



# Improving Classroom Provision for Learners with Autism

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*Autism Education Trust*



# Content

- How we think about autism
- Good Autism Practice
- AET Frameworks and Supports
- How to engage with AET



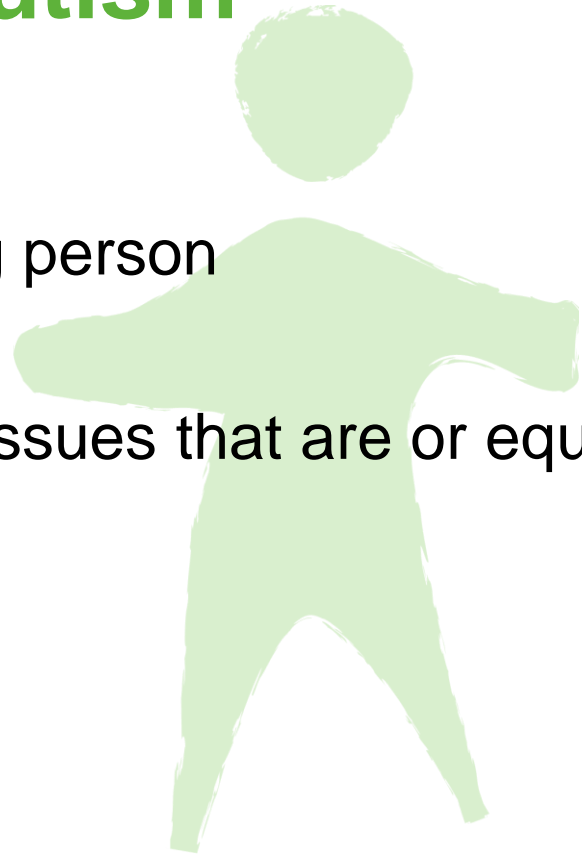
# How we think about autism

- Shift from deficit or impairment to developmental difference
- Difference in neurodevelopment typically impacting in four areas:
  - Social Interaction
  - Processing Information
  - Sensory Processing
  - Communication



# How we think about autism

- Do not describe the whole young person
- As unique as any other
- May be co-occurring conditions/issues that are of equal importance – e.g.
  - Learning Disability
  - Mental Health Issues



# Good Autism Practice

- Research by Institute of Education, 2011
- Identified 8 themes of good practice:
  - Ambitions and aspirations
  - Monitoring progress
  - Adapting the curriculum
  - Involvement of other professionals/services
  - Staff knowledge and training
  - Effective communication
  - Broader participation
  - Strong relationships with families



# Good Autism Practice

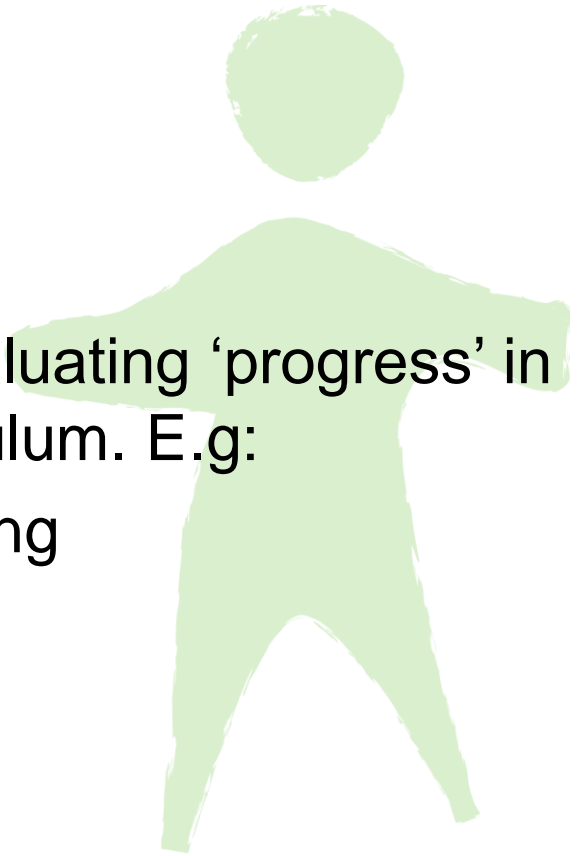
## Ambitions and aspirations

- A safe and supportive learning environment
- Commitment to inclusivity
- Identifying and building on strengths and interests
- Aspiring to young people 'reaching their potential'
- Promotion of wider personal development and life skills
- Attention to strengths and needs in the four areas of difference and co-occurring conditions

