

Autism Accreditation Assessment

The Collett School

Reference No.	
Assessment dates	4 th May 2021 – 6 th May 2021
Lead Assessor	Nikki Kennedy
External Moderator	N/A
Status prior to the assessment	Accredited
Advanced status applied for	No

Section 1: Context

About the Provision

Brief description of the provision made for autistic people:

“Wonderfully individual, we love to cherish the brilliance of each unique child, facilitating their needs so they can shine and thrive in our mainstream world. Our curriculum is broad and has the capacity for depth in areas of learning that are most needed as a result of their need such as Autism. Much of what the children are taught seeks to secure functional and practical skills.” (*Assessment Introduction Form*)

Number of autistic people supported by the provision: 62

Range of autistic people supported by the provision:

Our ASD pupils are identified as having speech and language communication needs, learning difficulties and complex learning difficulties. Approximately 10 % of our ASD pupils are non-verbal.

Outcome of last statutory assessment (Body; date, outcome):

Ofsted, 2018, Good

About the Assessment

- The assessment took place over 3 days.
- The provision’s adviser acted as assessor.
- A presentation was given on how provision is made for autistic pupils.
- 12 sessions were observed by the assessment team. These included a range of classroom-based activities; core and specialist subjects and specific autism interventions.

- Discussions were held with both teaching staff and therapeutic staff, some autistic pupils and some parents.
- Pupil profiles were reviewed from across each key stage.
- Some key policy documents provided by the provision were read.
- The results of surveys carried out with families were also considered.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

Main approaches or methods employed by the provision in supporting autistic people:

"Intensive Interaction, the TEACCH approach, Social Stories, Sensory Integration, Sensory Needs Interventions, PECS, visual supports, extra processing time, speech and language therapy, partnership between the school and parents and carers."
(*Assessment Introduction Form*).

Training and professional development staff receive in these approaches and in their understanding of autism

The Collett has a comprehensive training of programme which effectively meets the needs of all the staff within the school from the new starters with little to no experience right through to the most experienced staff members within the team.

Training starts during the induction programme where staff experience bootcamps in a range of subjects many specifically related to autism and classroom practices. Bootcamps provide staff with the information they need to know in a concise way in a specified period of time. There is a period of pre-induction where staff are expected to start early so that some of the induction material can be covered.

On-going support available to staff in working with autistic individuals

There are many experiences staff within the school. The Head of interventions and are team are available to discuss any concerns regarding pupils and support. There is also a staff member within the team who leads on the accreditation process and support staff with autism practice.

Bootcamps are part of regular practice and will be used to share information, interventions and strategies in a concise way.

Staff are given time to look at practice within other areas of the school, learning from peers within the school and sharing best practice across the school.

Staff appraisals centre around a professional dilemma, an area of practice which the staff member is finding difficult or wants to improve. They use the appraisal time to research around the difficulty, carrying out research specifically around their difficulty. Research is not about what they do, but about what they do regarding the information they find and what is the impact of what they find and what they do with it.

Section 2: Findings from Assessment

Personal Centred Planning

Brief description of how individual support is planned, implemented and evaluated:

"There are robust procedures in place to ensure that all pupils with ASD have an Individual Pupil Profile which includes:

- Pupil Portraits (Main Needs, likes and dislikes, key strategies, sensory needs)
- Roots and Fruits
- Anxiety Maps
- Positive Behaviour Plans

Individual outcomes set and agreed in the areas of:

- Cognition and Learning
- Communication and Interaction
- Social, Emotional and mental Health
- Sensory and Physical Needs
- Self-Help and Independence"

(Assessment Introduction Form)

Pupils needs are assessed, and any barriers to learning established. This is completed in collaboration with pupil and their parents so that they are also able to establish interests and aspirations. The Collett will use this information to develop individual plans, roots & fruits, anxiety maps and positive behaviour plans.

Additional input where appropriate will come from occupational and speech and language therapists. The Collett will assess small steps of progress using their CAPPS assessment sheets in both academic and personal development.

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The Collett School provide staff with an Autism Handbook, this outlines exactly the expectations around communication when working with autistic pupils. This includes expressive and receptive communication and social understanding and relationships.

The Collett has access to a speech and language therapist two days a week and direct support is encouraged during this time. In addition, school have employed a speech and language practitioner who will liaise with the therapist and provide practical support to staff in addition to advice, training and guidance.

A range of social communication groups are held to deliver specialist teaching, these consist of a range of topics and interventions depending on the needs of the pupils within the group. This can also include pre-teaching of lessons so that pupils are able to practice the interactions skills required for specific lessons and ensure that they have a level of success within the classroom.

