AUTISM ACCREDITATION REVIEW REPORT

Stanley School

Review Date: 23/03/2010

Review Team

	Name	Occupation
Team Leader	Stephen Dedridge	Autism Accreditation Advisor
	Name	Occupation
Team Member	Stephen Pyott	Autism Accreditation Advisor

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Amend as appropriate

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INTRODUCTION

The review report is designed to provide a concise and focused insight into the organisation's performance against accreditation teaching/learning standards. The Review Report focuses to the criteria for Autism Accreditation.

1. The service has a specialised knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorders.
2. The knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorders consistently informs the organisation, resources and management of the service.
3. The knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorders consistently informs the individual assessment and planning for all people with autism.
4. The knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorders consistently results in positive outcomes for all people with autism.

The Review Report will be submitted to the Autism Accreditation Panel and forms part of the decision making process.

PEN PICTURE

SERVICE PROVIDER

Name of Organisation	Stanley School
Address	Pensby Road, Thingwall, Wirral, CH617UG
Telephone Number	0151 648 3171
Mission Statement	The school believes in a strong special school sector which combines the very best of mainstream practice with specialist knowledge and skills. Pupils are able to learn in an atmosphere of high expectations, structured programs and success. This enables them to integrate into the community with the optimum success.
Organisational Structure	This is a day school for 90 pupils aged 2-11. Pupils are taught in classes that are ordered chronologically. There are 3 departments (Early Years, Lower and Upper School). We accept pupils from the whole of the Wirral.
Details of any other services	The school offers all the services of a LEA school. In addition we have: • An after school club (twice weekly) • Parents support group (fortnightly) • Parents workshops (weekly – with the Health Authority) • Home visiting (weekly) • Communication (with Speech and Language Therapy) • Summer playscheme

SCHOOL BEING REVIEWED

Name of School	Stanley School
Contact Person	Tony Newman
Unit(s) Details (Please list separately all units being reviewed and add or delete bullets as required) • Address(es); • Number of Placements; • Type of School; and • Specialist Standard used	Pensby Road, Thingwall, Wirral, CH617UG Placements: 90 (30) Type of Service: Complex Learning Difficulty School for children aged 2-11 Specialist Standard: Day School Standards
Telephone	0151 648 3171
Fax	0151 648 6887
Email address	headteacher@stanley.wirral.sch.uk
Autism Specific Aims for Care / Education	The school has a detailed policy, which lays out the approaches, philosophy and aims for pupils with ASD. Our school aims are all autism friendly. **Curriculum** 1. To address individual needs through a relevant, broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum 2. To develop skills in independent living 3. To develop communication skills **Relationships** 4. To develop good relationships between professionals involved with the child 5. To establish good working relationships with parents and carers 6. To provide opportunities for integration with other children and the wider community **Ethos** 7. To value all children's achievements 8. To develop self confidence and a positive attitude 9. To promote a sense of community which values all individuals equally 10. To have an attractive, stimulating and welcoming environment Please note all the aims and now the mission statement are expanded in a document that is available for the inspection.

Management and Staff Structure	Head Deputy 2 X TLR1 8 Class Teachers Teacher for communication (0.6) Teacher for PE (0.4) 1.5 Higher Level Teaching Assistant 16 Learning Support Assistants 10 Support Assistants
Description of School	Education for pupils with Complex Learning Difficulties. The school caters for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties and additional problems of which ASD` is the largest.
Philosophy of School	We offer a high quality education to pupils with complex learning difficulties. These include those on the Autistic Spectrum and those with global delay. The teaching methods adopted are all autism friendly (TEACCH, PECS, Social Stories, Intensive interaction etc). There is a detailed policy on the education of pupils with ASD.
Description of Physical Environment / Buildings	Mainly single story building built in 1959 (2 classes upstairs). Hall, 3 separate play areas (by age), splash pool, 2 sensory rooms, and soft play. Classrooms are all modified in accordance with the TEACCH approach. Whiteboards in all classes with network. Situated in a pleasant leafy suburb.
Budgetary systems enabling continued development and viability of the organisation	Funded by the LEA. Considerable fundraising for (e.g. computers, play areas, minibus etc)
Outline of the fee structure	N/A

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable)
As identified by the Panel

Recommendation 1 - Core Standard 17: Sensory Issues

Given the increasing knowledge and understanding of how sensory processing impacts on pupils with ASD, and the school's acknowledgment that many of their pupils have sensory needs, the Review Team feels that the school should address this and recommends that all pupils with ASD have a discrete, accessible and clearly understood Sensory Profile. It would be useful to seek input from an Occupational Therapist who would be best placed to help to interpret the findings of any such sensory assessments/profiles.

Through discussion with the management and staff team within Stanley School, through scrutiny of school documentation, including examples of completed Sensory Profiles and through examination of the Interim Development Report it can be confirmed that the school has put much thought and work into this recommendation and that it is an ongoing focus for further attention and development.

Amongst a host of strategies employed to address this recommendation the school has been in close liaison with an Occupational Therapist working within the local PCT (adult experience rather than school age) and staff continue to seek an Occupational Therapist with a relevant school age background.

As a result of such consultations the school have adopted the Olga Bogdashina sensory profiling tool. A member of the CAMHS learning disabilities team has introduced the process into the school by providing training to the whole staff team in relation to the profile and its use. This was followed by a day of INSET training dedicated to the implementation of the profile and its application for each class and this in turn resulted in a screening programme and prioritisation process so as to ensure all those with an identified need were able to receive detailed sensory profiles. In total 18 of the 25 pupils with an ASD were identified to be in need of a detailed profile and all of these are reported to have been completed by each class team as appropriate. This has, in turn, resulted in the development of a simple action plan for each pupil in order to enable an assessment of success to be undertaken at a later date. Discussions with the staff team clearly demonstrate that this undertaking has been beneficial and has helped to facilitate a clearer understanding of each pupils needs/challenges.

There has been a focus on staff training in relation to Sensory Issues and Teaching Assistants have been at the forefront of this development. A Sensory module has been written as part of a Home Tuition Scheme for Teaching Assistants which has been completed by all.

A Merseyside SLD Schools training day was attended by numerous school staff and this included workshops on sensory issues and sensory integration attended by ten individuals.

There is written guidance relating to sensory issues. This is Module 5 of the Stanley School Home Tuition Scheme that has been developed primarily for the continuing development needs of teaching assistants. The module has been made available to all staff and provides clear information relating to the area of sensory issues for pupils with an ASD as well as information pertaining to potential challenges and ideas of possible solutions and working strategies. The school intend to formalise this information into a clear sensory policy when all research work has been completed. Additionally a sensory overview document has been produced with the aim to help to increase staff understanding and a copy has been placed within each classroom. It provides a quick visual guide relating pupil behaviour to possible sensory issues.

In addition the Head Teacher has visited Queensmill School in Fulham to see how sensory issues have been tackled there. This came about as a result of attendance at an Autism Accreditation training event where approaches to addressing sensory issues had been described.

It is clear from the detailed and strategic response to the recommendation that the school see this as an appropriate area of focus. The recommendation has been fully addressed and the review team were pleased to note the comprehensive manner in which further investigation of this area is being carried out to ensure a quality end result.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Self Audit
IDR
ASD File 6

Interviews & Discussions with:
Head Teacher
Deputy Head Teacher

Teachers
Teaching Assistants

Observations:
Classroom practice

Areas for Development

The review team support the school's intention to produce a Sensory Issues Policy document upon the completion of current research and development projects.

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT (if applicable)
As identified in the IDR

Potential Area 1

There will be an INSET day on the last day of the Autumn Term 2009 focusing on PECS & TEACCH. Each class team will be required to reflect on what they're doing in both these areas and to audit their own practice and ideas for developments.

During the day, each class team was asked to review the current level of PECS usage in the class and to identify two or three specific targets to increase use. They were also asked to review other aspects of TEACCH (classroom layout, use of work systems, visual timetables, transitions) and identify a further two to three targets for these as well.

It can be confirmed that action plans resulting from this day were completed. During the review, pupils were observed using the PECS system and there was evidence of practice being influenced by the TEACCH approach. This is discussed in further detail within the Teaching/Learning Standards.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Class teams action plans from INSET day.

Interviews & Discussions with:
Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher

Observations:
Classroom Practice.

Potential Area 2

There is on-going work being carried out to provide PECS resources across the curriculum, building up symbols for different curriculum topics so that they are readily available for use throughout the school.

It can be confirmed that a bank of symbols for different curriculum topics has been created and stored in the staff room. These include symbols for topics such as Geography, History, Maths, PSHE, RE and Science. For example, the 'electricity' topic includes symbols representing plug, socket, fan, torch, lamp, shadow, switch and battery. According to the Communication policy, these resources 'may be used in group work or with individual children to enhance their understanding and support their communication during lessons'.

Observations by the review team confirm that PECS is being used in lessons at snack and meal times but the use of symbols in the teaching of curriculum topics was not observed. The language teacher confirmed that having set up the symbols bank the challenge now is to get staff to make full use of the resource. She personally hopes that one way in which this might be achieved is for a member of staff in the school to achieve accreditation as a PECS trainer. This person could then provide on-gong advice and training to staff to promote the effective use of PECS across the whole school curriculum.

Another possible way forward is for there to be a focus on a specific topic (perhaps one that lends itself most easily to a PECS approach) and for staff to be supported and observed in making best use of the symbols when teaching the topic. The wider use of PECS is identified as an area of development within Teaching/Learning Standard 4: Methods.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
List of contents of topic symbols folders.
Curriculum topic symbols folders.

