staff know where to access immediate support.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** AC3 & 1

Notes or details of evidence

8. Your setting encourages parents and carers and individuals with autism to attend and contribute to CPD events. This is highlighted in the school SEND Information Report.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC6 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.90

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

9. Your setting provides opportunities and support for pupils with autism to develop relationships with peers to a level and manner which supports their needs.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC4/AC4

Notes or details of evidence

10. Your setting sets 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.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **BR:** CC3

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

1. Your setting has a curriculum that 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.	**2.** Your setting provides individualised visual supports to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is understandable and predictable.	**3.** Your setting has 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.	**4.** Your setting demonstrates equality of access to activities for pupils with autism, including the extended curriculum and exam concessions, where appropriate.
○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A
Priority rating:	Priority rating:	Priority rating:	Priority rating:
Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed	Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed
RESOURCES COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **IP:** CC3 **CL:** CC3 CODE OF PRACTICE 6.32 OFSTED FRAMEWORK	RESOURCES COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC8 CODE OF PRACTICE 6.26 / 6.27	RESOURCES COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC8 CODE OF PRACTICE 6.27	RESOURCES COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC10/AC6 CODE OF PRACTICE 6.16 OFSTED FRAMEWORK
Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

5. Your setting trains staff in the use of a range of communication strategies to facilitate two-way communication.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC4

Notes or details of evidence

6. Your setting collects additional data that measures progress in the areas of social and emotional awareness, communication and autonomy and (works in partnership with parents & carers on this as well).

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** AC3 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.17 / 6.18 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK

Notes or details of evidence

7. Your setting assesses the process and quality of the learning experience (not just outcomes) from the perspective of the pupil with autism and considers the particular demands of group working.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC5/AC2 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.20

Notes or details of evidence

8. Your setting demonstrates flexibility in making adjustments to activities, lessons, timetables and their delivery, as necessary, for pupils with autism.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC2 & 9

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

9. Your setting involves pupils, where possible, in formulating their long-term goals and ambitions, and all staff have high aspiration for these pupils.	**10.** Your setting provides opportunities for pupils with autism to practice and use their knowledge and skills across situations and people, and to develop flexibility, by making planned changes and posing problems to solve.
○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A Priority rating: ____ Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** AC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.41 | OFSTED FRAMEWORK	○ Enhanced ○ Established ○ Developing ○ Not yet developed ○ N/A Priority rating: ____ Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC6
Notes or details of evidence	Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

1. Your setting conducts sensory audits within and outside of the setting. This includes transport and community facilities which pupils with autism may use. The audit considers potential sensory challenges and identifies how these could be managed.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC1/ AC1 & 6

Notes or details of evidence

2. Your setting consults pupils with autism on what to do in their free time (eg at break & lunch times) both inside and outdoors. It facilitates support for this during activities. It provides suitable environments for structured play with opportunities for games and interactions with others.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC6 & 8/ AC3 | CODE OF PRACTICE 8.8 / 6.2

Notes or details of evidence

3. Your setting uses a variety of cues (eg tactile, visual, auditory) to help pupils with autism understand and navigate the environment.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC2, 4 & 5 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.2

Notes or details of evidence

4. Your setting as guidelines that encourage staff to adopt a calm, empathic approach and to give pupils with autism time to process and respond to instructions.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC3

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

5. Your setting has clearly defined spaces/ areas for personal equipment and places of safety for pupils with autism.

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: Document Voice Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC3

Notes or details of evidence

6. Your setting takes into account the effect of external environmental factors when analysing the behaviour that challenges staff.

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: Document Voice Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** CC4

Notes or details of evidence

7. Your setting regularly audits staff confidence levels,understanding and knowledge of autism (at least once per term but this can be personalised depending on skill) and links this to Continuing Professional development (CPD) and the Performance Management system.

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: Document Voice Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **EE:** AC2,4,5 & 6 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.4

Notes or details of evidence

8. Your setting effectively communicates key transitional information on pupils with autism to all relevant adults, including parents and/or carers, and ensures that this information is given to the pupils in the most appropriate way and at the right time.

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: Document Voice Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** CC7 / AC5 | CODE OF PRACTICE 6.57

Notes or details of evidence

STANDARDS

9. Your setting enables pupils with autism to formulate their long-term goals and ambitions. All staff have high aspirations for these pupils.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** AC1 | CODE OF PRACTICE 8.4

Notes or details of evidence

10. Your setting creates time for staff to reflect on, discuss and evaluate their practice in relation to pupils with autism and the rationale that informs practice, to create a consensus and consistency of practice across the setting.

- ○ Enhanced
- ○ Established
- ○ Developing
- ○ Not yet developed
- ○ N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence: ☐ Document ☐ Voice ☐ Observed

RESOURCES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK **CL:** AC4 **EE:** AC1

Notes or details of evidence

NEXT STEPS ACTION PLAN

STANDARD	STANDARD NUMBERS WITH HIGHEST PRIORITY	NEXT STEPS (including who is responsible for the action)	TIME SCALE
THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL			
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS			
CURRICULUM AND LEARNING			
ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS			

