

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Larwood School

Reference No.	
Assessment dates	08.02.21 – 10.02.21 +25.05.21
Lead Assessor	Nikki Kennedy
External Moderator	N/A
Status prior to the assessment	Accredited
Advanced status applied for	

Section 1: Context

About the Provision

Brief description of the provision made for autistic people:

“Larwood is a primary school primarily for pupils with SEMH, however over half of our pupils who we support have a diagnosis of Autism and ADHD. Our small class sizes enable us to build positive relationships with each child and we maximise on this knowledge by personalising our engaging curriculum. Children are offered the national curriculum in a creative and ‘hands on way’ which means that children enjoy coming to school and they enjoy learning. For example, we have ‘Hands on Monday’, Skills curriculum, Stunning Starters and Fantastic Finishes. A positive reward system is at the heart of practice within Larwood School encouraging pupils to be the best they can to achieve and succeed. Since our accreditation in 2018 we no longer have a residential unit attached to the school but instead have offered 12 more places to pupils and we now have an Autism unit called Space Hub. Pupils benefit from consistency amongst familiar staff in a nurturing environment – we have a nurture room, sensory room, four full time interventionists, a strong tier up, tier down approach and a wide range of resources to support the mental health of our pupils, including rapid access to therapy.” (Autism Introduction Form)

Number of autistic people supported by the provision: 55

Range of autistic people supported by the provision:

“All pupils are verbal although some have selective mutism. Ranging from year 2-6. Many pupils also have additional diagnosis such as PDA, ADHD etc. Some of our pupils come to us with toileting issues and others may have a range of health needs. The primary reason that pupils come to us is related to behavioural issues in a

previous educational setting. As a result the majority of pupils start their journey at Larwood with gaps in tier learning as well as emotional and mental health needs." This essentially equates to missed time, learning and socialisation at schools and this can range from a half term to close to a year lost for some pupils.(Autism Introduction Form)

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

Ofsted, October 2019, Good, and ready to be inspected as an outstanding school based on the previous Section 8 inspection.

About the Assessment

- The assessment took place over 4 days.
- The provision's adviser acted as assessor.
- A presentation was given on how provision is made for autistic pupils.
- A tour was carried out of the provision.
- 13 sessions were observed by the assessment team. These included a range of classroom-based activities; P.E; mealtime.
- Discussions were held with both teaching staff and therapeutic staff.
- Personal files were sampled across each key stage.
- Some key policy documents provided by the provision were read.
- The results of surveys carried out with autistic people and their families were also considered.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

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

"Larwood has a highly individualised and holistic approach to supporting all pupils within our setting. Pupils respond well to the structure, routine and consistent approach used by all staff. Students also benefit from a reward system that is easy to understand and achievable. For example, every lessons/session starts fresh with new points to be earned (20 a day in total). Pupils know that points = prizes and look forward to the autonomy of choosing from a range of reward activities on a Friday afternoon. Lessons are also highly differentiated with at least 3 levels of differentiation and children can often choose their own level of difficulty, meaning they can challenge themselves where appropriate and have more support on other occasions.

Groupings of pupils are well thought out – only one area of the school has 100% of its class being ASC (Space Hub). The other 9 classes in the school are a mix of ASC pupils alongside pupils with a range of other needs. There is a careful consultation process amongst key staff to look at the individual needs of pupils and where they would best fit.

The environment is safe, provides calm sensory stimulus and with the addition of safe spaces that pupils can identify and fobbed doors at key points. The outdoor area is a good mix of wide spaces for sport, climbing frames, slides and children can also use scooters and bikes at play time. On top of this we have a sensory room which is accessed by many pupils. We have recently purchased a bright and engaging sensory path which children will be able to use on tier return after lockdown.” (Autism Introduction Form)

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

There is a comprehensive programme of training available to all staff within the school. Induction training starts before a person starts at the school. This ensures that when a person enters into the school they have the basic understanding. This is developed further as staff spend time in each class across the school getting to know the pupils. This is further secured when staff work within their specific class teams, spending time getting to know each of the pupils within their class through reading paperwork and getting to know pupils.

There are two dedicated sessions per half term that have an autism theme. This can be internal or external training. There are a number of staff members that have been working on Masters qualifications, they regularly feedback to staff teams on current research and facilitate reflection of practice across the school. Larwood school ensures that there is a mixture of both internal and external speakers during training with at least 1 session per term being delivered by an external speaker.