Interviews & Discussions with:
Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Language and Communication Teacher.
Speech and Language Therapist.

Observations:
Classroom practice.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF STRENGTH (if applicable)
As identified in the IDR

Potential Area 1

The School has data collection systems in place which accurately tracks the academic progress of pupils, informs individual action plans and enables the school to look at the progress of pupils with autism in relation to other groups of pupils

Staff at Stanley School assert that accurate tracking of pupil progress is necessary both to ensure the best possible outcomes for individuals and to aid school improvement. Consequently they have developed comprehensive data collection and analysis procedures. They make use of a number of systems and processes which when combined enable the school to focus upon the progress made by pupils with autism comparative to that of others.

The school has collected and interpreted data for more than ten years enabling historical comparisons to be made. They are able to evidence, for example, that Number has risen 2.8 P Levels since 1999 with an average pupil in 1999 'showing an interest' in Number compared with them 'counting accurately up to ten' by 2009.

The school makes use of the PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting – Lancashire County Council) assessment tool and historical analysis shows that it has increased its average score every year since 1999.

Additionally data analysed by the Durham University CEM P Scales Project and CASPA (Comparison and Analysis of Special Pupil Attainment – SGA Systems) enables the school to compare pupils with similar peers. CASPA data differentiates between SLD, ASD and Down Syndrome. It routinely shows that Stanley School pupils are performing well. For example, CASPA shows that in Number Stanley School pupils are performing at 1.2 P Levels above comparable pupils.

Progress is also measured using CASPA. Projected outcomes are provided using data previously collected for similar pupils and an assessment is made in relation to whether pupils have not met, met or exceeded expectations. Eighty percent of Stanley School pupils are shown to make expected or above expected progress. Additionally, CASPA analysis specifically identifies those individuals

who are not making expected progress and enables school staff to draw up an action plan to address areas of need.

Further analysis is undertaken with pupil Individual Education Plans and these show that, whilst targets are challenging, pupils are able to make good progress.

When used together these robust data collection and analysis tools enable school staff to accurately track individual academic progress. In turn this leads to accurate and appropriate target setting within IEPs and accurate recording and reporting of skills and abilities. It is clear that the data collection systems used within the school are an area of strength.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Self Audit
IDR
School Improvement Plan
IEPs
Data and the SLD School document
Report on Annual Pupil Performance

Interviews & Discussions with:
Head Teacher
Deputy Head Teacher
Teachers
Teaching Assistants
Speech and Language Therapist

Areas of Strength

When used together the robust data collection and analysis tools used within Stanley School enable school staff to accurately track individual academic progress. In turn this leads to accurate and appropriate target setting within IEPs and accurate recording and reporting of skills and abilities. The review team consider that the data collection systems used within the school are an area of strength.

Potential Area 2

The integration of Stanley School pupils with the mainstream primary school is carefully monitored and records kept showing individual pupil's progress in terms of their involvement and interaction

Observation of practice, consultation with senior staff members during the course of the review and scrutiny of detailed school documentation highlighted that Stanley School undertake integration and inclusion opportunities on a very regular basis throughout the school year and that this routinely involves pupils with an ASD.

A long standing and mutually beneficial partnership has been developed with an adjoining Primary School (Thingwall School) and an increasing number of opportunities are being developed with Irby Primary School to offer integration opportunities to large numbers of Stanley School pupils. In addition other socially beneficial initiatives including opportunities for pupils to partake in a Cub Scout group and local playgroups further enhance such opportunities.

Carefully considered integration support documentation and policy guidelines provide clear descriptions of the benefits of such opportunities for the pupils, the staff and the schools involved. For example, there is a clear understanding that well managed and appropriate integration should lead to benefits including:

- Pupils being encouraged to establish positive relationships
- The promotion of friendships
- The fostering of group and individual responsibility
- The building of self confidence and self esteem
- Pupils developing skills enabling them to cope with difficulties/challenges
- Pupils developing an awareness of their own needs views and feelings and, in some instances, the needs, views and feelings of others
- Opportunities to take turns and share
- The development of a sense of community
- The promotion of decision making, communication and interaction
- An opportunity to respond and adapt to new and unfamiliar experiences
- The development of receptive and expressive language skills
- An increased ability to follow and respond to instructions

- The development of concentration and attention skills etc.

Staff may additionally benefit through the opportunities to share facilities and expertise and through the opportunity to promote the value and appropriateness of integration.

Of particular note is the carefully considered approach to monitoring and record keeping that is routinely undertaken for all such experiences. All Stanley School pupils are observed, and data is recorded, in relation to their levels of involvement and interaction. For example involvement is rated using a five point scale:

1. No activity
2. Frequently interrupted activity
3. Mostly continuous activity
4. Continuous activity with intense moments
5. Sustained intense activity

And interaction is rated:

TC – No Interaction
TC-A - Target child interacts with adult
TC-C - Target child interacts with child
TC-GC - Target child interacts with group
A-TC - Adult interacts with target child
C-TC - Child interacts with target child
GC-TC - Group interacts with target child

This enables clear monitoring to take place and strategies to be adopted to address points of weakness or areas in need of further development.

All pupils undertaking integration opportunities are observed at the beginning of each academic year. This provides a baseline relating to their levels of involvement and integration. Additional observations are carried out for mainstream pupils enabling clear comparisons to be made. Where Stanley School pupils are showing signs of weakness in relation to their mainstream counterparts an action plan is developed to provide clear targets for support and intervention. At the end of each school year similar observations are undertaken and further comparison can be made to assess the degree of progress made by each pupil.

The perception of parents regarding the integration programmes was also sought by asking them to complete a questionnaire.

All but 1 respondent thought their child enjoyed their integration and the figures were comparable with previous surveys. 88% thought their social skills had improved as a result.

It is clear that this very strategic and analytical approach to integration opportunities offers clear data in relation to degrees of success. It provides information that is useful to the skills development of individual pupils as well as providing clear data about the success of particular interventions and strategies across time. The review team can confirm that the approach taken to the integration of pupils has a significant impact on pupil progress and it is considered it an area of strength

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Integration policy documentation
Integration records
Data analysis information
IEPs
Pupil files

Interviews & Discussions with:
Deputy Head Teacher
Staff supporting integration opportunities
Parents

Observations:
Integration opportunities for two pupils attending Thingwall School.

Areas of Strength

The integration of Stanley School pupils within mainstream primary school settings and the careful monitoring and record keeping during such activities enabling a clear analysis of the success of support strategies is considered by the review team to be an area of strength.

Potential Area 3

Stanley School places emphasis on working in partnership with parents. This is achieved through strong communication links, regular weekly parent workshops support for parents at tribunals and high levels of support for individual pupils and their families.

In order to obtain feedback from parents, the school sends out a questionnaire which is based on the Ofsted format every two years. The results are analysed and all written comments are recorded. In January 2009, parents were surveyed as to their attitudes towards the school in general; the workshops for understanding behaviour and integration. Findings informed the school Improvement Plan.

The review team can confirm that the school's parent questionnaire provides clear evidence of a very high level of satisfaction from parents with how the school communicates with them and works with their children, the vast majority stating that there was nothing the school could do to improve,

As part of the Autism Accreditation review, parents are also asked to complete a questionnaire, the results of which are shown in the summary of this report. Our findings are in line with the schools, with 75 % of grades being scored in the 'very happy' category and no parent scoring themselves as 'unhappy'.

Parents state that the school maintains regular contact in a variety of ways and keeps them up to date with their child's work and progress. Parents appreciate the use of the daily chat book, one stating that it 'keeps us well informed' whilst another parent suggested that it 'is very handy for learning what my son has been doing on a certain day'.

One parent wished staff could 'write more in the home-school book' and suggested that this varied 'from class to class', whilst another parent suggested that contact 'has been less good' in their child's current class. Similar sentiments were expressed by one of the parents interviewed by the review team, who stated that in one class she received a daily comment about what they child had achieved but this was not the case when her child moved to another class.

Parents clearly value the chat-books and it is suggested that as an area of development, consideration is given as to how consistency can be achieved between classes regarding how they can be best used as a tool of communication with parents. This suggestion is

made in the context of the majority of parents (82%) being happy or very happy with how the school communicates with them.

The four parents interviewed by the review team were extremely enthusiastic about what the school had done for them and their child. One parent spoke about how the school has put them in contact with other professionals. Another parent described how the staff from the school had accompanied her in taking her child to the hairdressers. In the words of one parent, the school is 'like a life line. I feel like I would have gone mad without them'.

In interviews parents described staff as very approachable, giving the impression that they always have time to discuss any issues or concerns. One parent spoke about the school being 'one big family'

The school invites parents who may be experiencing difficulties with their child's behaviour to a series of workshops which will also be attended by the head-teacher, the class teacher, the school nurse and any other professionals the parents would like to be present.

In order to ensure consistency, workshops follow a set format. At the first meeting, the parent will identify the behaviour which they would like to be addressed. They will be provided with some coping strategies that they can immediately put into practice. There will also be a discussion of the underlying causes of the behaviour and consideration of what longer term strategies and actions should be implemented by parents and professionals.

There is a strong focus on providing parents with practical support in areas which are causing them the most concern, for example sleeping, diet, toilet training or establishing a morning routine. The school will provide parents with resources to help them implement strategies and in future workshops any progress will be assessed in a systematic fashion before further actions are agreed.

The aim is to provide parents with long term sustainable involvement and the process is a genuine partnership between parents and professionals in which parents are valued as experts on their child. The workshops also help to ensure a continuity of approach between home and school. According to the head-teacher, another positive aspect of the workshops is that they help develop class teacher's skills in carrying out a functional analysis of behaviour.