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OFSTED FRAMEWORK

DOWNLOAD FRAMEWORK

Personal development, behaviour and welfare – Inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners by evaluating the extent to which the provision is successfully promoting and supporting children's and other learners': self-confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner	STANDARD No.1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare – Understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks such as abuse, sexual exploitation and extremism, including when using the internet and social media **Effectiveness of leadership and management** – Actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners	STANDARD No.2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating the extent to which: assessment information is gathered from looking at what children and learners already know, understand and can do, and is informed by their parents/ previous providers as appropriate; assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify children and learners who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling children and learners to make good progress and achieve well	STANDARD No.3
Effectiveness of leadership and management – Successfully plan and manage learning programmes, the curriculum and careers advice so that all children and learners get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment	STANDARD No.9
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Engagement with parents, carers and employers helps them to understand how children and learners are doing in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve	STANDARD No.1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Except in the case of the very young, children and learners understand how to improve as a result of useful feedback from staff and, where relevant, parents, carers and employers understand how learners should improve and how they can contribute to this	STANDARD No.1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Where relevant, English, mathematics and other skills necessary to function as an economically active member of British society and globally are promoted through teaching and learning	STANDARD No.1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Teachers, practitioners and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each child or learner can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged & equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning	STANDARD No.4
Personal development, behaviour and welfare – Following of any guidelines for behaviour and conduct, including management of their own feelings and behaviour, and how they relate to others & personal development, so that they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain In Outcomes; attain relevant qualifications so that they can and do progress to the next stage of their education into courses that lead to higher-level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs	STANDARD No.6
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Except in the case of the very young, children and learners understand how to improve as a result of useful feedback from staff and, where relevant, parents, carers and employers understand how learners should improve and how they can contribute to this	STANDARD No.9

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

1.

- Matthew's passport
- Joe's passport
- Rocco – GAP paper 'My comprehensive school'
- Martin, GAP paper - Personal statements of students at University
- Pupil consultation form
- John Simpson audio transcript IDP
- Pupils' views on school

2.

- Etherington GAP paper on prevention of bullying and peer awareness
- SEND anti-bullying guidance
- B is for Bullied NAS report by Reid and Batten
- Anti-bullying alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk

3.

- NICE guidance on autism, ADHD, epilepsy and OCD
- Christie et al. paper on PDA giving guidance to schools
- Carlile GAP paper on PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance syndrome)
- Moran GAP paper on similarities and differences between attachment disorder and autism
- Tourette syndrome: Key facts
- Tourette syndrome: Education issues
- Gascoigne paper on meeting the needs of pupils with SLCN in integrated services
- What is dyslexia?
- West Midlands training framework

4.

- Moran GAP paper Pupils discussing their ideal self pdf
- Emotions keyring
- Fitzpatrick GAP paper on anger management
- Emotional well-being booklet
- What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools?
- Mental health and behaviour in schools

5.

- Autism lens

6.

- Ros Blackburn GAP paper – her insights as an adult with autism
- Legal guidelines from www.education.gov.uk

7.

- Objects of reference devised by Coventry LA

8.

- Pupil voice presentation written by pupils
- Pupil participation case study

9.

- AET Outcomes report
- Finished at school report
- Pathway to work powerpoint
- Resource on puberty and sexual health

10.

- Scott – GAP paper Designing the ideal classroom with pupils
- Williams and Hanke – GAP paper Pupils drawing their ideal school.
- Pupil consultation form
- I want to choose too document showing how preverbal pupils can communicate choice.
- Talking mats www.talkingmats.com
- Christie et al. GAP paper on gaining the views of pupils at a specialist school

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

1.

- What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools?
- Mental health and behaviour in schools
- Emotional well-being booklet
- Pupil voice presentation written by pupils
- AET Person-Centred Planning

2.

- How helping works document on effective engagement with parents and carers
- Example of a home-school document
- Parents' views on what makes a good school
- Structured conversations with parents (Achievement for All) pdf
- Parent/carer consultation form

3.

- Lead practitioner role
- Morewood GAP paper on Mainstreaming autism in secondary schools

4.

- National Autism Plan for Children
- SIGN Document 98 on the identification of autism
- Video from AET diagnosis of Jonathan and his mother talking about how his diagnosis was made and the benefits
- Video from AET of Helen and her mother explaining the diagnosis

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

5.

- AET Good Practice report

6.

- Gascoigne paper on meeting needs of SLCN in integrated services
- AET Person-Centred Planning document
- Website for health professionals on autism in Scotland

7.

- Link to AET training hubs
- Link to IDP autism spectrum on the AET microsite
- AET Good Practice report
- West Midlands training framework

8.

- Clubb GAP paper on EarlyBird plus with parents and staff being trained together

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

9.

- Link to info re AET Awesomes pack
- Circle of friends booklet
- Friendship programme for secondary pupils

10.

- Visual Information on school rules

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

1.

- AET Teacher's Guide
- wiki How website which gives answers to any question on every aspect of life www.wikihow.com
- Gascoigne paper on meeting the needs of pupils with speech, language and communication needs

2.

- Other resources can be found at www.do2learn.com

3.

- GAP paper by Johnston and Hatton on the effects of change
- Group working: clear roles

4.

- Differentiation: A Guide to primary Differentiation
- A Guide to secondary differentiation
- Equalities Act 2010
- Template for a school accessibility plan - Learning Works
- Personalised Learning – A Practical Guide
- Guidance on exam accommodations

STANDARDS

RESOURCES

5.

- Video of Karen from Early Years IDP showing value of adding other forms of communication to speech
- Confusing world of words
- AET Toolkit Tool 12 Portable communication symbols page 23
- Gascoigne paper on meeting the needs of pupils with speech, language and communication needs

6.

- AET Outcomes report

7.

- IDP John Simpson audio transcript
- Pupils' views on school
- Pupil consultation form
- see www.talkingmats.com for ways to engage preverbal pupils

8.

- Differentiation: A Guide to primary differentiation
- A Guide to secondary differentiation

9.

