



**Autism Accreditation**  
The National Autistic Society  
Bristol Office  
Church House  
Church Road  
Filton  
Bristol BS34 7BD

6<sup>th</sup> August 18

Dear Louise Stanton,

This is confirmation of the decision agreed by the Autism Accreditation Award Committee made on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018 that Gosberton House Academy has been awarded Autism Accreditation **Advanced status**.

The committee were particularly impressed with the following areas of strength:

#### *Community Ethos*

A strong sense of community exists within the Academy. This is founded on a commitment to a 'rights and responsibility' culture related to the school's work to achieve the UNICEF Rights Respecting Gold Award. Pupils are given the space to be themselves and are encouraged to celebrate their differences and personal achievements. At the same time, high expectations are set for them in terms of how they should interact with others with respect and good manners and how they should contribute to a calm, purposeful working environment.

#### *Continuous Professional Development*

The school invests heavily in CPD as reflected it having achieved the Continuous Professional Development Excellence Mark and Investors in People Platinum status. Parents and professionals comment highly favourably on staff knowledge and understanding of autism. The assessment team observed staff as highly skilled and consistent in their approaches. Staff feel valued, are encouraged to be reflective learners and are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding further. There is a robust collaborative culture within the school where staff feel they can obtain help from colleagues and are keen to share information and ideas.

#### *Creative approach to learning*

The school employs creative ways to make learning fun and engaging for the students and to invest them with a sense of pride and achievement. There is a willingness to take on new challenges and initiatives such as Scouting schools and Forest schools to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, meaningful and challenging to the pupils.

#### *Self-reliance*

Staff allow pupils time and space to solve problems for themselves, making effective use of verbal and visual prompts to encourage independence and self-reliance. Thinking skills are explicitly taught and pupils are regularly praised for self-reliance and resilience.

#### *Sharing of expertise*

The school is strongly committed to sharing and promoting the good practice established at GHA

across the county. Indeed, the school clearly sees itself as having a mission to try and make the world outside the school gate a better place for autistic people. This includes the fundamental role the school has played in setting up AIMS, the Outreach Service, AET training and Early Bird Training. The school has also contributed to furthering knowledge and understanding of autism through its involvement in a range of research projects.

#### *Learning at Home*

Parent feedback is excellent. An impressive initiative has been 'Learning at Home'. This has empowered parents to appreciate their role as educators of their child and provided a means by which parents can celebrate and value their child as a learner.

#### *Transitions*

Transitions are exceptionally well organised and skilfully choreographed to ensure each pupil knows what is expected of them and what is going to happen. This ensures that they remain calm, focussed and not stressed.

#### *Environment*

The décor of the school is maintained to a good standard. For example, walls are kept smooth and free from cracks or marks. Everywhere is kept neat and free of clutter. Displays are very attractive and effective use of photographs and pupil quotes are made to reinforce the school's culture of celebration and pupil voice. Colour schemes are employed effectively to achieve a balance between ensuring environments are attractive and engaging whilst still low arousal. The school has been accredited for its gardens and use of outdoor spaces for learning.

#### *Integration of Therapeutic interventions*

Whilst the school recognise the value of therapeutic expertise, where necessary using its own funds to buy therapy time, staff at GHA take full responsibility for understanding, delivering and evaluating therapeutic interventions in the best interests of the pupils rather than been over-dependent on external specialist input.

#### *Visual Mediation*

Throughout the school, there is recognition of the value of providing visual supports in a range of formats and contexts.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Dedridge', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Stephen Dedridge  
Senior Adviser, Autism Accreditation