The review team spoke to parents who had being involved in workshops and they spoke with considerable strength of feeling about how useful and beneficial they had found them.

The review team were also presented with the results of a survey carried out by the school with parents who had attended workshops. This showed that 91% of parents thought the workshops had helped them understand their child's behaviour, 72% thought they were helping them cope with their child's behaviour and 63% thought the workshops had improved behaviour.

One parent stated that the workshops have been 'a great help in thinking of new ideas and techniques to use at home and going out, often coming up with ideas between us that I wouldn't necessarily thought of on my own'. Another parent wrote that the 'Workshops has been very good in developing strategies to combat certain behaviours, going over plans and helping to determine the cause of problems, addressing them and implementing them'.

The school has also been involved in the piloting of a course for parents based on the 'Signposts for Building Better Behaviour' Programme. Six parents attended five group sessions of two and a half hours per session. The sessions were facilitated by staff from the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation who had received training in the Programme.

As a result of evidence of positive outcomes from the pilot, it is anticipated that staff at Stanley School will be trained as facilitators of the Signpost Programme to enable more parents whose children attend the school to access the programme.

Another initiative has been the piloting of a home visit scheme. Since October 2009, a class teacher from the early years has worked for the equivalent of half a day per week in the evenings so that she can observe families of the children in her class within the home and provide practical support.

It is up to the parents to set the focus of the visits. For example, advice has been given on how to get individual children to sit down at a table at mealtimes, to eat independently, to dress for bedtime or to be prepared for a move to a bigger bedroom.

The teacher hopes the scheme will develop the confidence of parents in knowing how to manage their child's behaviour. It is felt that observing the child and their parents interacting within the home environment makes advice more pertinent and effective. It may also have helped in the transference of skills and continuity of approach. Interviews with parents confirm that they value the home visits and have found them very helpful.

As pilot schemes, both the Signposts programme and the Home visits present with positive outcomes for both parents/carers and their children with autism. As an area of development, the school may wish to consider how these initiatives can be sustained and expanded.

The school facilitates a fortnightly Parents group. This provides an opportunity for parents to discuss experiences and issues and to offer each other support, advice and information. Professionals will sometimes be invited to talk to the group. For example, during the review an Occupational Therapist was observed giving a talk on the sensory difficulties experienced by children with autism. There was then an opportunity for parents to talk about their own children and for the Occupational Therapist to give some practical suggestions and ideas.

A specific area where the school has supported parents is to provide practical advice in the process of claiming mobility allowances for their children and making an appeal if the claim is not accepted. The head teacher and school nurse have also attended tribunals to support parents and to give evidence.

The school's work with parents has been acknowledged by it achieving the award of 'Customer Service Excellence'. This award involved the school carrying out structured interviews with a small group of parents to discuss their experiences and feelings from initial diagnosis process to their child's placement at Stanley School. Key points were identified from the results of these interviews to help inform future practice.

In conclusion the review team were presented with strong evidence that the behaviour workshops and other strategies ensure that the school is responsive to the needs and concerns of parents and provide them with a high level of practical support and personal attention. This is clearly an area of strength.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Autism Accreditation Family Questionnaires.
Parents/carers view of the school-January 2009.
Parent workshops- document outlining method and process.
Customer Journey Questionnaire for parents.

Interviews & Discussions with:
Parents
Headteacher

School Nurse
Teacher carrying out Home Visits

Observations:
Parents Group

Areas for Development

As pilot schemes, both the Signposts programme and the Home visits present with positive outcomes for both parents/carers and their children with autism. As an area of development, the school may wish to consider whether these initiatives can be sustained and expanded.

Areas of Strength

The review team were presented with strong evidence that the behaviour workshops and other strategies ensure that the school is responsive to the needs and concerns of parents and provide them with a high level of practical support and personal attention. This is clearly an area of strength.

Potential Area 4

A Home Tuition Scheme has been introduced involving TAs in individual study and training.

The Home Tuition Scheme currently consists of five modules of study on specific topics which teaching assistants are expected to complete outside of term time. The Head teacher has researched and written the modules and they are linked into topics and development areas within the School Improvement Plan or the Autism Accreditation review process. For example, a module on Sensory Issues was developed in response to the recommendation given in the last report). Feedback from teaching assistants can also help to decide the focus of modules.

Each module follows the same format, stating what it is about and what will be learnt. Suggestions for further study are included as well as points to think about in order to help transfer what has been learnt into practice.

For example, Module 1 is entitled 'Using symbols in the classroom' and states that 'Although you are used to using symbols this module will give you some background and an overview of the ideas behind using them'. At the end of the module, teaching assistants are encouraged to think about how symbols are used in the classroom, practical ways in which symbols could be used in class and whether there could be more use of symbols in particular subject areas.

Other modules deal with the structure of the PECS approach; Literacy; Child Protection and Sensory Issues.

As an area of development, the review team encourage the school to continue investigating ways in which the scheme could be accredited by an external body and if this does not prove to be feasible by devising an internal system of assessment and certification. This will help to validate the Home Tuition Scheme for both the teaching assistants themselves as well as future potential employers.

The review team interviewed a teaching assistant who stated that the Home Tuition Scheme had given her more confidence to try things out and also that it encouraged sharing of ideas. She also was able to describe how what she had learnt had influenced her practice.

The Home Tuition Scheme provides a practical means of developing the skills and knowledge of teaching assistants in order to inform practice and as such is an area of strength.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Module materials

Interviews & Discussions with:
Teaching Assistant
Headteacher

Areas for Development

As an area of development, the review team encourage the school to continue investigating ways in which the scheme could be accredited by an external body and if this does not prove to be feasible by devising an internal system of assessment and certification. This will help to validate the Home Tuition Scheme for both the teaching assistants themselves as well as future potential employers.

Areas of Strength

The Home Tuition Scheme provides a practical means of developing the skills and knowledge of teaching assistants in order to inform practice and as such is an area of strength.

Potential Area 5

Stanley School is a forward-thinking school that is constantly reviewing research and best practice and thereby developing its own practice to further the progress made by pupils.

The school has been identified as 'exceptionally effective' in its most recent Ofsted report with achievement described as 'outstanding'. Yet there is no sense in which the school can be accused of resting on its own laurels.

Rather the school is engaged in a constant quest to seek best practice, keeping up with the latest research and visiting other schools to find out what they are doing. Before implementing change, a review is carried out of current research to ensure that there is a solid theoretical basis. There is also a strong focus on data collation and analysis to provide clear evidence as to the impact of actions on pupils and their families in order to inform further action.

Examples of such developments have already been mentioned in this report and include parent workshops, early years teachers input in the home, joint pilot with PCT of "Signposts for building better behaviour" course for parents, 'customer journey' work, Home Tuition Scheme for TAs and Integration monitoring.

The review team regard the culture of research, data analysis and honest self evaluation (which ensures that the school remains a dynamic, thriving and forward looking institution) is an area of strength.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Self Audit
IDR
School Improvement Plan
IEPs
Data and the SLD School document
Report on Annual Pupil Performance
Parents/carers view of the school-January 2009.
Parent workshops- document outlining method and process.
Customer Journey Questionnaire for parents.
Home Tuition Scheme
Ofsted report 2007

Interviews & Discussions with:

Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Teaching staff
Speech and Language Therapist

Areas of Strength

The review team regard the culture of research, data analysis and honest self evaluation (which ensures that the school remains a dynamic, thriving and forward looking institution) is an area of strength.

REVIEW STANDARDS

SPECIALIST STANDARD 1
Environment

The physical environment is fit for purpose/suits its stated purpose and meets/is responsive to the needs of the people with autism.

INDICATORS

1. There are policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines that inform practice regarding the needs of people with autism in relation to their environment.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

The 'Approaches to ASD' policy document acknowledges the SPELL framework 'as a useful, overarching set of principles' including reference to creating 'a carefully planned and sensitively adapted environment' with particular attention being paid to 'reducing or eradicating unhelpful stimuli'.

The document also states that 'the basic classroom is organised according to the TEACCH approach' and identifies the main physical features associated with this method. Further guidance is provided in the 'TEACCH' policy document under the section entitled 'Physical Structure'.

2. The physical environment reflects policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines and meets the needs of the people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

The review team can confirm from observation that classrooms are neat and organised environments which provide a sense of order and predictability for the pupils. Clearly delineated areas for different activities are indicated through the visual boundaries created by furniture, screens and flooring. Visual information is displayed or contained within the classroom environment such as timetables and reward charts as well as labels to show where equipment is kept or where the pupils should sit.

In the best examples, the carpet, furniture and the backing paper for displays are kept to one or two colours and displays are restricted to designated display areas within borders, with the rest of the wall space kept bare.

The limited space within some classrooms means that staff have to work hard to ensure that resources are stored and easily accessible while at the same time keeping the classrooms free of clutter and from displays becoming distracting. In many observations this tidy, low arousal environment was evident but there are exceptions which may need to be addressed to ensure the best possible outcomes.

3. The physical environment is used effectively to promote well-being and progress for the people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

The school environment is well maintained and provides opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of activities. Each department in school has its own outdoor play area with pupils having access to a range of age appropriate play equipment and apparatus. The school also has two sensory rooms and a soft play room.

Lunchtime arrangements take into account the needs of pupils in that meals are transported to classrooms so that pupils can eat them in a small group within a familiar environment.

According to the school's self audit, there are regular planned opportunities for pupils to access the wider environment with off-site activities including visits to the park and café, horse riding, swimming, bike riding and residential outdoor pursuits. In the family questionnaires sent out by Autism Accreditation one parent states that these 'regular trips into the community help our child with coping with different situations'. The school also manages the integration of pupils into the challenging environment of a mainstream school.