- Pathway to work
- AET Person-Centred Planning Toolkit
- Beardon et al. GAP paper which considers the wishes of students in FE and HE
- AET Outcomes report

10.

- Facing Change

RESOURCES

1.

- Sensory audit for schools and classrooms
- Sensory assessment checklist
- Scott GAP paper on school design
- Audio transcript of an adult talking re sensory issues – John Simpson IDP

2.

- Badge system for social interaction
- Morewood GAP paper on mainstreaming inclusion
- Pupils' views on break and lunchtime

3.

- List of objects of reference
- An evaluation of a swimming toolkit for children on the autism spectrum
- Example of special school setting www.brackenhillschool.co.uk

4.

- Autism lens: understanding the actions of pupils on the autism spectrum
- Professional views on staff qualities
- A short presentation giving the views of pupils with SEND on staff in their secondary school

5.

- Example of special school setting www.brackenhillschool.co.uk

6.

- Dean Beadle video – misunderstood – all seen as within child - AET diagnosis DVD
- Autism lens – perspective of pupils on the autism spectrum

7.

- West Midlands Training Framework
- TDA

8.

- AET transition toolkit.
- Getting ready for secondary school
- Moving class
- Facing change

9.

- Pathway to work
- AET Person-Centred Planning Toolkit
- Beardon et al. GAP paper which considers the wishes of students in FE and HE
- AET Outcomes report

10.

- O'Neill paper on evaluating practice
- McAteer paper on adult style
- Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants
- Practitioner views on what makes an effective school
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Practitioner consultation form
- Peeters and Jordan GAP paper on what makes an effective practitioner

	IP. THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL Your setting:	BR. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS Your setting:	CL. CURRICULUM & LEARNING Your setting:	EE. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT Your setting:
1	obtains information directly from the pupil on their strengths, interests, needs and emotional well-being, to add to information given by parents/carers and staff so that it can motivate, engage and encourage pupils with autism in a meaningful way. Most pupils with autism will have a personalised pupil passport	establishes strong relationships between staff, and pupils with autism, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being	has a curriculum that 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	conducts sensory audits both within and outside the setting, including transport and community facilities, which involves pupils with autism, to consider potential sensory challenges and identify how these will be managed
2	recognises the particular vulnerability of pupils with autism and safeguards against actual and perceived episodes of teasing and bullying, including cyber bullying	understands 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	provides individualised visual supports to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is understandable and predictable	consults pupils with autism on what to do in their free time (eg at break & lunch times) both inside and outdoors and facilitates support for this in activities, suitable environments structured play and opportunities for games and interactions with others
3	understands that pupils with autism often have additional needs arising from other conditions (eg visual or hearing impairment, attachment disorders, dyslexia, dyscalculia, learning disabilities, dyspraxia, ADHD, OCD, PDA and speech, language and communication difficulties, Tourettes…) Staff know how to access advice and guidance on these	has a named and experienced member of staff (autism champion/lead practitioner/ SENCO) with general information on autism and specific information about individual pupils (This is easily accessible for all relevant staff on the school's management information system)	has 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	uses a variety of cues (eg tactile, visual, auditory) to help pupils with autism understand and navigate the environment

	IP. THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL Your setting:	BR. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS Your setting:	CL. CURRICULUM & LEARNING Your setting:	EE. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT Your setting:
4	safeguards the well-being of pupils with autism by recognising that they are predisposed to high levels of stress, anxiety and depression and that these can be prevented or reduced if needs are recognised early and met	is aware of the referral pathway in the local area (through the Local Offer) for pupils without a diagnosis who may have autism	demonstrates equality of access to activities for pupils with autism, including the extended curriculum and exam concessions, where appropriate	has guidelines that encourage staff to adopt a calm, empathic approach and to give pupils with autism time to process and respond to instructions
5	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	proactively develops links with other settings and is active in disseminating its expertise in autism to other practitioners	trains staff in the use of a range of communication strategies to facilitate two-way communication	has clearly defined spaces/areas for personal equipment and places of safety for pupils with autism
6	trains staff to know that physical intervention is particularly difficult for pupils with autism and ensures that staff understand the legal framework of positive handling intervention to respond in an appropriate way when managing behaviours that challenge	knows how to access professionals in health, social care and the voluntary and independent sectors and works effectively with them. This is described in your school SEND Information Report	collects additional data that measures progress in the areas of social and emotional awareness, communication and autonomy and (works in partnership with parents & carers on this as well)	takes into account the effect of external environmental factors when analysing the behaviour that challenges staff
7	teaches and supports pupils with autism to develop and use an effective communication system	provides training about autism at different levels for all teaching and support staff (eg, office staff, drivers, escorts and lunch-time supervisors) and has a system that informs and supports supply staff and new staff about the needs of pupils with autism through an induction programme ensuring that these staff know where to access immediate support	assesses the process and quality of the learning experience (not just outcomes) from the perspective of the pupil with autism and considers the particular demands of group working	regularly audits staff confidence levels,understanding and knowledge of autism (at least once per term but this can be personalised depending on skill) and links this to Continuing Professional development (CPD)and the Performance Management system.