# Good Autism Practice

## Monitoring progress

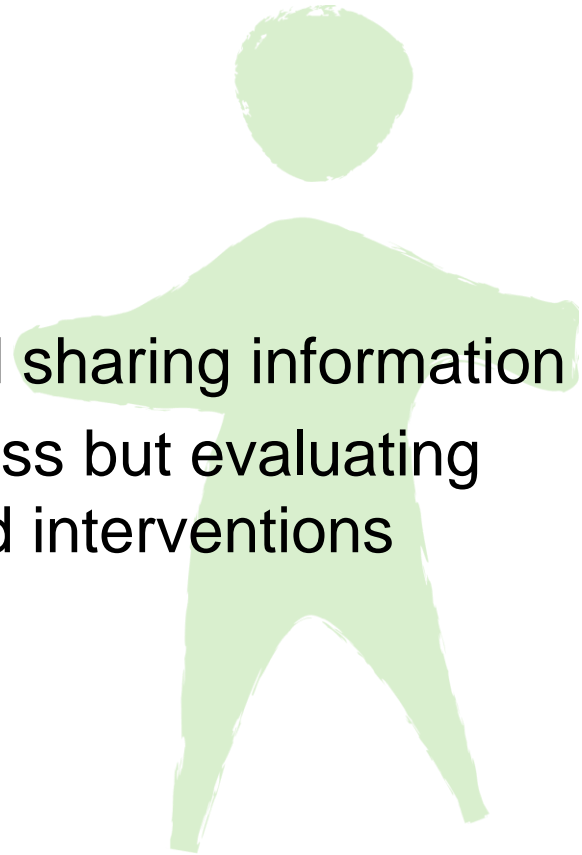
- Commitment to planning and evaluating 'progress' in areas outside the national curriculum. E.g:
  - Social and emotional well-being
  - Physical well-being
  - Community presence
  - Life skills



# Good Autism Practice

## Monitoring progress

- Good systems for recording and sharing information
- Not only measuring pupil progress but evaluating effectiveness of approaches and interventions
- Celebrating achievement





# Good Autism Practice

## Adapting the curriculum

- Beyond broad differentiation to a genuinely person-centered approach.
- Involving and listening to the young person
- ‘How does our understanding of this young person and his/her unique development inform how provide access to the curriculum’
- Beyond the national curriculum
- Towards appropriate IEP or person centered plan

# Good Autism Practice

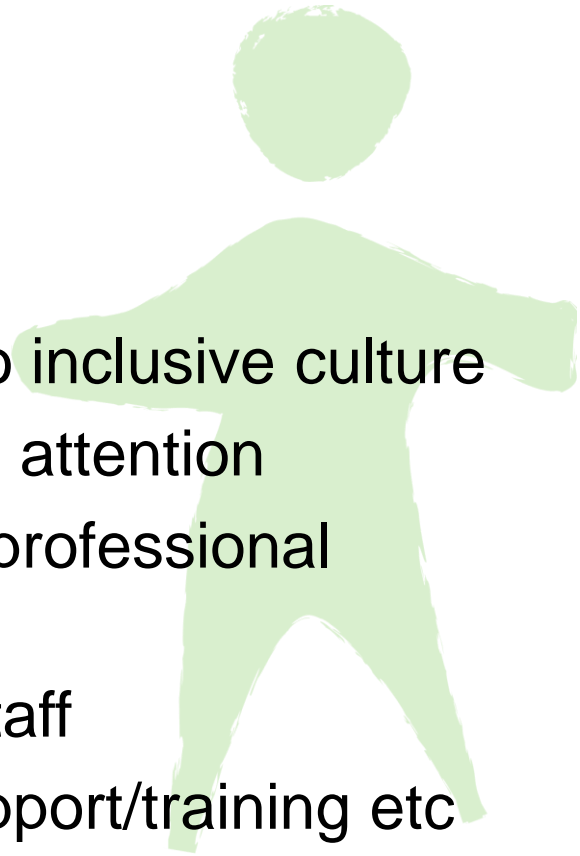
## Involvement of other professionals

- Recognise vulnerability to high anxiety, sensory processing challenges and other mental health issues
  - Appropriate engagement of CAMHS, OT
- Engagement of SALT to support communication development
- Engagement of EP as appropriate
- Recognition of wider family vulnerabilities/pressures and engagement of social services support
- Readiness to explore complimentary inputs – e.g. music or art therapy

# Good Autism Practice

## Staff knowledge and training

- Strong leadership commitment to inclusive culture
- Strong pastoral ethos – care and attention
- Commitment to associated staff professional development and support
- High expectations and pride in staff
- Networking and cross school support/training etc
- Training and involvement of parents/carers
- Autism champions