Within classrooms, whilst pupils are provided with sufficient personal space to engage in self directed activities or work on their own, social interaction is encouraged by maintaining areas for group work. Independent exploration of the environment is supported by safety features such as double handles on doors and radiator guards.

The introduction of detailed sensory profiles has helped to identify appropriate modifications of the environment to meet group or individual needs. For example, in one class background music is played to help create a calming atmosphere and all the pupils had large tables as work areas whilst one pupil's work station was screened off.

Another example was of a pupil who was sitting in a group and had an empty seat immediately behind him. It was explained that he would be moved to this seat if being part of the group activity became too much. Pupils who may appear over-stimulated were often seen to be provided with the opportunity to change their immediate environment by retreating to a more spacious or less stimulating area either within or outside the classroom.

4. People with autism are able to function effectively within the physical environment and their well-being is enhanced.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

During all observations pupils were able to explore their surroundings with an appropriate level of independence without placing themselves or others at risk. They appeared to be at ease within their environment and visual cues helped them to understand where they were meant to be and what they were required to do. On the whole pupils showed few adverse sensory reactions to the environment and when they did environmental modifications were already in place or were introduced.

The school is not purpose built to take into account the needs of pupils on the autism spectrum and space is limited. The school will be moving to a new site in 2013/14 which will be shared with a mainstream primary school.

Staff from Stanley School have visited other schools to obtain ideas about best practice in terms of the accommodation for pupils with autism. They have also attended a series of workshops together with representatives of the local authority and the architects in order to plan the design, features and detail of the new building.

A member of the review team attended the latest of these workshops and it is evident that considerable thought is being given to ensuring that the new buildings cater for pupils with autism. Stanley School staff were able to give direct feedback regarding issues such as noise levels and sound proofing; safety issues; lighting; ventilation; development of independence and specific provision such as a sensory garden and a calming room.

The review team consider that these Future Provision workshops are an area of strength in that they provide an excellent opportunity for Stanley School staff to be actively involved in planning the design and detail of the new school building. This ensures that the potential impact of the environment on the well being and progress of pupils with autism is both understood and fully addressed by the architects and other professionals involved in the process.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Approaches to ASD Policy
Teacch Policy

Interviews & Discussions with:
Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher

Observations:
Future Provision workshop
Classroom based activities, Assembly a Speech and Language Therapy session, an Intensive Interaction session and an integration session within a neighbouring school.

SPECIALIST STANDARD 2
Teaching/Learning - Programme/Curriculum and Activity Content

The programme/curriculum and the content of activities are informed by an understanding of autism/takes into account the needs of the people with autism.

INDICATORS

1. Within policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines there is a clear written description of the needs of people with autism in relation to the programme/curriculum and the content of activities.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

The review team can confirm that the school has a number of policies and guidelines which help to provide a clear written description of the needs of people with autism in relation to the curriculum and the content of activities. These include a Stanley School Curriculum Overview 2006, the Stanley School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy Document 2010, an ASD Policy file, a Speaking and Listening Curriculum along with Curriculum Policy Statements for Communication, Play, ICT, PSHE, Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education, English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology and Physical Education.

Within the Autistic Spectrum Disorders file 6 there is detailed guidance entitled "Removing Barriers to Achievement for all children and increasing SEN Presence, Participation and Achievement in all educational settings – Pointers to Good Practice: ASD Policy Guidance" produced in 2005 by the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral Local Authority. This document provides a means of promoting an agreed and consistent strategy to educating pupils with an ASD. The policy includes guidance on monitoring and review to ensure that recommendations that are adopted are regularly assessed to enable a judgement to be made as to whether pupil's needs are being routinely met.

The ASD File 6 also contains detailed guidance documents entitled "Approaches to ASD", "ASD and ICT" and "TEACCH". Additional documentation is printed from the NAS website and includes information about "How many people have Autistic Spectrum Disorders", "Behaviour Information & Guidance", "How Can I Help A

Child With Autism At My School?" and "Hairdressers – Preparing for a Visit".

The Curriculum Overview document provides information relating to particular tensions that might arise when teaching pupils within the current cohort. For example, there is recognition that "There is a problem giving pupils balance in the curriculum when their particular difficulties at any time may make it impossible, this is particularly true of autistic pupils" (Powell & Jordan 1997).

Clear guidance is provided relating to the "additional subjects" at Stanley School and these are taught within both the EYFS and wider school framework. The additional subjects consist of Communication, PSHE/Personal Independence, Play, Social / Emotional Development, Behaviour Strategies and a Sensory Curriculum. It is clear that such specific frameworks and guidance provided for each of these "additional" areas takes good account of the needs of pupils with and ASD.

Additional steps such as the introduction of new communication folders in 2010 and the introduction of the SEAL programme in 2009 have helped to ensure that when school documentation is viewed in its entirety it clearly describes the needs of people with autism in relation to the curriculum and the content of activities.

2. The programme/curriculum and the content of sessions reflect policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines and are informed by the needs of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

Stanley School works to the fundamental principles that: 'No child is uneducable, every pupil is entitled to a relevant curriculum that is as broad and balanced as his individual needs allow, there is equality and opportunity for all pupils, each child is entitled to reach their full potential and the curriculum for each pupil will be individualised'

The school ensures that each pupil has access to the full range of the National Curriculum and a relevant, broad and differentiated curriculum that aims to address individual needs.

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curriculum replaces the National Curriculum for Early Years pupils. As previously mentioned a detailed policy document has been developed and, along with the 'EYFS Assessment, Planning & Recording document', it provides guidance to all staff working within this environment. The four

themes of the EYFS framework, namely 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development', are recognised and addressed appropriately with frequent reference to pupils with an ASD and guidance is provided for staff in relation to maximising opportunities for pupil learning. It is pleasing to note that the department has been awarded accreditation and quality assurance by the Effective Early Learning Programme, based at the Centre for Research in Early Childhood, Birmingham. The developments undertaken within the four EYFS classes and the focus upon the development of appropriate and user friendly policies, assessment, planning and recording documentation that all take into account the needs of pupils with an ASD is seen to be an area of strength.

Session observations throughout the review visit included classroom lessons, lunchtimes, snack time, music, a Speech and Language Therapy session and an integration session within a neighbouring school. All included content that reflected policy and addressed the needs of the pupil population. For example, opportunities for communication were maximised through skilful development of session content in order to ensure opportunities for problem solving and questioning. All staff demonstrated an ability to ask questions of pupils at a level that suited individual abilities and the use of appropriate communication methodologies and support materials further aided successful contributions from pupils.

In the best examples observed pupils were required to source materials needed to complete tasks, they were asked a variety of questions about how and why they had reached particular conclusions and they were encouraged to interact with adults and peers to achieve particular learning goals. A highly motivating music session and a Speech and Language Therapy session provided pupils with an opportunity to identify peers who they would like to have the next turn, thus encouraging some opportunities for interaction. An RE session promoted the generalisation of skills learnt within other environments as pupils were required to wash their hands and spread butter using a knife. A Numeracy lesson introduced pupils to making a pattern using a white board demonstration and large bricks. They were then required to transfer the skills they had learnt using smaller items on a table surface.

Several sessions were witnessed where pupils were given specific tasks and responsibilities in order to promote independence skills and flexible thinking. In one observation, pupils' problem solving skills and flexibility of thought were developed by the teacher deliberately making mistakes which required the pupils to correct her.

All lessons observed demonstrated an adherence to current planning and classroom staff were able to demonstrate how and why pupils were completing the tasks they had been assigned.

Regular monitoring helps to ensure that planning remains an appropriate focus for staff and that pupil progress can be successfully demonstrated.

Regular meetings and training sessions ensure that all members of the staff team have an understanding of the specific needs of people with autism and how to use specific strategies and approaches in order that pupils access an appropriate and relevant curriculum. These training are described by staff as highly informative with regular opportunities to revisit past learning or to build upon appropriate concepts, methodologies and strategies.

Furthermore, it is clear from scrutiny of pupil IEPs that clear written descriptions and processes help to ensure that the staff team routinely focuses upon the needs of people with an ASD. Stated targets, interventions and support methodologies make clear and consistent reference to the challenges faced by those with autism, helping to ensure that curriculum and activity content are appropriate.

3. The programme/curriculum and the content of activities promote the independence, well-being and progress of the individuals with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		X	

As highlighted elsewhere the use of "Additional Subjects" consisting of Communication, PSHE/Personal Independence, Play, Social / Emotional Development, Behaviour Strategies and a Sensory Curriculum along with access to all elements of the National Curriculum or the EYFS framework helps to ensure that independence, well being and the progress of those with an ASD is routinely promoted within Stanley School.

The review team saw many examples of pupils being provided with alternative means of communication, where necessary through the use of speech, signing or gesture, visual cues, etc.

It is clear that planning takes into account that pupils work at their own developmental level and that consideration is given to the particular needs and/or challenges faced by individual pupils. This

includes appropriate consideration being given to the fact that a pupil has autism.

A positive and motivating learning environment has been created where pupils' strengths are stressed and their achievements recognised. Pupils are actively challenged to achieve the highest possible standards, meeting individual capabilities, and good efforts are made to engage them in the learning process. In the vast majority of observations pupils were seen to be on-task and enjoying their learning. Where pupils were observed to be off-task staff need to be careful to try to reengage them into the learning activity, or find appropriate alternative learning activities, so as to avoid long periods of inactivity or, worse still, periods of negative or overly obsessive behaviour.