	IP. THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL Your setting:	BR. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS Your setting:	CL. CURRICULUM & LEARNING Your setting:	EE. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT Your setting:
8	provides opportunities for pupils with autism to meet others with autism to share interests and experiences	encourages parents and carers and individuals with autism to attend and contribute to CPD events. This is highlighted in the school SEND Information Report	demonstrates flexibility in making adjustments to activities, lessons, timetables and their delivery, as necessary, for pupils with autism	effectively communicates key transitional information on pupils with autism to all relevant adults, including parents and/or carers, and ensures that this information is given to the pupils in the most appropriate way and at the right time
9	has a life long holistic learning perspective, including an understanding of adolescence in autism and sexual health and aims for an effective pathway to fulfilled adult lives	provides opportunities and support for pupils with autism to develop relationships with peers to a level and manner which supports their needs	involves pupils, where possible , in formulating their long-term goals and ambitions, and all staff have high aspiration for these pupils	involves pupils with autism, where possible, in formulating their long-term goals and ambitions, and all staff have high aspirations for these pupils
10	ensures that pupils with autism are effectively and regularly consulted on all aspects of their education and experience at school	sets 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	provides opportunities for pupils with autism to practice and use their knowledge and skills across situations and people, and to develop flexibility, by making planned changes and posing problems to solve	creates time for staff to reflect on, discuss and evaluate their practice in relation to pupils with autism and the rationale that informs practice, to create a consensus and consistency of practice across the setting

What is the purpose of these autism standards?

The Autism Education Trust (AET) has developed this set of schools autism standards with funding from the Department for Education in England, to describe the key factors common to good practice for pupils with autism. The standards have been designed to support schools to meet their statutory duties outlined in the SEND code of practice 2015, the criteria within OFSTED common inspection framework 2015 and to evaluate the extent to which the needs of pupils with autism are addressed, by analysing policies, systems and whole school development work.

Schools working towards these standards will be able to provide evidence for a range of statutory duties (The School SEND Information Report, The Equality Duty 2010, Teachers' Standards, July 2011, anyone working towards the National Award for SENCOs (NASENCO). In working towards these standards, schools will also develop the confidence and capacity of their staff whilst building effective partnerships with families.

The standards will provide schools with an instrument to build awareness of and reflection upon existing provision and what the evidence is telling us works well for pupils with autism. Completion of the standards will enable schools to identify and remove potential barriers to learning, enabling pupils with autism to make good progress. Ideally, the standards should be revisited on a regular basis *over time* to provide evidence that practice is developing and improving. Evidence of effective practice is telling us that the views of pupils with autism and their parents/carers should be sought when completing these standards.



The evidence gathered through this analysis of provision can add to a school's existing self evaluation processes:

- to determine staff training needs
- to feed into the school improvement plan
- to consider environmental adaptations or new builds
- to build strong parent/carer partnerships
- to provide evidence to OfSted and other external agencies they are a self-improving school
- to use in consultation with pupils with autism and their parents /carers to ensure that good communication and effective provision is in place
- To provide evidence in the school SEND information report that parents/carers and pupils are being consulted about the quality of education and care they are receiving

Ultimately work on these standards will improve outcomes for pupils with autism by developing provision and meeting individual needs.

These standards should be used alongside the AET schools autism competency framework which describe the knowledge, understanding and skills that staff working in schools and other educational settings require to work effectively with pupils on the autism spectrum. The standards are therefore not intended to cover individual staff competency but instead are focused on providing schools and other educational settings with a national benchmark against which to measure their skills and knowledge in this area of special educational need.



There are 4 themes within the AET standards

THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL 	Standards within this theme
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS 	Standards within this theme
CURRICULUM AND LEARNING 	Standards within this theme
ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS 	Standards within this theme

These can be developed over time

At key points in the school calendar (ie when reviewing the School Improvement Plan) schools can access how far along they are on the journey towards meeting the standard they are working on.

These autism standards will support schools to meet their duties under the SEND code of practice 2015

Autism is often hard to detect in some pupils and their needs might go unnoticed particularly as some pupils may not express their difficulties or stress to staff. Using these standards might enable staff to better identify and meet needs.

There are increasing numbers of pupils with autism in all types of schools as a result of increased awareness and diagnosis of autism. It is highly likely that staff in both special and mainstream schools will have pupils with autism in their class. The Statistics First Release (January 2015) reports that of the number of pupils identified as being on the autism spectrum in mainstream Primary school 4.1 % o are at K and 25.5 % have Statements of EHC plans. In Secondary schools these percentages are 5.4 (K) and 23.9 (S or EHC plan). Autism is one of the most frequently encountered SEN types in schools. The SEND code of practice 2015 identifies four broad areas of need and it says that each of these areas needs to be planned for, not to fit a pupil into a category but to identify what action the schools needs to take.

- **6.20** For some children, SEN can be identified at an early age. However, for other children and young people difficulties become evident only as they develop. All those who work with children and young people should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.
- **6.25** When reviewing and managing special educational provision the broad areas of need and support outlined from 6.28 may be helpful, and schools should review how well equipped they are to provide support across these areas.
- **6.29** Children and young people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

SEND code of practice 2015

Education is the most successful intervention in terms of outcome for pupils with autism (Parsons et al: 2009).

What is the evidence base for the standards?

These standards have been written largely on the basis of expert and stakeholder opinion. Evidence from research studies is often limited. Research in autism is complex due to

- differences between pupils with autism
- pupils with autism often receiving more than one intervention at a time
- other factors that affect outcomes for pupils

What the standards are not

The standards are not intended as a guide to the different interventions that staff might use. The literature on interventions is huge and each pupil with autism is likely to need different types of support and adjustments to meet their needs duting their school career. However this guidance will help the user to understand the areas of development and the aspects of school/setting life which are likely to require assessment and intervention for the majority of pupils with autism.