# Good Autism Practice

## Effective communication

- Good staff to staff communication
- Observing and sharing staff practice
- Listening to young people – informal and formal structures
- Good and open communication with parents/carers
- Young people and parents involved in setting priorities and targets
- Recognising importance of transitions

# Good Autism Practice

## Broader participation

- Supporting community access and engagement
- Acting as ambassadors for autistic young people
- Promoting diversity and difference
- Promoting genuine inclusion



# Good Autism Practice

## Relationships with families

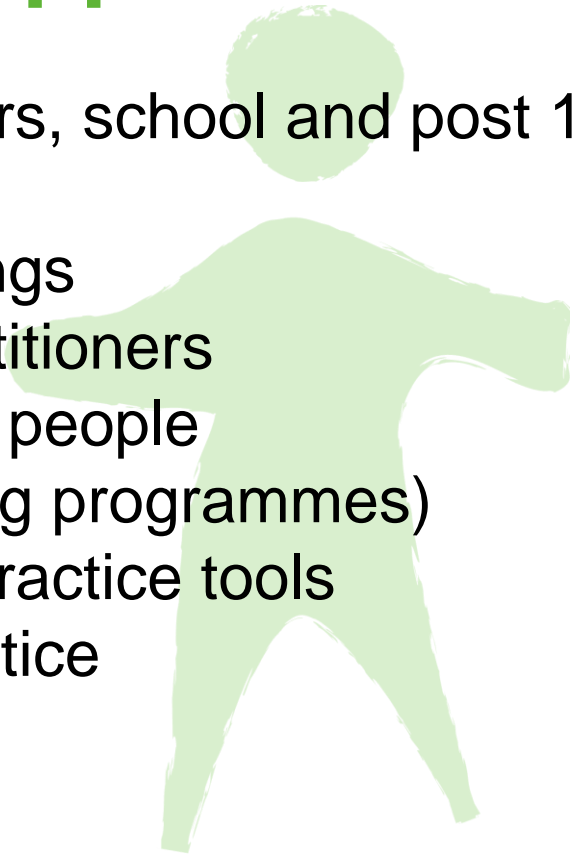
- Working in partnership – mutual respect
- Being available
- Recognising vulnerabilities
- Establishing strong relationships with young people - really getting to know them
- Being flexible – not rigidly applying school rules



# AET Frameworks & Supports

Three education phases – early years, school and post 16.

- Good practice standards for settings
- Competency frameworks for practitioners
- Progression framework for young people
- Professional development (training programmes)
- Supporting resources and good practice tools
- Promotion of communities of practice



# AET Frameworks & Supports

Reflecting the research, all elements of the programme structured:

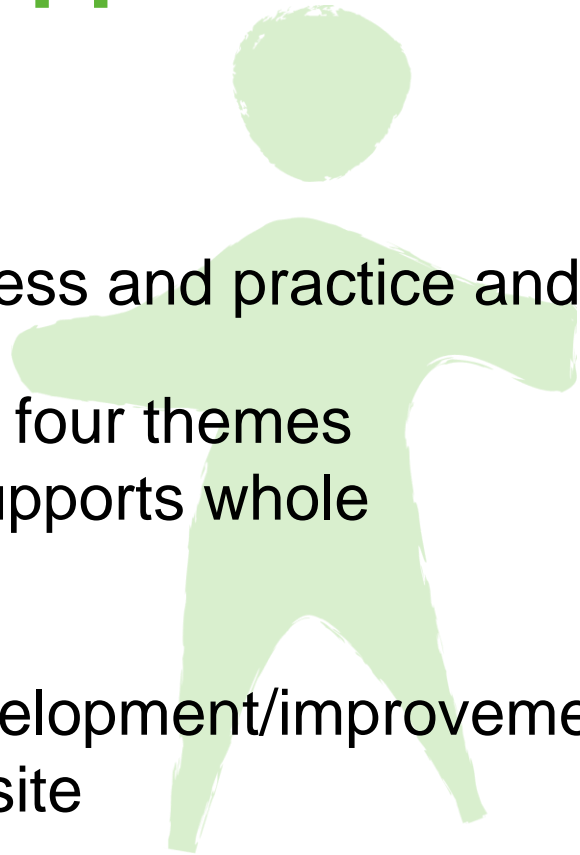
1. **The individual** (how to understand and address their strengths and needs)
2. **Building relationships** (with staff; parents/carers and peers)
3. **Curriculum and learning** (adjustments to the way in which activities are presented, selection of priorities and modifications to the timetable)
4. **Enabling environments** (how to create good classroom and school environments for pupils with autism).