Each pupil observed during the course of the review has an IEP which identifies targets. These targets routinely relate to communication skills, social skills, problem solving, choice, flexible thinking and appropriate behaviour management.

The school's well developed curriculum ensures that activities are balanced between the classroom and the wider world. This ensures that an appropriate focus of the school is the generalisation of concepts learnt in the classroom into the wider community. Of particular note has been the development of the integration programme enabling pupils from Stanley School to access other local schools. This is further commented upon as a potential area of strength.

Observation of sessions provided ample evidence that the learning was real, motivating and delivered in a way that ensured pupils could understand the concepts/learning objectives being addressed. This approach helped to ensure that there was a practical, experiential and visual learning environment suiting the needs of pupils with ASD.

School documentation is in place to support the curriculum. Evidence has been seen in the teacher planning files that these, in turn, inform short term plans and individual lesson planning.

4. The people with autism respond positively to the programme/curriculum and the content of activities and maintain skills or make progress.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

Reference to the potential area of strength relating to data collection and analysis provides good evidence that pupils at Stanley School routinely respond positively to the curriculum and activity content enabling them to maintain skills and make progress. This data has been collected for over ten years and shows clear progress both in terms of overall school performance and individual pupil achievement.

Scrutiny of curriculum documentation, teaching documents, discussions with the staff team and observation of practice throughout the review demonstrate that the curriculum being followed at Stanley School demonstrates a clear understanding of autism and is relevant to the needs of all pupils.

The differentiated use of the National Curriculum, EYFS Framework and the incorporation of "additional subjects" alongside the skill of the staff team has helped to ensure that content is realistic and motivating for all. A curriculum that delivers appropriate learning opportunities to the children with autism was evident in all sessions observed.

There is an emphasis on supporting children to learn skills, to develop interests, to take account of others, to self-manage, and to raise self-esteem. Within observed sessions, teaching and support staff were always highly positive in their support and encouragement of each child.

The review team observed lessons that reflected the school's curriculum and programme plans throughout the review. Monitoring is good and there is an appropriate link between planning and the curriculum.

Good examples of practice were observed relating to self help skills and 'learning to learn' activities. Pupils were seen to be encouraged to find appropriate items that might allow them to complete tasks successfully whilst others were given specific responsibilities at the beginning of each school day. The development and nurturing of the building block skills for education are clear throughout and staff demonstrated skill in pitching content at an appropriate level.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Self Audit
IDR
EYFS Policy Document
Curriculum Overview

EYFS Assessment, Planning & Recording Guidance
ASD Policy file
Speaking and Listening Curriculum
Curriculum Policy Statements for Communication, Play, ICT, PSHE, Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education, English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology and Physical Education
Removing Barriers to Achievement for all children and increasing SEN Presence, Participation and Achievement in all educational settings – Pointers to Good Practice: ASD Policy Guidance
"Approaches to ASD", "ASD and ICT" and "TEACCH" Guidance
IEPs
Lesson Plans
Medium Term Plans
Long Term Plans
Statistical Analysis

Interviews & Discussions with:
Head Teacher
Deputy Head Teacher
Teachers
SaLT

Observations:
Classroom lessons
Speech and Language Therapy session
Intensive Interaction session
Integration
Assembly
Morning routine, lunchtime, snack time

Areas of Strength

The developments undertaken within the four EYFS classes and the focus upon the development of appropriate and user friendly policies, assessment, planning and recording documentation that all take into account the needs of pupils with an ASD is seen to be a strength.

SPECIALIST STANDARD 3
Teaching/Learning – Activity Organisation & Resources

There is a planned approach to the organisation of activities and resources that takes into account the needs of people with autism.

INDICATORS

1. There are policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines that inform practice regarding the organisation of activities and resources in relation to the needs of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

The policies, procedures and guidelines stated in Specialist Standard 2 Teaching/Learning – Programme/Curriculum and Activity Content provide information regarding the organisation of activities and resources in relation to all pupils, including those with an ASD. These documents include the Stanley School Curriculum Overview 2006, the Stanley School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy Document 2010, an ASD Policy file, a Speaking and Listening Curriculum along with Curriculum Policy Statements for Communication, Play, ICT, PSHE, Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education, English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology and Physical Education. Detailed guidance entitled "Removing Barriers to Achievement for all children and increasing SEN Presence, Participation and Achievement in all educational settings – Pointers to Good Practice: ASD Policy Guidance", "Approaches to ASD", "ASD and ICT" and "TEACCH" and "How Can I Help A Child With Autism At My School?". Additional guidance is provided relating to the "additional subjects" of communication, PSHE/personal independence, play, social/emotional development, behaviour strategies and a sensory curriculum.

2. The organisation of activities and resources reflects policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines and takes into account the needs of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

Class and pupil timetables are organised to provide a range of activities related to the individual needs of pupils. Activities are reflective of policies and procedures within the school and organisation and resources routinely take account of pupils with an ASD.

In the best examples of practice the staff team are highly organised and work seamlessly to ensure that all pupils are supervised and supported throughout. All staff were clear of their roles at all times and teaching assistants showed great skill in supporting pupils on an individual basis while not distracting attention from the member of staff leading the session. However there are occasions where pupils are engaged in long periods of off-task behaviour. This is discussed as an area of development under Specialist Standard 4.

Staff showed skill in using whole group teaching and individual activities to ensure lessons were appropriately targeted at individual ability levels. In the best examples a combination of approaches were used and differentiation was evident through the degree of support offered by staff, the expected outcome from an activity or through the use individual extension activities or additional supports.

Independent completion of work was observed, for example during a literacy session where extension activities were provided in the form of differentiated worksheets. Where this was the case it was clear that pupils were working to their fullest potential within lessons and individual targets were clearly being addressed. However, there were instances where this was seen not to be the case and whole group teaching accounted for all teaching and learning activity. In such circumstances the degree of differentiation was limited and, because of the spread of abilities within each class group, content was less well matched to ability.

3. The organisation of activities and resources promotes the well-being and progress of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

Activities at Stanley School are routinely well organised with appropriate resources being used to maximise the number of positive experiences for pupils. Risk assessments were seen to be appropriately completed and clear thought has been given to each and every activity to try to ensure a useful experience for each pupil.

All resources used during the review were of a high quality and all were seen to be safe. Many had been produced by the staff team to address a particular need or to focus upon the likes and preferences of an individual pupil. For example, many resources had been adapted to incorporate favourite toys and/or reference to favourite activities.

A good balance between teacher/adult directed activity, free choice and self directed learning was evident in most sessions. Examples included pupils who spent time completing worksheets before having an opportunity to choose a game or a puzzle. In another example, during an early years lesson, whilst pupils were engaged in self directed play staff engaged with them commenting on what they were doing and participating in their play at a level the child would tolerate. This helped develop their social interaction skills and acceptance of others.

As previously mentioned there were a small number of instances, however, where pupils seemed to be off-task for long periods and this is discussed as an area of development in Specialist Standard 4.

4. The people with autism respond positively to the activity and the resources used and make progress.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

Throughout the review the team observed pupils taking part in activities, focusing on tasks and showing enjoyment. Very few instances of off-task behaviour were observed and when pupils did become distracted staff routinely showed skill in helping them to reengage successfully in the learning activity. The organisation and presentation of resources clearly contributed to the success of sessions.

In addition reference to analytical data such as that routinely produced by the school demonstrates that pupils do make good progress at Stanley School.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
Self Audit
IDR
EYFS Policy Document
Curriculum Overview
EYFS Assessment, Planning & Recording Guidance
ASD Policy file
Speaking and Listening Curriculum
Curriculum Policy Statements for Communication, Play, ICT, PSHE, Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education, English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology and Physical Education

Removing Barriers to Achievement for all children and increasing SEN Presence, Participation and Achievement in all educational settings – Pointers to Good Practice: ASD Policy Guidance
"Approaches to ASD", "ASD and ICT" and "TEACCH" Guidance
IEPs
Lesson Plans
Medium Term Plans
Long Term Plans
Statistical Analysis

Interviews & Discussions with:
Head Teacher
Deputy Head Teacher
Teachers
SaLT

Observations:
Classroom Observations
Speech and Language Therapy session
Intensive Interaction session
Integration
Assembly
Morning routine, lunchtime, snack time

SPECIALIST STANDARD 4
Teaching/Learning – Methods

There is a range of methods and approaches used with people with autism that respond to their needs and are informed by a knowledge and understanding of autism.

INDICATORS

1. There are policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines that inform practice regarding the approaches and methods used with the people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

In recent years, the school has carried out an investigation of teaching methods employed to meet the needs of pupils on the autism spectrum. The results of this investigation is summarised in a policy document entitled 'Approaches used with ASD pupils' dated 2006.

According to this document, the conclusion was reached that the SPELL approach should be 'used as a useful, overarching set of principles' by the school and that classrooms should be 'organised according to the TEACCH approach'. The Policy also identifies other approaches that are used in addition to SPELL and TEACCH, including PECS, Intensive Interaction, Social Stories and the Social Use of Language Programme.

The school has also developed a policy on TEACCH which provides detailed information on how the approach is used in the school whilst further explanation of the specific strategies employed with pupils with autism is included in other policy documentation such as 'Autism and ICT', 'Transition' 'Communication' and 'Play'.

The Autism and ICT Policy identifies the ways in which ICT is used as a tool at Stanley School to develop pupils' communication and motor difficulties.

The Transition Policy provides information on how transitions in school and between schools are managed. In terms of managing day to day transitions it acknowledges that 'visual timetables are particularly helpful and these are used daily in all classes'. The value of using symbols to inform pupils about changes to the timetable is also noted.