There are other sets of standards in education that staff are required to consult and use:

- Teachers' Standards, July 2011
- The OFSTED Framework (September 2015)
- The National Award for SEN Coordination (NASENCO)

These AET standards should not be used in isolation from other professional standards but should be part of a seamless approach to good provision.





Worked example from The Bulwell Academy

1. What first prompted you to use the standards?

'We were asked to look at the standards and decided to engage with them as a measure to gain awareness of our practice within the Academy'.

2. How long have you been working on the standards?

'We've been working on the standards prior to them being released nationally as we were asked to provide feedback '.

3. Which standard/s did you start with?

'We used all the standards as an audit initially to get an understanding of our practice to feed into our development action plan and SEF evaluation cycle'.

4. How did you engage all staff (or was it just a few)?

'The ASD team with the Inclusion Department alongside the nurture provision and mainstream staff working with high priority students have all participated as part of the quality assurance process, sharing practice eg strategies, interventions, planning ideas etc'.

5. What part did SLT play in this?

'I am on SLT and fed directly to the Principal and team, enabling the standards to be strategically placed as part of the whole school QA cycle'.

'Here is a quote from our most recent OFSTED Inspection'

"Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress throughout the academy. Leadership of this work of the academy is exceptionally strong"

"Disadvantaged students make rapid progress, especially at Key Stage 3"

OFSTED June 2015

6. What differences have you noticed in:

- Student participation – *'engagement in lessons due to the range of strategies and resources used'*
- Student progress – *'improved , we have closed the gaps with peers'.*
- Student outcomes – *' improved …see the OFSTED quote'*
- Staff attitudes – *'Staff have a greater awareness and understanding and are engaged in sharing good practice across the Academy. This means that they are more responsive with their planning through the use of the inclusive planning grids.'*
- *"Most teachers ensure good progress of students by planning lessons meticulously and addressing students' weaknesses quickly and, as a result, the students make good progress"* OFSTED 2015
- Parent/carer involvement – *'We have been developing the Inclusion Parent Action Group, and the numbers of parents participating has increased'.*

Worked example from The Bulwell Academy

Student Quotes:

"They always listen to you and they take you seriously. They always help you and it's like they really care what happens to us. We have brilliant staff here."

Quotes from the love of learning display in A Block...

"I like learning in a group"
"I like to learn new and interesting things"
"I find the lessons interesting. I like English."
"I like the support I get when I get stuck"
"I can experience new things and learn a lot more then I already do."

Worked example from The Bulwell Academy

THE INDIVIDUAL PUPIL

standards	Evidence
The setting recognises the particular vulnerability of pupils with autism & safeguards against actual & perceived episodes of teasing/bullying, including cyber bullying	• SEND Student Council • Nurture Intervention • New school anti-bullying guidance • Student log book (bullying) • Talk About Intervention • Anti-bullying sessions – personal
Your setting trains staff to know that physical intervention is particularly difficult for pupils with autism and ensures that staff understands the legal framework of a positive handling intervention to respond in an appropriate way when managing behaviour.	• All staff using positive handling as a physical intervention have been trained. Not yet developed training for handling students with ASD. • MAPP training, Reasonable adjustment behaviour pathway

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

standards	Evidence
Your setting establishes strong relationships between staff and pupils with autism, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being.	• Pupil Voice work • PCR
Your setting understands that building effective relationships requires active listening to pupils with autism and their parents/ carers, promoting opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas.	• Home school diary, regular phone calls, home visits, open evenings. • Celebration assemblies • Parent Autism Group

Worked example from The Bulwell Academy

CURRICULUM AND LEARNING

standards	Evidence
Your setting establishes strong relationships between staff and pupils with autism, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being.	• Pupil Voice • PCR
Your setting understands that building effective relationships requires active listening to pupils with autism and their parents/ carers, promoting opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas.	• Home school diary, regular phone calls, home visits, open evenings. • Celebration assemblies • Parent Autism Group

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

standards	Evidence
Your setting conducts sensory audits both within and outside the setting, including transport and community facilities, which involves pupils with autism, to consider potential sensory challenges and identify how these will be manage.	• Towards independence intervention, personal social development entry level award' • Sensory audit – access plan

What is autism?

Autism is a term used to describe a **neurological difference in brain development** that has a marked effect on how a person develops. Different terminology (including the triad of impairments) is needed in medical contexts which look at things a child cannot do in order to arrive at a diagnosis. The AET standards, training and methodology focus instead on recognising differences and working with them in a positive way which is more helpful in an educational context.

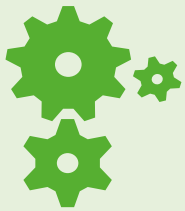
There are **four key areas of difference** that are particularly important for staff in schools and educational settings to understand and pay attention to because most pupils with autism will have individual educational needs to be met in these areas.

Interacting

…the way they interact, play and develop relationships



Processing Information



…their attention, interests and how they learn.



Sensory Processing

…taking in and perceiving sensory information. This may include hyper (high) or hypo (low) sensitivity to the 5 senses, as well as balance and body awareness.



Communication



…the way they communicate, understand and use language.

Further details on each of these four areas are given on pages 50 and 51.

