**Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

[**Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**](https://www.rackhamprimaryschool.com/autistic-spectrum-disorder-asd/)

Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behaviour.

**Social and emotional understanding**

Children with an ASD have difficulty in understanding the social behaviour of others and in behaving in socially appropriate ways. Other children develop this understanding without being explicitly taught and do so fairly easily.

Children with ASD are very literal thinkers and interpreters of language, failing to understand its social context.

For the child with an ASD, other people's opinions may have little or no influence on their behaviour and the child may say and do exactly as they want.

Children with an ASD often find it hard to play and communicate effectively with other children who may be confused by their behaviour and may avoid or tease them.

Adults who do not know the child or know about autism, may misunderstand the child's behaviour and view it as naughty, difficult or lazy, when, in fact, the child did not understand the situation or task or did not read the adult's intentions or mood correctly.

**Communication and language**

Children with an ASD have difficulty in understanding the communication and language of others and also in developing effective communication themselves.

Many are delayed in learning to speak and some do not develop speech. They may have distinct repetition or patterns of speech, talking in a monotone or in an unnatural tone of voice.

Many children will have difficulties in communicating effectively, especially in social situations.

It is likely that they will need to be taught the purpose of communication, a means to communicate (using pictures, photos, gestures, spoken or written words) and how to communicate.

**Flexibility of thought and behaviour**

Children with an ASD often do not play with toys in a conventional way, but instead spin or flap objects or watch moving parts of toys or machinery for long periods and with intense concentration.

Their play tends to be isolated or alongside others rather than with others.

Some children develop a special interest in a topic or activity which may be followed to extreme lengths.

Any new skills tend to be tied to the situation which means that children with an ASD will need specific help to generalise skills.

They will also have difficulty adapting to new situations and often prefer routine to change.

**Differences in sensory perception**

Some children with ASD are over-sensitive or 'under-sensitive' to certain sounds, sights and textures.  This has implications for the child's home and school environment and may explain their response to changing clothes or food and their response to noise.

In addition, the child may not make appropriate eye contact, looking too briefly or staring at others.  In the past, there has been a focus on teaching the child to look when communicating but it may be that some children are unable to talk and look at a person at the same time.

**What the school will do**

Although every child who has ASD is different and needs an individual approach, staff at The Bellbird have built up a considerable knowledge in supporting these children.

Some strategies, such as visual timetables, are common to all classrooms. Others, such as individual workstations, are introduced for children with an ASD.

If a child receives a formal diagnosis of ASD then staff will work with specialists from outside the school. They provide support through staff training and more individualised strategies.

**Getting a formal diagnosis**

If a parent is seeking a formal diagnosis through school, then ASD has to be identified by a number of professionals from outside agencies, such as Community Paediatricians or Educational psychologists.

For further information and support

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/a-to-z/a/autistic-spectrum-disorders-asd>