The Communication Policy refers to the multi-modal approach used in the school e.g. a combination of signs, symbols and photographs accompanied by natural gesture and facial expression. The policy also provides information about the PECS system and other additional and alternative means of communication within the school. It also describes the Communication Passport employed with some pupils.

The Play Policy recognises that the development of play skills is an important part of the curriculum at Stanley School. It recognises the difficulties that children with ASD can have in this area and identifies the value of the Intensive Interaction approach. Each classroom is equipped with resources for play activities appropriate to the age of the children.

2. The approaches and methods used reflect policies, procedures, local protocol & guidelines and take into account the needs of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
	✓		

From observation of practice, the review team consider that there is a consistent commitment to providing clear routines and visual support in keeping with principles associated with TEACCH and SPELL.

Classrooms are organised into clearly designated areas and have a clear sense of order. Visual timetables were seen to be used in all classes with both the whole class as well as with individuals. Timetables are represented a variety of formats according to individual need. As discussed under Specialist Standard 1, in many observations a tidy, low arousal environment was evident but there are exceptions which may need to be addressed to ensure the best possible outcomes.

It was observed that tasks are presented in a way which helps pupils to fully understand what is required of them through the use of visual cues and clear instructions. Activities are often presented with a clear beginning, middle and end. Staff understand the importance of establishing predictable routines with transitions being clearly signposted through strategies such as transition songs and the movement of furniture.

On one occasion pupils struggled to stay on task when they were expected to be completing activities independently while the teacher and Teaching Assistant focussed upon the reading and writing skills

of others, and on another occasion a pupil seemed to be offered free choice for a whole forty minute period. As an area of development, consideration could be given to what strategies might be employed for pupils who are off-task for an extended periods of time to engage them in alternative valuable activities or to re-engage them into the previous activity. Thought might also need to be given to how individual pupils can be taught to start and complete activities independently by training them to use a structured and predictable work system which offers immediate positive reinforcement for the completion of tasks.

A highly effective 1:1 session employing Intensive Interaction techniques was observed. It is understood from discussion with staff that social skills groups are run. The Language and Communication teacher described a social story she had written for a pupil to address the aggressive way in which he spoke to people and a parent also made reference to a Social Story which was sent home from the school to help address hygiene issues.

The review team also saw an example of a Communication Passport. This is a booklet made with the child's parents and informs anyone involved about the child. It included sections on how the pupil communicates and what things they like or dislike.

The review team found clear evidence of a differentiated approach taken to communication based on assessment both in terms of target setting for communication and also in observation of practice. On the whole the language was pitched at an appropriate level. Staff were observed to use signing to communicate with pupils. Reference was also made to symbols or photographs in order to offer direction or instruction, to positively reinforce behaviour such as 'good sitting' and to provide guidance and reassurance during transition periods. For example, one pupil was helped to understand what was happening by being personally shown a 'Finish' symbol followed by a 'Play' symbol.

Choices available for snacks and lunchtime were communicated using pictures or photographs and pupils were encouraged to make requests either verbally or by handing over a PECs symbol or sentence strip. Thought was given to how to encourage more PECS exchanges, for example by offering a sandwich in small portions.

According to the communication policy since PECS was introduced, pupils have become more motivated and able to communicate. On the INSET day held in the Autumn Term class teams were asked to review the current level of PECS usage and as previously described

a resource bank of PECS symbols for Curriculum topics has been developed. Observations suggest that there are still missed opportunities for pupils to access PECS as a tool for communication throughout the school day and not just at snack or mealtimes or when choosing a toy or other favoured object.

The review team therefore consider that an area of development for the school is to increase opportunities for pupils who are non-verbal to access and make use of PECS throughout the school day in a range of situations and across the curriculum.

3. The approaches and strategies promote the well-being and progress of people with autism.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
			✓

Staff have accessed Bild accredited Approach training. This advises that 'when confronted with violence/aggression it is essential to create options for actions and to communicate these options to the individual, in order to prevent escalation of an incident. Helping staff to deal calmly and confidently with challenging behaviour can also have a reassuring and calming influence on individuals'.

The review team can confirm that any challenging behaviour which was observed was dealt with in a calm and controlled manner and with recognition of the need to communicate at an appropriate level for the pupil.

The importance of physical exercise was acknowledged as an essential component to promote positive behaviour. For example, it was recognised that one class had difficulties with starting the school day with circle time. It was decided that as they had been sitting on the school bus for a long time it was a good idea for them to spend a period of time running around in the playground before being brought into the lesson.

The review team found evidence that staff take account of environmental and sensory factors for each group of pupil or each individual when addressing behaviour. For example, at the INSET day in the Autumn Term, one pupil was identified as becoming very distracted during circle time. Strategies devised to support him included asking him whether he wants the quiet room or the toilet and taking him over to his workstation to access a box of his favourite activities. When another pupil becomes stressed, staff recognise the benefits of gently stroking her hand and speaking in a calm, quiet voice.

In one classroom, pupils obtaining sensory experiences from ball chairs. One child was provided with a weighted blanket and his work area was screened off from the rest of the class. Similar modifications were observed in other classes.

Observations and pupil records demonstrate there was recognition of the need for pupils to have regular opportunities to access favoured items or self directed activities. For example, one pupil was observed obtaining reassurance from carrying a puppet on his arm whilst it was recognised that for another child watching a Bob the Builder DVD helped to calm him down when he was agitated or upset.

The review team observed many examples of positive reinforcement of targeted behaviour. Pupils were given praise verbally or by using a symbol, for example to identify 'good sitting'. There are a range of visual reward systems in place. Pupils work and achievements are celebrated in display work, often using photographs of pupils showing them carrying out activities. Other examples are included in the self audit and include the awarding of certificates and the identification of 'pupils of the week'.

The chat book is also used to share progress with parents. For example, the review team read a chat-book which informed parents how well their daughter was doing and that 'her language is developing now and her play skills are excellent'.

Reward systems are often personalised. For example, one child loves the Tweenies so her good behaviour is rewarded with pictures of characters from the programme. Another child rejected verbal praise when conventional words such as 'good' were used and the teacher discovered he responded positively to being called 'fierce' because he has an interest in dinosaurs and considers fierce as a compliment.

Detailed planning files ensure that essential information is shared between staff and that care plans and risk assessments are maintained.

The review team found evidence of a high level of care and empathy for pupils. Staff are committed to addressing the well being of pupils and ensuring that the school is a safe and supportive environment. Together with the strong commitment to parent partnership described elsewhere in this report, this can be considered as an area of strength within the school.

4. The people with autism respond positively to the approaches and methods used and make progress.

Not Met	Partially Met	Met	Met & Exceeded
		✓	

During the observations, pupils were seen to accept adult direction in order to carry out a range of purposeful activities which they clearly found motivating and relevant. There were only a very small number of occasions when pupils were off-task for a long period of time without being engaged in alternative valuable activities or re-engaged into the previous activity.

Pupils appeared happy and confident. They worked in close proximity with their peers and often socially interacted with both other children and with adults.

Robust systems of data analysis provide clear evidence that pupils make progress in a number of areas. Further evidence is provided from parents, some of whom spoke to the review team to express how much their child had progressed since coming to the school.

In the school's own survey, 100% of parents strongly agree that their child likes school and 83% consider their child is making progress. Similar results were obtained from the Autism Accreditation questionnaires which showed that 88% of parents were very happy with how the school supports their child.

Staff at Stanley School should take great pride in the many positive comments contained within both their own parent survey and the Autism Accreditation questionnaires. For example one parent states that 'our child thrives in his environment at the school. The staff are very supportive and have identified his particular needs at the same time introducing him to new things'.

Sources of Evidence:

Written Documentation of:
School policies including:
Approaches to Autism
Play
Transition
Autism and ICT

Interviews & Discussions with:
Headteacher
Deputy headteacher
Teaching staff

Speech and Language Therapist
School Nurse
Parents

Observations:
Classroom Observations
Speech and Language Therapy session
Intensive Interaction session
Integration
Assembly
Morning routine, lunchtime, snack time

Areas for Development

As an area of development, consideration could be given to what strategies might be employed for pupils who are off-task for a extended periods of time to engage them in alternative valuable activities or to re-engage them into the previous activity. Thought might also need to be given to how individual pupils can be taught to start and complete activities independently by training them to use a structured and predictable work system which offers immediate positive reinforcement for the completion of tasks.

The review team consider that an area of development for the school is to increase opportunities for pupils who are non-verbal to access and make use of PECS throughout the school day in a range of situations and across the curriculum.