Understanding the social interactive style and emotional expression of staff and peers



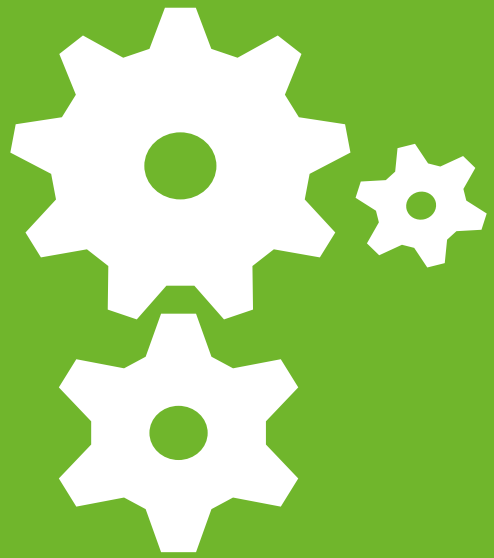
Most pupils with autism find social interaction with adults and peers very effortful. Pupils with autism are not easily able to understand commonly used implicit social messages and may find it hard to understand or relate to how social rules change due to context, or what is considered socially 'appropriate' (ie what is appropriate to say and do in some situations is inappropriate in other situations). It is difficult for pupils on the autism spectrum to easily and quickly read and understand the emotional intentions of staff and peers, but it should also be remembered that this can be a 'two-way' difficulty. The actions of pupils on the autism spectrum are often misinterpreted as intentionally insensitive or defiant. When wanting to play with peers, or join a group activity, pupils with autism may need support or help in doing so.



Understanding and using communication and language both verbal and non-verbal

Pupils with autism at all levels of intellectual ability have difficulties in understanding the communication and language of adults and peers and in communicating effectively themselves. About 40% of pupils with autism are delayed in learning to speak and some pupils develop little or no speech. It is likely that most pupils with autism will need support and strategies to help teach them how to communicate with staff and peers in order to have their needs met. This can involve the use of alternative means of communication (e.g. objects of reference, visual symbols, photos, gestures, spoken word, or a combination of means). It should be remembered that an approach to communication for a pupil should be consistent across the school day.

Differences in how information is processed and adjusting to unpredictable changes in routine



Pupils with autism find change much more difficult than other pupils as they are not easily able to predict what will happen instead or what to do in the changed situation. Some pupils with autism develop special interests in a topic or activity which may occupy a great deal of their thought and time. Such interests can be used to very good effect as part of the learning process and can be broadened into related areas and act as a route into employment.

Pupils on the autism spectrum have an uneven profile of abilities, which can also coincide with other factors such as age, personality, or the existence of other developmental differences or impairments. It is therefore of paramount importance to assess each pupil to gain an overall profile of their strengths and needs.



Differences in the way sensory information is processed

Many pupils with autism are under-sensitive or oversensitive to particular sensory stimuli such as sights, sounds and smells. They may also be overwhelmed as they have problems in separating out sensory information and attending to the most relevant. This can cause high levels of anxiety and staff can do a great deal to reduce this by finding out what each pupil finds hard and creating a classroom and school environment which addresses these difficulties.

What is the 'difference not deficit' debate and current terminology?

There is often an assumption that pupils on the autism spectrum need to behave and live like those without autism. Many adults on the autism spectrum take exception to this assumption and the fact that much of the literature on autism uses medical terms such as deficit, disorder, and intervention. They argue that such terms are both inaccurate and stigmatising and based on an incorrect notion of what humanity and normalcy entail. They argue that such notions can further disable people on the autism spectrum, and if internalised can lead to crises in self-identity, esteem and worth. On the other hand, there are others that argue that they are severely impaired and want to retain the term disorder to explain their experience. In recognition of this debate, much of the literature now just refers to autism or autism spectrum and not autism spectrum disorder or condition.
If their needs are recognised and appropriate support is given, a significant number of pupils on the autism spectrum will experience relatively few difficulties in their school lives and into adulthood.

Although different subgroups have been identified (e.g. Asperger syndrome, high functioning autism, 'classical' autism, atypical autism, semantic pragmatic syndrome), it is current thinking that such distinctions are not easily made, and these have been merged into one category of autism spectrum in the revised diagnostic classification system DSM V (2013). The term autism spectrum was created by Lorna Wing in 1996 who suggested that it is simpler to state that all individuals affected in the four areas are on the autism spectrum, rather than trying to categorise them under other specific groups.



How many children and young people on the autism spectrum are there?

It is estimated that there are **approximately 1 in 100** children and adults **on the autism spectrum**. Autism is hard to detect in some pupils, particularly in girls, and so there may be pupils at your school or setting who are not yet diagnosed. Approximately 4 boys with autism are diagnosed for each girl, but we believe that many girls are going unrecognised until much later in life or are diagnosed with other conditions. However, **identifying and addressing the educational needs of a pupil does not depend on having a diagnosis**, whether that is autism, a literacy problem, or a social and communication difficulty, for example. Staff should not focus all their efforts on 'getting a formal diagnosis' as they can address the needs of the pupil without this, by finding out with the pupil, exactly what aspects of school life are difficult and the type of support the pupil would like and benefit from.

How many pupils with autism have exceptional skills or talents?

A significant number of pupils with autism have good knowledge and skills in a specific area, relative to their skills in other areas. They often have a much more uneven profile of skills and difficulties than other pupils, so it is important that staff do not assume that because pupils have average or above average skills or attainments in some areas, it does not mean they have no problems in school.



Which conditions often co-occur together with autism?