# AET Frameworks & Supports

## Good Practice Standards

- Tool for settings to audit their access and practice and to plan improvement
- Up to 10 standards in each of the four themes
- Links to Ofsted framework and supports whole school/setting improvement
- Links to Code of Practice
- Links to resources to support development/improvement
- Freely available through our website





**STANDARDS**

**1.** Your setting establishes strong relationships between staff and pupils with autism, seeing this as the starting point for mutual understanding and support for the pupil's learning and well-being.

**2.** Your setting understands that in order to build effective relationships it needs to actively listen to pupils, parents and carers and promote opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas. This will enable families to feel that staff are open and approachable to discussions.

**3.** Your setting has a named and experienced member of staff (autism champion/lead practitioner/ SENCO) with general information on autism and specific information about individual pupils (This is easily accessible for all relevant staff on the school's management information system).

**4.** Your setting is aware of the referral pathway in the local area (through the Local Offer) for pupils without a diagnosis who may have autism.

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

Priority rating:

Type of evidence:  Document  Voice  Observed



Notes or details of evidence

- Enhanced
- Established
- Developing
- Not yet developed
- N/A

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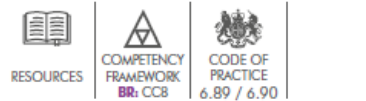


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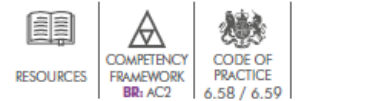


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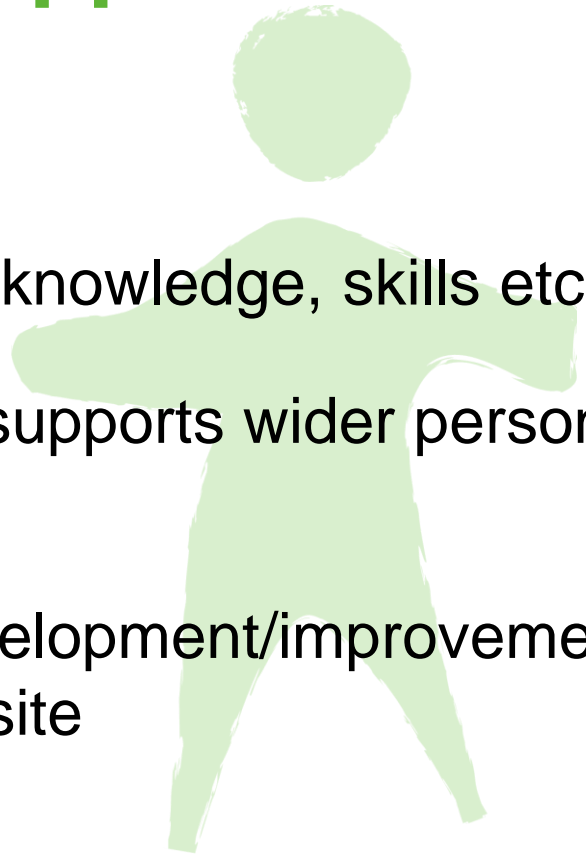


Notes or details of evidence

# AET Frameworks & Supports

## Competency framework

- Tool for practitioners to reflect on knowledge, skills etc and to plan CPD
- Links to teachers standards and supports wider personal development
- Links to standards
- Links to resources to support development/improvement
- Freely available through our website





CORE COMPETENCIES

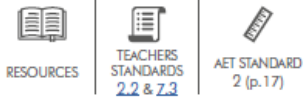
ADVANCED COMPETENCIES

**1.** You are aware of the importance of building on strengths and interests to motivate and encourage pupils on the autism spectrum in their learning.

- Not yet developed
- Developing
- Established

Priority rating:

Type of evidence:  Document  Voice  Observed



Notes or details of evidence

**2.** You can identify ways of differentiating the curriculum flexibly to meet the needs of pupils on the autism spectrum.

- Not yet developed
- Developing
- Established

Priority rating:

Type of evidence:  Document  Voice  Observed



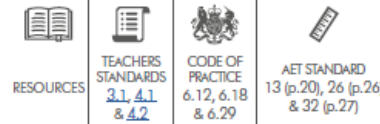
Notes or details of evidence

**3.** You deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that encompasses aspects of the social and emotional well being of pupils on the autism spectrum, their communication needs and life skills.

- Not yet developed
- Developing
- Established

Priority rating:

Type of evidence:  Document  Voice  Observed



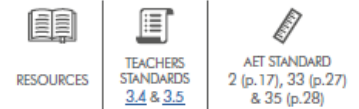
Notes or details of evidence

**4.** You understand the many potential benefits of using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for pupils on the autism spectrum to enhance their learning experience and as a tool for communication and leisure.