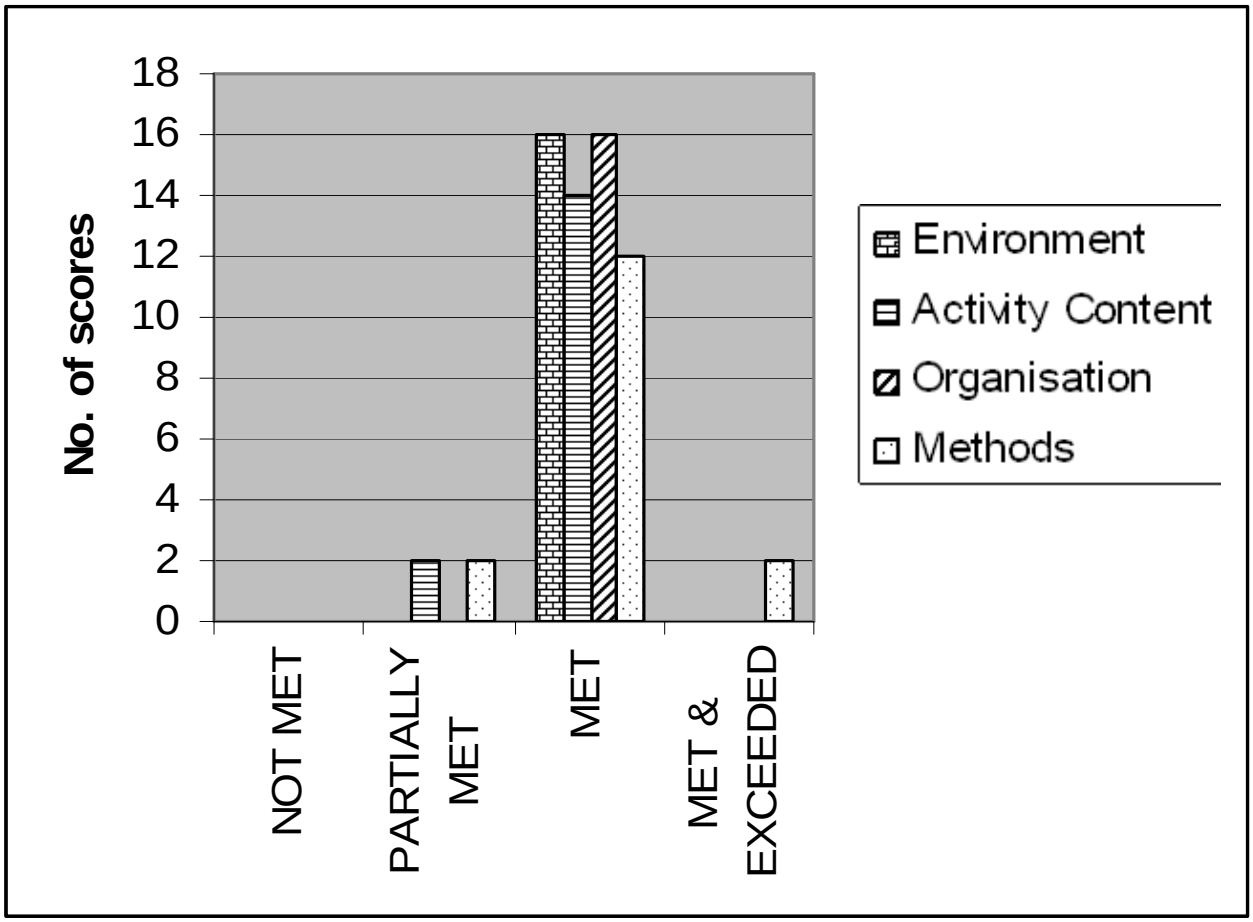
Areas of Strength

The review team found evidence of a high level of care and empathy for pupils. Staff are committed to addressing the well being of pupils and ensuring that the school is a safe and supportive environment. Together with the strong commitment to parent partnership described elsewhere in this report, this can be considered as an area of strength within the school.

SUMMARY

OBSERVATIONS

OBSERVATION SCORES				
			Number of observations completed:	**16**
	NOT MET	PARTIALLY MET	MET	MET & EXCEEDED
Environment	0	0	16	0
Activity Content	0	2	14	0
Organisation	0	0	16	0
Methods	0	2	12	2
TOTALS	**0**	**4**	**58**	**2**
PERCENTAGES	**0 %**	**6 %**	**90 %**	**3 %**



Comments:

Sixteen observations were carried out. Classroom based lessons included Literacy, Numeracy, Music, PSHE and RE. Morning routines, lunchtimes, snack time, Assembly a Speech and Language Therapy session, an Intensive Interaction session and an integration session within a neighbouring school were also observed.

As part of the review, a parents group in which an Occupational Therapist gave a presentation and a workshop to discuss the new building plans were also observed. Neither of these sessions was scored but they are discussed in the narrative of the report.

Statements:

Some of the characteristics of the best examples of observed practice including:

- Classrooms were neat and organised low arousal environments which provide a sense of order and predictability for the pupils.

- Appropriate modifications of the environment were in place to meet group or individual needs.

- Pupils were required to source materials needed to complete tasks, they were asked a variety of questions about how and why they had reached particular conclusions and they were encouraged to interact with adults and peers to achieve particular learning goals.

- Pupils were seen to be encouraged to find appropriate items that might allow them to complete tasks successfully whilst others were given specific responsibilities.

- A combination of approaches was used and differentiation was evident through the degree of support offered by staff, the expected outcome from an activity or through the use individual extension activities or additional supports.

- Staff team are highly organised and work seamlessly to ensure that all pupils are supervised and supported throughout.

Two observations were scored as 'met and exceeding' both for methods. One was an Intensive Interaction session which was delivered with a rigour and confidence suggesting a clear

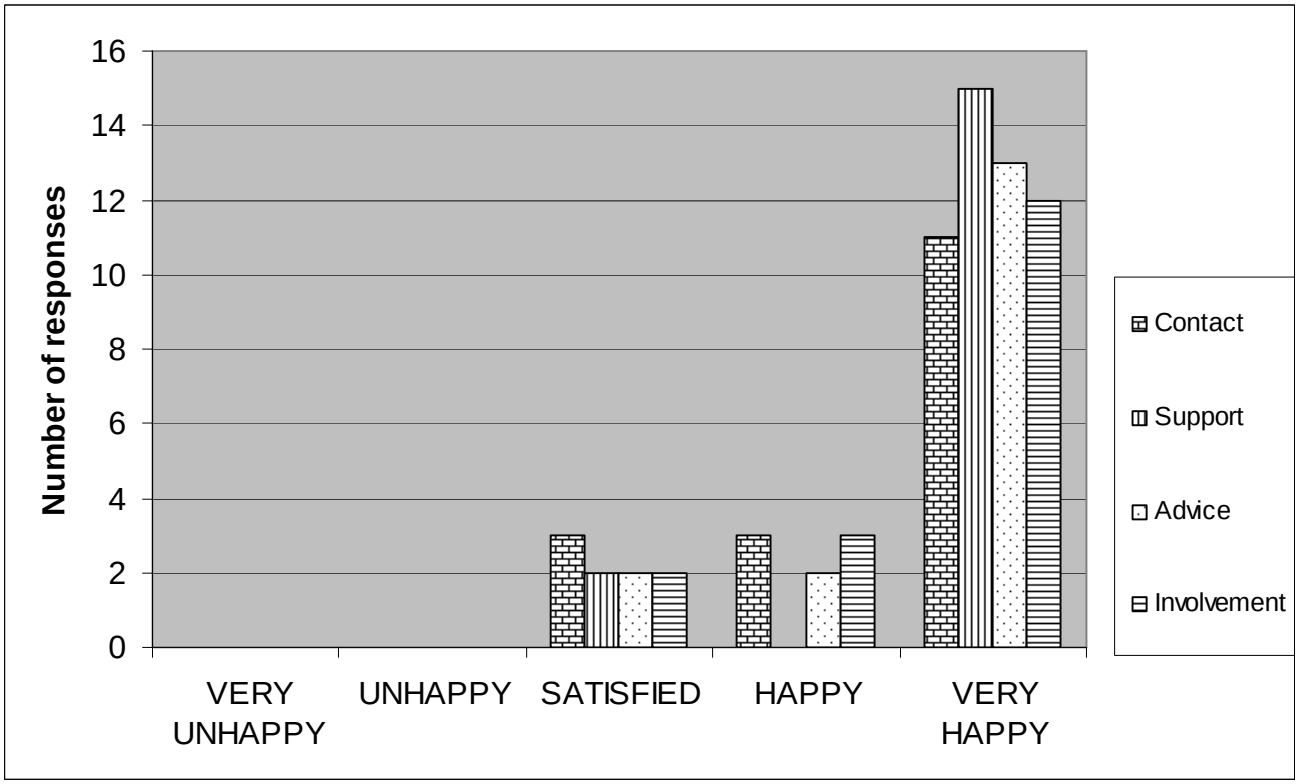
understanding and appreciation of the approach. Another was a lesson involving pupils with complex needs who stayed on task and successfully completed activities because of a skilled application of structured teaching methods combined with a flexible approach to the management of each child's specific sensory difficulties and behavioural needs.

One observation was scored as partially met for methods and another observation was scored as partially met for methods and content. In both cases, whilst there was evidence of pupil progress there were extended periods of time when pupils were off-task, distracted or allowed to engage in self-directed activities and purposeful adult interventions to engage them in alternative activities or re-engage them in the original task were not in sufficient evidence.

QUESTIONNAIRES

SCORES	
Number of Questionnaires sent out (information provided by the school):	**30**
Number of Questionnaires returned:	**17**
Number of sections **not** scored (figures only reflect sections scored):	**0**

	VERY UNHAPPY	UNHAPPY	SATISFIED	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY
Contact	0	0	3	3	11
Support	0	0	2	0	15
Advice	0	0	2	2	13
Involvement	0	0	2	3	12
TOTALS	0	0	9	8	51
PERCENTAGES	**0 %**	**0 %**	**13 %**	**12 %**	**75 %**



Comments:

Over half of the parents of pupils with autism returned completed questionnaires. Grades indicate that the vast majority of parents are very happy with the way the school keeps in touch with them; supports their child and ensures they make progress; provide them with help and advice regarding their child's needs and the extent to which the school involves them in their child's education.

Statements included:

1/ How well does the school keep in touch and communicate with you?