A wide range of training has been delivered to staff by the SALT and specialist practitioner, these have been a mix of theoretical sessions as well as practical workshops. Much of this was in evidence during the observational element of the assessment.

There has been some recent training on PECS to lower school staff and this is starting to be implemented. This is still in its infancy with many of the staff with training only being delivered 6 weeks ago.

SALT have started to use SMILE therapy, videoing pupils' interactions, teaching skills and then re-videoing so that they are able to see the development of skills and the progress that they have made since the first video.

CAPPS Collett Assessment spreadsheet allows staff to record progress of communication skills of all pupils in their receptive and expressive communication skills as well as their social interaction abilities.

Pupils Profiles include information regarding pupils expressive, receptive and social communication skills. Information is also included within approaches to avoid which highlights language which shouldn't be used, specific phrases or the around and type of language which is used.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Staff were seen to consistently use reduced levels of language when communicating with pupils. They were also considerate of which staff member was speaking so staff were seen to not talk over each other, ensuring that there was only one voice providing the information and instructions at one time.

In the majority of the classrooms there were a wide range of visual cues to support pupils in their understanding of an activity, key words and phrases that might be used, or instructional jigs which were provided to aid independence or support appropriate behaviour.

During their Collett mile walk pupils were seen to take this opportunity to interact with each other and the staff as they completed laps of the playground. I was also seen during playtime that pupils would interact with peers outside of the classroom in small groups or 1:1.

Staff were seen to give pupils time to respond to instructions, either verbally or by completing an activity, before the next set of instructions was presented.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

PSCHE curriculum tracks development in life skills, each section is broken down into skills following developmental levels so that staff are aware of comparison to neurotypical development.

Some pupils' profiles include strategies to support independence but this was not seen consistently across all paperwork sampled.

Where possible skills are taught given a real-life context, especially in the upper school. Communication skills are taught in context when group working around other activities and although COVID has presented some difficulties work related learning and appropriate accreditation occurs for upper school pupils in skills which could lead to gainful employment beyond The Collett School.

Pupils within Sullivan class are working with the class team to develop their sensory garden. Pupils are responsible for making the decisions about what goes into the garden, but also for doing all the work within the garden.

Staff and speech and language spoken about teaching pupils' skills in the context in which they will be used to support generalisation into real life.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

All classrooms displayed a timetable for the day, however these rarely appeared to be differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils within the class or specific individuals within a class. They were however consistent in their use across the school.

Many pupils across the school were seen to participate in a range of activities independently being provided support where required. During 3 observations visual jigs were seen for pupils to follow so that they were able to navigate their way through the activity in front of them and understood the expectations of what needed to be completed.

Pupils were seen in all classes to have the confidence to participate in questioning as part of whole group activities. Where pupils were reluctant staff were seen to give them the opportunity and confidence to do so allowing them the space they required for processing information before giving a response.

Pupils across the school were seen to have skills and confidence in choice making, where appropriate this was adapted to meet the abilities of the pupils offering a reduced choice where appropriate to enable the decision-making process to take place.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The autism handbook includes a section on sensory processing, it identifies some strategies which enable staff to set up a sensory environment which supports the needs of their pupils. It identifies ways in which pupils can develop understanding of their own sensory needs and the impact this may have. It also suggests places to go if sensory needs are particularly complex and further information for support is required.

All environments across the school are low arousal and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils within each class. Consideration has really been given to the needs of the pupils in each room and although each room has clear working areas and chill out areas the arrangements of these differ, additionally where required breakout spaces

have been established for specific pupils who have difficulty accessing classrooms. These have been adapted and include specific sensory strategies to meet needs.

Each class has a sensory toy bucket for pupils to access and displays for zones of regulation. In many classrooms there has been additional work with the pupils so that these boards include either generic strategies for each area, a pocket of strategies or personalised strategies for pupils.

The Collett have access to an independent OT once a week who is a sensory integration specialist. She is currently supporting in classrooms across the school and getting to know the pupils in each of the classes. She is working with school, pupils and parents to meet the sensory needs of the pupils.

Although there is some reference to sensory needs in pupil profiles, the information is a little lost and information is not specific and this is not consistent across all files.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Autistic pupils were seen to access a wide range of sensory provision. Some of the classrooms have specific breakout spaces which have been well thought out so that they meet the needs of the pupils that use them.