- Not yet developed
- Developing
- Established

Priority rating:

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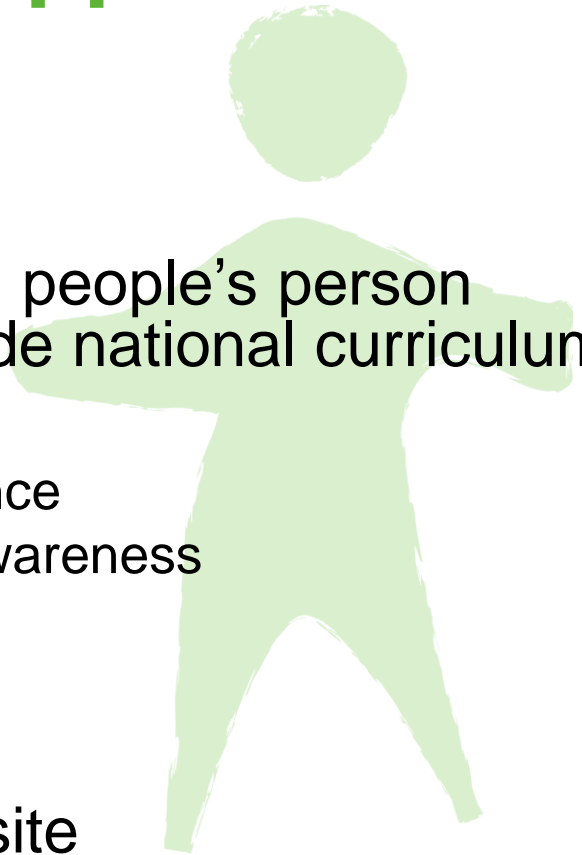


Notes or details of evidence

# AET Frameworks & Supports

## Progression framework

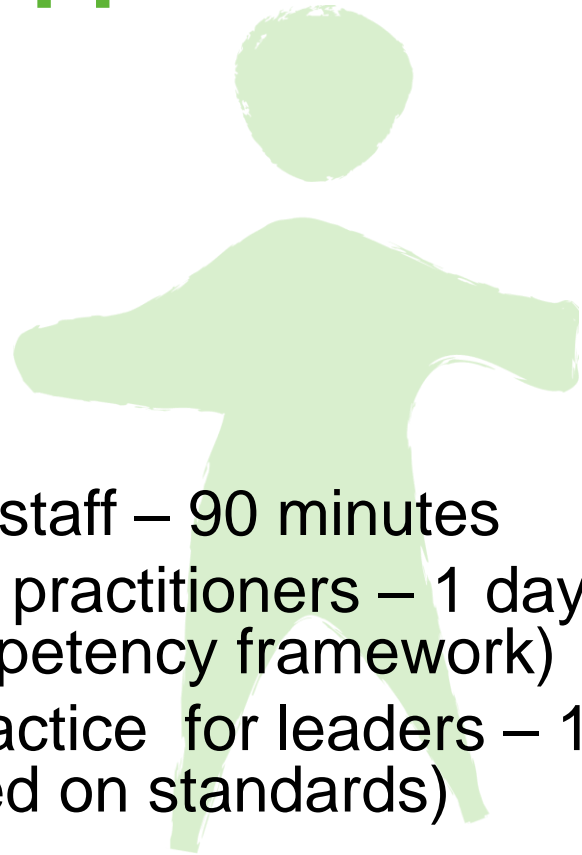
- Tool to assess and plan for young people's person centered approach in areas outside national curriculum
- 7 themes
  - Four areas of developmental difference
  - Emotional understanding and self-awareness
  - Learning
- New and in further development
- Freely available through our website



# AET Frameworks & Supports

## Training Programmes

- Currently all face to face
- Core training in 3 tiers
  - T1 – Awareness raising for all staff – 90 minutes
  - T2 – Good Autism Practice for practitioners – 1 day or 4 x 90 minutes (reflecting competency framework)
  - T3 – Leading Good Autism Practice for leaders – 1 day or 4 x 90 minutes (centered on standards)



# AET Frameworks & Supports

## Training Programmes

## Complimentary modules

- Extending and enhancing good practice
- Complex needs and participation
- Transition from school to college
- Using the progression framework



# Engaging with AET

- Frameworks and resources available through the website
- Training programme delivered through licensed partners – our ‘hubs’ – typically within a local authority area
- To find your local hub go to the website
- If you are interested in becoming a hub, please talk to us.



[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)

Questions

Thank You