- The use of a daily chat book keeps us well informed. Plus we have regular talks with our child's teacher which keeps us up to date with our child's progress.
- Via the daily chat book, regular contact with teachers/school nurse/ speech and language therapists and school evenings, keeps us up to date with our child's work and progress.
- Stanley keeps in touch with us on a regular basis and are very approachable if we need to contact the school.
- Through regular contact I am always well advised on my child's needs.
- Excellent communication.
- I have daily progress reports.
- The chatbook is very handy for learning what my son has been doing on a certain day.
- Excellent contact. The chatbook comes home every evening with information about my son's day at school.
- Any queries I phone the school and staff are more than obliging to help us.
- Contact has been less good in his current class but the school overall has been very good.
- Wish they could write more in the home-school book. This varies from class to class.

2/ How well do you feel that the school supports your child?

- My child has progressed so much in the time he has been at Stanley School.
- My son has learnt a lot.
- My child has come on great.
- My son has gained lots since starting there thanks to their support.
- Excellent staff. Very effective for his individual needs.

- He is coming along leaps and bounds.
- Progress is mentioned but not always achieved.
- Our child thrives in his environment at the school. The staff are very supportive and have identified his particular needs at the same time introducing him to new things.
- My son is supported effectively and sensitively.
- Dedicated and caring staff.
- Overall excellent but some teachers could do more.
- The school is amazing.
- Stanley School is an excellent school. I have recommended this school to parents with children with ASD.
- Regular trips into the community help our child with coping with different situations.
- I could not praise Stanley enough for everything the school does for my son. Nothing is too much trouble.

3/ How well does the school support and advise you in relation to your child's needs?

- We also get help and advice on coping with our child's behaviour e.g. eating and communication.
- We get regular advice from one to one workshops on coping with our child's challenging behaviour. The school has also started home visits to further help.
- Workshops are fantastic and school always goes the extra mile to help in anyway they can.
- The only problem is that the behaviour workshops can sometimes be a little too late to address a problem we have. By the time we have the meeting we have already had to figure out a solution ourselves so meeting no longer relevant.
- The school is like a lifeline with care and support.
- Any problems ideas are always addressed to me promptly.
- They have always been very supportive from day one.

4/ How well does the school involve you in their work with your child?

- A copy of my child's IEP has been given to us with targets so that we can do at home what is being done at school.
- Stanley School is a great school and involves parents in every aspect.
- School invite us in to view work and assemblies.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

Core Standard 3
Professional Training and Development

The Home Tuition Scheme provides a practical means of developing the skills and knowledge of teaching assistants in order to inform practice and as such is an area of strength.

Core Standard 5
Planning for Development and Improvement

The review team regard the culture of research, data analysis and honest self evaluation (which ensures that the school remains a dynamic, thriving and forward looking institution) is an area of strength.

Core Standard 5
Planning for Development and Improvement

The review team consider that these Future Provision workshops are an area of strength in that they provide an excellent opportunity for Stanley School staff to be actively involved in planning the design and detail of the new school building. This ensures that the potential impact of the environment on the well being and progress of pupils with autism is both understood and fully addressed by the architects and other professionals involved in the process.

Core Standard 6
Assessments, Reporting, Recording and Evaluation

The integration of Stanley School pupils within mainstream primary school settings and the careful monitoring and record keeping during such activities enabling a clear analysis of the success of support strategies is seen to be an area of strength.

Core Standard 6
Assessments, Reporting, Recording and Evaluation

The developments undertaken within the four EYFS classes and the focus upon the creation of appropriate and user friendly policies, assessment, planning and recording documentation that all take into account the needs of pupils with an ASD is seen to be an area of strength.

Core Standard 7
Individual Plans

When employed together the robust data collection and analysis tools used within Stanley School enable school staff to accurately track individual academic progress. In turn this leads to accurate and appropriate target setting within IEPs and accurate recording and reporting of skills and abilities. It is clear that the data collection systems used within the school are an area of strength.

Core Standard 13
Family and Support Links

The review team were presented with strong evidence that the behaviour workshops and other strategies ensure that the school is responsive to the needs and concerns of parents and provide them with a high level of practical support and personal attention. This is clearly an area of strength.

Specialist Standard 4:3
Family and Support Links

The review team found evidence of a high level of care and empathy for pupils. Staff are committed to addressing the well being of pupils and ensuring that the school is a safe and supportive environment. Together with the strong commitment to parent partnership described elsewhere in this report, this can be considered as an area of strength within the school.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Core Standard 3
Professional Training and Development

The review team encourage the school to continue investigating ways in which the Home Tuition Scheme could be accredited by an external body and if this does not prove to be feasible by devising an internal system of assessment and certification. This will help to validate the Home Tuition Scheme for both the teaching assistants themselves as well as future potential employers.

Core Standard 10
Communication

The review team consider that an area of development for the school is to increase opportunities for pupils who are non-verbal to access and make use of PECS throughout the school day in a range of situations and across the curriculum.

Core Standard 13:2
Family and Support Links

As pilot schemes, both the Signposts programme and the Home visits present with positive outcomes for both parents/carers and their children with autism. As an area of development, the school may wish to consider whether these initiatives can be sustained and expanded.

Core Standard 13:3
Family and Support Links

It is suggested that consideration is given as to how consistency can be achieved between classes regarding how they are used as a tool of communication with parents. This suggestion is made in the context of the majority of parents (82%) being happy or very happy with how the school communicates with them.

Core Standard 15:1
Sensory Issues

The review team support the school's intention to produce a Sensory Issues Policy document upon the completion of current research and development projects.

Specialist Standard 4
Teaching/Learning Methods

As an area of development, consideration could be given to what strategies might be employed for pupils who are off-task for a extended periods of time to engage them in alternative valuable activities or to re-engage them into the previous activity. Thought might also need to be given to how individual pupils can be taught to start and complete activities independently by training them to use a structured and predictable work system which offers immediate positive reinforcement for the completion of tasks.

APPENDIX

SCHOOL COMMENTS

Please note that comments must only pertain to the report and not to the performance of the review team. Any feedback on the performance of the review team must be sent separately to the Accreditation office on the Review Team Evaluation form at the end of your review.

PANEL REPORT

TERMINOLOGY

The Audit Programme may be applied to services for people with autism spectrum disorders. In this folder the word 'autism' is used to apply to the whole spectrum, including Asperger syndrome, so that unwieldy phrasing is avoided. Similarly, to avoid repetition of alternative titles, generic terms have been used throughout the text.

To be consistent with the Care Standards ACT 2000 UK, this document refers the term Autism Spectrum Disorders, whilst recognising that some may refer to this as Autistic Spectrum Conditions.

Accredited: When a service/school has successfully completed their self audit, IDR and review and is awarded accredited status by the Accreditation Panel.

Areas for Development: Term used describing areas for improvement. To be highlighted for the Panel to consider as Recommendations.

Areas of Strength: Term used describing aspects of strong practice within the service/school to be highlighted for the Panel to consider as Good Practice or Commendation.

Autism: Term used to apply to the whole spectrum, including Asperger syndrome.

Carer(s): Term used to refer to parents, guardians and other family members that are responsible and care for a person with autism.

Commendation: Determined by the Panel from areas of strength that reflects outstanding practice within the service/school.

Deferred: Status of service/school determined by the Panel. Neither not Accredited nor Accredited for a maximum of 6 months until recommendations from the panel have been addressed. A re-visit will be arranged in which a second report will be produced on these recommendations, no IDR required. This report will then be presented to the Panel to determine whether Accredited status can be granted or not.

Good Practice: Determined by the Panel from areas of potential strength within the service/school that reflects good practice within the membership of Autism Accreditation.

Interim Development Report (IDR): Report completed by the Accreditation Advisor at the 18 month visit and includes further actions, key documents and areas of potential strength.

Not Accredited: Accredited status not granted or removed by the Panel after the service/school review. No IDR required, but there will be a minimum of 12 months before the next review.

Panel: Makes the judgement on whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate whether the service/school meets the criteria for accredited status. The Panel consists of a representative from the Accreditation department and a minimum of two individuals from a pool of professionals selected based on their expertise and qualification in the field of autism. Panel members are selected based on their area of expertise as it relates to the type of service/school being reviewed and any potential conflicts of interest with the specific service/school presented at the Panel meeting.

Pen Picture: A factual description/overview of the service/school(s) being reviewed that forms section A of the self audit (see page 18). Accreditation Advisor agrees and completes at initial visit with the service/school and updated as necessary. This document is required as part of the final self audit submission.

Person with Autism: Any individual who is using a service/school, including pupil, student, client, customer, resident, or service user.

Policies, Procedures, Local Protocols and Guidelines: Documents which establish the groundwork for good practice and which refer to or evidence methodologies developed to successfully support the needs of people with autism e.g. Individual Plans, or Transition Policy.

Service/School: Includes all types of organisations and schools that provide education, care or support for people with autism.

Service/School Manager: Any person who has the direct management responsibility for a service/school, including Principal, Head Teacher, Manager, General Manager and Home Manager.

Service/School Provider: Any organisation or individual that owns a service/school, including local/education authorities, health authorities, trusts, national charities, local charities and private organisations.

Standards: A set of Core and Specialist requirements set by the Accreditation Standards Body. The Standards are the basis that:

- The service/school uses for their self-evaluation for the self-audit document;
- The IDR is compiled through the self audit and other key documents
- The review team makes their observations to compile their review report.

Statutory Requirements: These include all statutory and legislative bodies' requirements that must be met in order for care provision to be allowed in the United Kingdom. They include CQC, OFSTED, HMie, Health & Safety Executive Council etc.

The use of these terms avoids duplication of documents and also ensures consistency of terminology throughout the text.