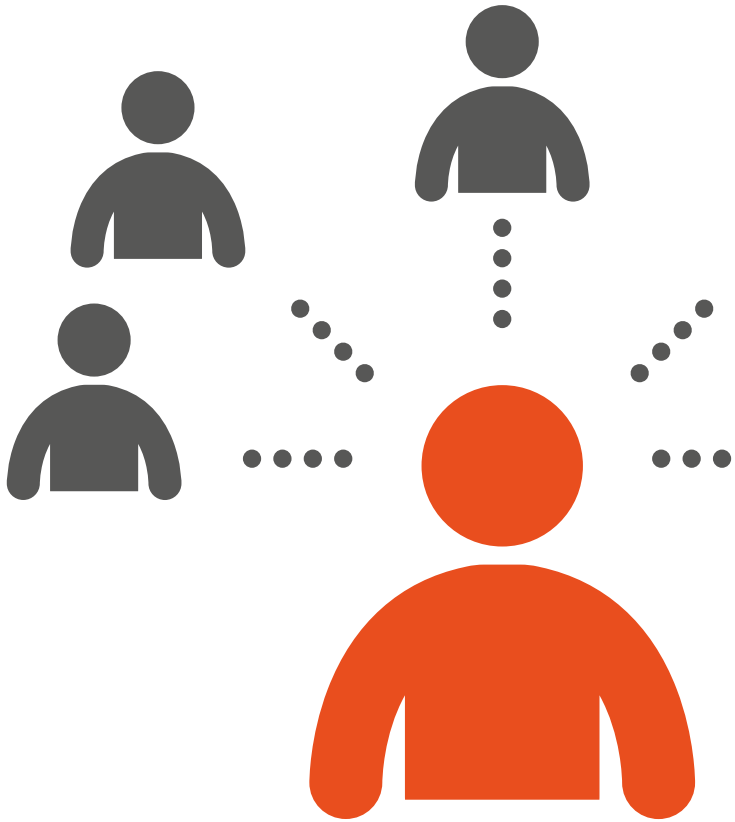
It is estimated that about one third of pupils with autism also have learning disabilities, and two thirds of the autism population are of average or above average intellectual ability. Commonly associated problems with autism are sleep disturbance, limited diet and/or erratic eating and drinking times/constipation and gut problems. About a third of pupils with autism also have epilepsy which may be hard to detect. All of these additional difficulties can have an adverse effect on a pupil's ability to focus on tasks and it is vital that good information is shared between all those who are involved with the pupil.

Autism in a social context

Reports from adults and pupils on the autism spectrum often state that it is not their autism that poses them difficulties as such, but the expectations and responses they have from other people. In particular the expectation to act, respond and learn in the same way that more typically developing pupils do.

When working with pupils on the autism spectrum, it is imperative to understand that such pupils have a differing way of processing information and thus differing understandings and social expectations to their more typically developing peers. This can create great difficulties with regard to understanding the communications and intentions of others, as well as a perceived lack of understanding from others of their own intentions. This disruption in mutual understanding coupled with potential sensory sensitivities can make school a particularly challenging environment for pupils on the autism spectrum. It is therefore vital that staff who work with pupils on the autism spectrum enhance their understanding of these differences and make adjustments to their own style of interaction and their expectations and modify how they interact and deliver the curriculum to these pupils.

Knowledge and understanding of autism and how best to support pupils on the autism spectrum continues to change and develop, thus it is important for practitioners to keep up to date with developments in the field. From our current understanding regarding autism however, this framework prioritises the following key points



Glossary of terms

TERM	DEFINITION
ASC	Autism Spectrum Condition is a term used in some areas in preference to ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder).
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder is the term used in much of the literature but there is debate as to whether the word Disorder should continue to be used as it has negative connotations.
Asperger syndrome * See footnote 1	A diagnostic category for a pupil of average or above average intelligence with autism who was not significantly delayed in learning to speak.
Atypical autism	A category used to cover those who have characteristics in common with autism and Asperger syndrome but who do not quite meet the criteria for either of these categories. It is also referred to as pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).
Autism	A diagnostic category which may also be referred to as autistic disorder, Kanner's autism and classical autism.
Autism outreach	Many authorities have a team of staff who support schools and families in their work with pupils on the autism spectrum. These are often referred to as autism outreach teams, communication teams or specialist teams.
Autism spectrum	Term given to cover the whole range of subgroups including autism, Asperger syndrome, atypical autism and PDD-NOS.
Differentiation	Lessons can be variously differentiated by: outcome (learning objective), task, process (the method of teaching), pupil grouping, tailoring the content of the lesson for the individual pupil (personalised learning), provision (access to specialists), choice and self-direction, learning style.
Educational psychologist (EP)	A psychologist who ascertains the educational needs of pupils in discussion with parents, carers and staff and makes recommendations on strategies and provision.
Expressive language	The use of words and sentences, vocabulary and grammar.
FE	Further Education

TERM	DEFINITION
HE	Higher Education
High Functioning Autism (HFA) * See footnote 1	A pupil on the autism spectrum who is of average or above average ability but who was delayed in learning to speak.
IDP	Inclusion Development Programme
Multi-agency	Groups from different professions or disciplines.
Neurodiversity	A term favoured by autistic adults which sees autism as a particular way of being and their neurodiversity being a positive and not a negative.
Neurotypical	Neurotypical is a term given to individuals without autism or any other neurodiverse condition (such as dyslexia, ADHD or Tourettes).
Non-verbal communication	Communication through the use of facial expressions, gesture and body language.
Occupational therapist	A therapist who ascertains a pupil's sensory needs and ability to perform everyday tasks and self care skills.
Pathological demand avoidance syndrome	A term given by some clinicians for individuals who have some of the characteristics of autism and Asperger syndrome, but who find it extremely hard to follow other people's demands or agendas.
Pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) * See footnote 1	A term used in diagnostic systems to group together certain clinical conditions. All the autism spectrum disorders (autism, Asperger syndrome and PDD-NOS) fall into this category. In addition, it includes Rett's syndrome and Heller's syndrome (childhood disintegrative disorder), which are generally not included within the autism spectrum because of their characteristics and prognosis.
Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)	Those who have characteristics in common with autism and Asperger syndrome, but who do not quite meet the criteria for either of these categories. It is also referred to as atypical autism.
Preverbal	Description given to a pupil who has not yet developed spoken language.
Quality-first teaching	High quality provision for all pupils from all teachers and teaching assistants. Wave 1 should be on offer to ALL pupils. Such teaching will be based on clear objectives that are shared with the pupils and returned to at the end of the lesson; new vocabulary is explained; visual and kinaesthetic methods are used as well as auditory/verbal learning. These approaches are the best way to reduce the number of pupils who need extra help.