Pupils were seen to have access to sensory activities which they enjoy. Many of the pupils across the school were seen have to fidget toys or something to play with while they engaged in lessons. The Collett have invested in a range of chairs which are specifically designed to allow pupils to rock on their chair in an appropriate way. This was seen to be a great sensory tool for pupils in the classroom.

Autistic pupils were seen to be supported in their ability to manage sensory experiences within a safe context. Within one observation it was seen that a particular staff member was identified as having a limited diet and was encouraged to try foods alongside the pupils in the class. This had a positive impact on pupils who were seen to have anxieties around trying new foods who were able to try a little more as a result.

There were many examples of multi-sensory teaching across the school where pupils were encouraged to use a range of senses in their learning.

There were many examples of sensory regulation occurring across the observations. Where best practice was seen pupils were seen to self-regulate with many examples of pupils using their zones of regulation and identifying the need to participate in

regulating activities during a session. A range of regulating activities were seen to be used by the pupils across the school.

Where pupils weren't able to self-identify regulation needs staff were seen to support pupils in understanding their need for regulating activities, and suggesting activities which they can participate in.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Pupil profiles show clearly what pupils like, there is some evidence that these are updated as pupils' interests change. There is also information which shows which strategies work best with the pupils. It includes a range of strategies which should be used with the pupil, although there is some inconsistency in the detail provided across the profiles seen.

Roots and Fruits documentation includes pro-social as well as anti-social behaviour, experiences and feelings. This helps to give some background on the pupil in addition to activities that they enjoy as well as what they look like in the green zones of regulation.

Further details are included within anxiety mapping documentation and analysis. This gives staff clear guidelines for preventing escalation in behaviour as well as identifying activities or situations which may cause anxiety or overwhelm pupils.

Staff were able to share what made pupils happy in addition to how zones of regulation are used and activities which pupils pick when feeling overwhelmed.

All staff are trained in Hertfordshire STEPS which is refreshed annually. The theme of the training for annual refreshers are based on themes identified by the behaviour lead within the school.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

The Collett School has a feeling throughout of calm both within the classrooms and across the school. Where pupils were seen to escalate either self-regulation was used or staff were seen to de-escalate the situation. Zones of regulation was seen in all classrooms with strategies that the pupils could access to support their regulation.

Pupils were seen to consistently have the confidence to express their opinions and make decisions. Staff were seen to encourage this through giving pupils the time and space to contribute to lessons and providing appropriate praise for responses. Pupils were seen to participate in a range of activities, they were consistently engaged and enjoyed the activities they were doing. Many of the activities observed had real life applications and developed skills which the pupils will require later in life.

Pupils were seen to participate in activities where they were trying new things, learning new skills or using learnt skills in a different context. This included activities within their learning but also during free time learning or trying new leisure activities.

Pupils regularly felt a sense of achievement in the work which they were participating. There are a range of reward systems which were adapted to suit the class in addition to school wide reward system. At the time of observations many pupils were having vaccinations. Staff were seen to reward pupils for having successful vaccinations. In addition, the nursing team who were administering vaccines were seen to consider the needs of the pupils and be empathetic and supportive in administering the vaccine.

Consultation with Autistic People

The school council will meet with the Executive Head of schools on a termly basis bringing to him the topics discussed in the council meeting. This has had an impact on what is available to pupils during their breaks times as playground areas have been developed as a result of the school council.

Pupils were seen to regularly voice their opinions and make decisions during lessons and throughout the school day.

The Collett marking policy encourages pupils to have their view regarding comments that have been made. This is differentiated to meet the abilities of the pupils across the school from reception through to year 11.

Pupils have access to differentiated learning sheets which enable them to provide their views regarding the learning across the year. These documents then form part of the annual report for the year to parents.

Consultation with families of Autistic People

The Collett School do a lot in consultation of families from when the pupils enter the school sought from the initial stages of an autistic person starting at the school.

This continues throughout the child's time in the school. Face to face meetings either in person or virtually have been a regular occurrence with parents supporting them where required. A weekly newsletter is sent out to families sharing information and events from within the school. Assemblies are a big part of the school routine and families are included in celebration and class assemblies, where this isn't always possible different strategies are developed to allow parents to access these events without making it too stressful for the children.

Parents are enabled to have continuous conversations with class teams through the use of the class dojo, where instant messages can be sent between school and home as things crop up and information needs sharing.

Parents are always kept informed and conversations held regarding the introduction of additional professionals when provided extra support for autistic young people.

