

Communication and interaction Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and characteristics of ASC

What you will see (The difficulty/barrier, how this presents and the impact on the learner)	What can help (Provision – strategies, interventions and resources)	What have you tried?
<p>Young children with ASD or characteristics of ASD may be pre-verbal. This can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdrawn behaviours • appearing to be in a ‘world of their own’ • frustration, resulting in challenging behaviours • poor progress not associated with a learning need. 	• A multisensory approach.	
	• Makaton.	
	• Symbol communication such as PECs.	
	• Visual support.	
	• Now and Next boards and sequence strips.	
	• Communication support software such as Communicate in Print or Widgit.	
	• Introduce language through rhyme and song.	
	• All attempts to speak are supported.	
<p>Difficulty understanding or using social communication – the ‘unspoken rules’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social isolation and vulnerability. • Can appear rude or aggressive. • Makes mistakes in social interactions and lacks the skills to repair. • Appearing to struggle with boundaries, e.g. open discussion of matters considered private or social taboos. 	• Comic strip conversations/story boards.	
	• Social Autopsy approach.	
	• Autism-specific social communication programme.	
	• Explicit teaching of social rules, the reasons and benefits of their use.	
	• Lego-based interventions.	
	• Lunch/ break time clubs.	
	• Modelling and role play.	
	• Grouping learner with social communication difficulties with socially competent peers.	
	• Use of prompting to support generalisation of what has been learnt.	
• “Now (you are doing this) and Next (you are going to be doing that)” boards.		
<p>Difficulties with language and non-verbal communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing that whole class/group instructions are meant for them – can appear that learners are reluctant or unwilling to follow instructions. • Interpreting language literally; struggling to understand idioms, some jokes and sarcasm, which can lead to vulnerability and embarrassment. • Struggling to differentiate or misinterpreting tone of voice. 	• Use the learner’s name to gain their attention before giving instructions.	
	• Keep instructions simple.	
	• Avoid use of sarcasm, idioms and figures of speech.	
	• Use visual supports, pictures, symbols.	
	• Be aware of your own use of body language to communicate - this can be missed or misinterpreted.	
	• Be aware that learners may not be able to read facial expression as a form of communication.	
	• Awareness of own tone of voice (calm and not too loud).	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating interactions inappropriately – shouting out, touching others to get attention, interrupting. • Difficulty in understanding body language. • Difficulty in recognising and interpreting facial expressions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the impact of language and social communication difficulties on peer relationships and potential vulnerability; careful consideration of grouping and be vigilant to misunderstandings leading to conflict or ridicule. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social rules displayed visually and referred to explicitly. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider, in collaboration with the learner and parents/carers, peer awareness training. 	
<p>Unusual communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat, monotonous tone – can lead others to believe that learner is unemotional. • Immature tone. • Adoption of the accent of another language – often American. • Loud voice regardless of time or place – can appear opinionated and rude. • Lecturing tone – can cause difficulties with peer relationships. • Unusual eye contact – often avoidant and fleeting but can be overly intense. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Stories™ 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social autopsy approach. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social communication and understanding groups or 1:1 work. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of TV programmes to observe and analyse the behaviour of others. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of potential difficulties with creative writing or analysis of events, fiction and poetry; provide writing frames, story boards and task boards. 	
<p>Difficulties with imagination – putting themselves in ‘someone else’s shoes’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle to understand another person’s point of view which can lead to others believing the child or young person lacks emotion and compassion. • May struggle with some aspects of the curriculum requiring this skill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid ‘visual clutter’ – classrooms are ordered and calm. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the sensory environment using a sensory audit to consider: 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and corridor displays 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of workstations or re-positioning of individual table or desks 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where space allows, set up a sensory room. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory tool box. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help/exit cards. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory circuits delivered by trained staff. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sensory profiling. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing ear defenders. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-warning of fire drills or announcements where possible. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan transition times e.g. delayed or early movement between lessons. 	
<p>Difficulties in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning (executive functioning) – finding it hard to organise ideas, plan projects, organise equipment and resources – can appear disorganised and may become anxious and confused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check back that any verbal input has been understood. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual support. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get attention using name. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide checklists and task boards. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequencing or multi-step tasks. • Maintaining concentration if not understanding 'the point' of the task or experiencing sensory overload. • Reading and comprehension, due to problems with inference and vocabulary. • Literal understanding. • Intense focus and 'getting stuck' on an aspect of a task. • Refusal, avoidance or reluctance to complete homework – 'school-work is for school and home is my refuge'. • Not understanding what is expected of any task (including homework). • Struggling with changes to usual school routines - or worrying that there might be a change. • Difficulty recording work. • Difficulty demonstrating level of knowledge and understanding in line with assessment criteria, leading to attainment scores not in line with learner's abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to link work to special interests. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using timers to structure tasks. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reward the extra effort it has taken to complete a task. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close liaison with home regarding homework – can homework be limited or completed within the school day? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of learning breaks to manage demand and sensory stimulation. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-teach key vocabulary – small group or individual support. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching of inference. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of narrative programmes. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use scaffolding techniques, e.g. writing frames. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide alternative methods of recording e.g. laptop and or speech-to-text software. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach touch typing. 	
<p>Difficulties combine, leading to social isolation and difficulties making, maintaining and repairing friendships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of sadness, loneliness, low self worth and anxiety. • Vulnerable to bullying and exploitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For assessment, share and explain marking criteria to support understanding of why work needs to be completed in a particular way, or the extent to which exam questions need to be answered. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Buddy' systems. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle of Friends approach. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of a key person. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time clubs/activities. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place and time to be away from the demands of social interaction. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support during unstructured times to prompt the use of helpful strategies, encourage and model. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider, in collaboration with the learner and parents/carers, peer awareness training. 	
<p>Difficulties combine, leading to escalation in anxiety and deteriorating well-being and mental health.</p> <p>Difficulties combine (sometimes including the impact of the continuous challenge and effort of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring support. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vigilant for signs of increasing generalised anxiety and deteriorating wellbeing. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion at the Local Inclusion Forum Team meetings. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of aspects of school life that are most difficult. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported transition in to school each day. 	

<p>continually attempting to 'mask' difficulties), leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased withdrawn behaviours. • Increase in challenging behaviours. • Escalation in behaviours in order to be sent home or excluded. • Difficulties around eating in school or at home. • Escalating difficulties with emotional regulation at home. • Increase in demand avoidance. • Increase in perfectionism/ 'overworking'. • Increasingly reporting feeling unwell. • Refusing to attend school, or parental efforts to ensure attendance are met with increasing resistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced communication plan agreed with parents, which may include more regular phone calls, emails, meetings, use of contact. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider increased use of learning breaks. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider curriculum load. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider referral to GP or NELFT. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost parents to the Local Offer and known community support. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss referral to Early Help/Social Care with parents. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider needs to other children in the family. 	