TERM	DEFINITION
Receptive language	Understanding what is communicated or written, including vocabulary, grammar, stories and non-verbal communication.
Speech and language therapist (SALT)	A therapist who assesses an individual's ability to communicate and their speech and language skills and devises programmes to develop these.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)	A programme designed to enhance understanding of the importance of the social and emotional aspects of learning.
Special educational needs (SEN)	A term used to describe a pupil who is deemed to require additional or different educational support from others of the same age.
Special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)	A person within school who is responsible for coordinating information and action for pupils with special educational needs.

Footnote 1– 'The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has revised its diagnostic manual, known as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). The fifth edition (DSM-5) was published on 18 May 2015. The DSM is one of the two main international sets of diagnostic criteria for autism. It is influential, but it is not the main set used in the UK.

In DSM-5, the terms 'autistic disorder', 'Asperger disorder', 'childhood disintegrative disorder' and 'PDD-NOS' have been replaced by the collective term 'autism spectrum disorder'. For many people, the term 'Asperger syndrome' is part of their day-to-day vocabulary and their identity, so we understand concerns around the removal of Asperger syndrome as a distinct category from the manual. All individuals who currently have a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, including those with Asperger syndrome, will retain their diagnosis. No one will 'lose' their diagnosis because of the changes in DSM-5'.

{Extract taken from a paper by the NAS entitled Changes to autism and Asperger syndrome diagnostic criteria 09.12.2015

REFERENCES AND FURTHER SUGGESTED READING

Autism Centre for Education and Research

www.afa3as.org.uk

www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

www.bild.org.uk
Website for BILD (British Institute for Learning Disabilities) Resources on children and adults with learning disabilities

www.researchautism.net
Provides information on the evidence of different interventions in autism

www.communicationmatters.org.uk

Centre for Research on Autism and Education

www.csie.org.uk
Index for inclusion

Department for education

www.do2learn.com
Several resources for pupils and staff

www.leics.gov.uk

www.nasen.org.uk

asd.nes.scot.nhs.uk
Website with information on autism for health professionals

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk

www.talkingmats.org.uk

TDA

www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk

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AET Expert reference group - England
AET Programme Board - England
AET training hubs - Kent, London, Oldham, Birmingham, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire
Autism outreach teams - Birmingham, Blackpool, Barnet, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire,
Bracken Hill School - Nottinghamshire
Bulwell Academy - Nottingham
Communication and Autism Team - Birmingham
Communications Trust - England
Dyslexia-SpLD Trust - England
Educational Psychologists - Nottinghamshire
National Autistic Society - England
Respondents from the parent survey (87) - England
Respondents from the professional survey (42) - England
Respondents from the pupil survey (23) - England
Sutherland House School - Nottinghamshire
Genium - creative agency

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Reference for these standards: Jones, G., Baker, L., English, A. and Lyn-Cook, L. (2012/2015). AET schools autism standards. London, AET. Revised and updated in 2016 by Daly, M., English, A. and O'Brien, A.

SUPPORTED BY:

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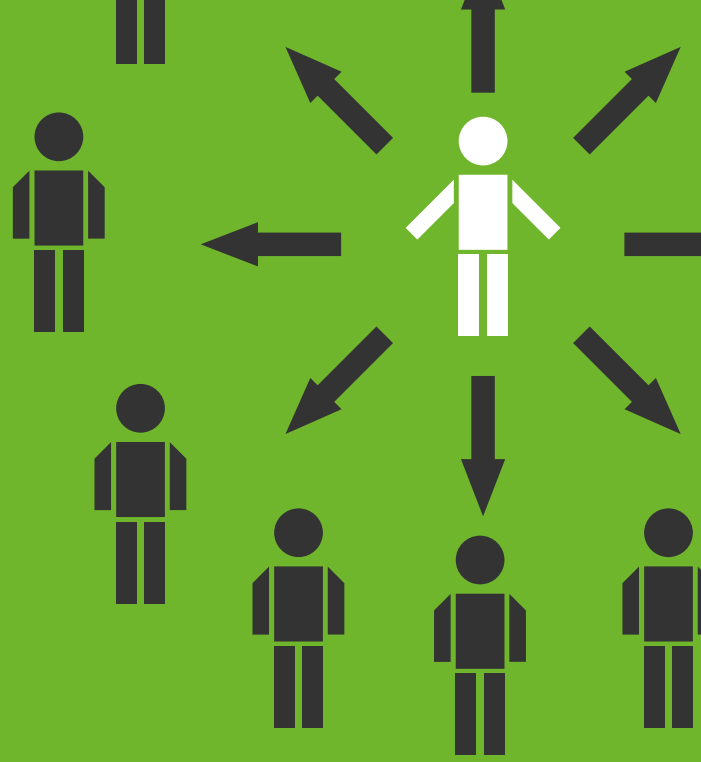
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