The Collett has a parent section within their website that provides parents with a one stop shop of information and support within Hertfordshire. This is well used by parents as a place to go for information they might require. right through to their transitioning into the next provision. Parents are seen as a collaborative part of the education of their young autistic people and therefore their views are

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

Use of staff language in lessons is exceptional, The Collett focus on having only one voice providing instructions, or information and this is presented in a way that pupils are able to understand with simplified, direct language.

Staff at The Collett have developed their knowledge and skills to successfully meet the changing needs of pupils within the school. The Collett now have SLD and SEMH pupils within their population in addition to their normal LD cohort. This has been a challenge for staff within the school, however they have adapted well and continue to meet the needs of all the pupils through the support.

The Collett continues to be a calm and relaxing environment for all pupils and staff across the school. The environment within the school has been developed and well considered to meet the needs of all the pupils. Where required breakout rooms/spaces have been created to give pupils the space they require to de-escalate effectively.

Zones of Regulation are used highly effectively across the school. There were many instances across the observations where pupils were able to recognise zones they were in and self-regulate, or within the lower school staff supported pupils to identify zones and use strategies from within the toolbox to regulate consistently.

In addition to Zones of Regulation a wide range of tools available for pupils to regulate their sensory needs.

Staff provide pupils with the tools they need to be able to work through activities with the minimum support. Pupils were seen to actively use task schedules to support through activities, word jigs and social stories, all adapted to meet the needs of each pupil.

Pupils show extraordinary confidence in being able to express opinions and providing input into lessons, problem solving and asking appropriate questions.

The mental health provision which has been implemented at The Collett School has enabled early intervention to be put in place with pupils and families where support needs have been identified. Pupils who are referred to CAMHS and PALMS can be effectively triaged to ensure that the appropriate cases are getting the specialist

support required. This has helped specialist services and empowered families to deliver effective support in the home for their autistic person.

The training programmes which have been delivered to staff have had a significant impact on practice. Staff now feel empowered to manage behaviour and provide the support of pupils within their class. This has enabled The Hive to change the way in which it works focuses on pupils with more complex needs and deliver additional learning interventions rather than providing behaviour support, having a positive impact on the pupil's progress across the school.

The Collett have introduced the role of Speech and Language Practitioner, this has had a substantial impact on the provision within the school and the ability to meet the speech and language needs of the pupils. Through regular training and modelling staff are able to effectively meet the needs of the pupils within the class and pupils are able to make progress in their speech and language following support which is provided.

What the provision could develop further

The Collett could consider the development of peer to peer interactions as part of teacher led activities across the school, encouraging pupils to interact around unfamiliar topics and practice social skills with each other in addition adults.

The Collett could consider the development of timetables taking into consideration the abilities of the pupils and providing them with the visual structure to suit their abilities. Consideration for the location of timetables within the room as many are placed on the interactive whiteboard which could act as a distraction for some pupils.

Learning objectives and targets across the school were seen on desks and in workbooks. These were written in full text, often holding a lot of information. Although these are often placed in pupils' workspaces they are only accessible for the staff. Collett should consider ways to enable pupils to access their targets and learning objectives.

The Collett have just started to use a new profile format and Hertfordshire STEPS have again just changed the paperwork in which they expect behaviour support information to be reported. The Collett are aware that there are some difficulties regarding consistency as it is a new system of paperwork they have procedures in place to

monitor and develop this with the staff team, this is supported by the assessment team as an area for development.





Further develop the use of PECS within the lower school so that it becomes a meaningful and consistent method of communication for pupils.

The school may wish to review the responses from parents to the accreditation online survey and consider where there may be opportunities for further development in how the school works in partnership with parents.





APPENDIX 1: SURVEYS

The Collett School FAP Deadline 07/05/2021





1. Feedback questionnaire on The Collett School to be completed before 07/05/2021. Please note that comments accompanying these ratings are shared with the provision but are removed from all final reports.





1. The support my relative is given is...			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		4.76%	1
2	ok, but could be better		9.52%	2
3	mostly good		33.33%	7
4	always good		52.38%	11
			answered	21
			skipped	0

2. The understanding that staff have for my relative@SQ@s autistic needs is...

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		4.76%	1
2	ok, but could be better		19.05%	4
3	mostly good		23.81%	5
4	always good		52.38%	11
			answered	21
			skipped	0

3. The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		9.52%	2
2	ok, but could be better		28.57%	6
3	mostly good		9.52%	2
4	always good		52.38%	11
			answered	21
			skipped	0

4. The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		9.52%	2
2	ok, but could be better		23.81%	5
3	mostly good		28.57%	6
4	always good		38.10%	8
			answered	21
			skipped	0



APPENDIX 2: COMMENTS FROM THE PROVISION