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

Reflection plays a significant role in understanding and sharing ideas to support pupils across the school. This occurs three times a week and has a structure which enables staff to share strategies to support pupils across the school. To ensure that this includes a positive feeling, ‘magic moments’ are also shared of the things that pupils have achieved, in the widest sense.

There is an ethos of reflection within the school, the teachers reported on regularly reflecting on practice as part of class groups in addition to the whole school reflection.

The teachers also shared how they were able to access support across the whole school team.

The Behaviour Support Team provide regular support and advice to class teams in how to support pupils effectively where other strategies have not worked.

The Family Support Worker and mental health lead provides staff with knowledge and understanding of pupils within the family context and provide the support where required for mental health difficulties that arise. This has been particularly helpful during Covid and has included physical home visits, virtual and telephone support.

Section 2: Findings from Assessment

Personal Centred Planning

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

Information is gathered regarding pupils prior to entry. Information is taken from EHCP, meeting with parents and prior provision. This is carried out by the Senior Leadership Team and Family Support Worker who becomes the main contact for families. Transition programmes are developed and pupils are introduced to their new classes, with a less formal style to the teaching on the first day so that the boys and class team can get to know the new pupils.

Sensory profiles and behaviour support plans are developed before the pupils start the school and these are available for class teams and edited as observations are carried out. These are live documents which are adapted as needed during the pupils time at school

Larwood follows the Chris Quigley curriculum this allows staff to assess pupil's depth of learning in different subjects and doesn't require all evidence to come from written documentation.

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Larwood School profiles include a section on communication and clearly shows the ways in which a pupil communicates and the challenges that they can face. It also shares ways in which the staff should communicate with the pupil when they are calm and when they are starting to show signs of anxiety. Although there is some indication in behaviour support plans of difficulties with social interaction these do not always highlight specific difficulties or how staff support social interactions effectively.

Behaviour support plans include communication in the baseline and a pupils normal daily functioning. In addition it identifies the ways in which staff should interact with the pupils during this time. This is continued through other stages within the behaviour support plan.

All staff shared the importance of getting communication right for every pupil and that the skills and strategies are personalised to meet their needs. Staff across the school were able to share specific examples of how they adapt communication and interactions to meet the needs of pupils so that they are able to be successful and achieve.

Animal Assisted Therapy enables pupils to develop skills of communication and emotional regulation, giving pupils the vehicle with which to share their fears. It is also through learning the skills of dog training and recognising changes within the dog, they are supported to recognise the changes within themselves.

A kindness award has been developed in Key stage 1, it encourages pupils to recognise and nominate kindness in their peers. These are recognised and rewarded by staff and prizes are awarded termly. This has now been shared across the wider school and is now consistently used the whole school.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Staff were consistently seen to adapt their language for the children they were communicating with, language was seen to be simplified and structured to meet the needs of the pupils. Within one observation it was seen how effective communication was able to support a pupil who had frozen during a PE session. The staff member used direct and appropriate communication which gave the pupil the confidence to complete the activity and feel a huge sense of confidence.

Autistic pupils were seen to make themselves understood and had the confidence to express their opinions during a lesson. During sessions pupils were also seen to be

able to ask for help when participating in independent study. This confidence was seen not only when working with teachers but also teaching assistants. Staff were seen to consistently work seamlessly with each other in the classroom.

Pupils were seen to be given the opportunity to communicate as part of the peer group in addition to staff. During one observation pupils were seen to have to problem solve together and make a joint decision regarding what they were doing. This could potentially have been very difficult but guided by the staff team they had a successful discussion and were able to make a cohesive decision about how they were going to move forward in the activity.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Pupil's personal profiles include a section on self-help which shares skills of independence which pupils have. It identifies how best to support pupils to be independent in being able to carry out activities. Plans identify how the strategies identified in support plans will be utilised to support pupils in becoming more self-reliant and autonomous in their lives.

Pupils participate in weekly skills sessions with their peers from different classes across the school. This was initially a level 1 qualification where pupils learn basic skills of independence which culminate in them planning and executing a meal with their peers in The Town Centre. This has been so successful that it has developed further and Larwood now provides a Level 2 qualification which builds on these skills of independence and focuses more on abilities to manage a home successfully.

Staff were able to identify the need for structure and routine and spoke about the different strategies which have been put in place to support pupils. Staff also spoke clearly about the adaptability of these strategies and the need for these to be portable so that pupils are able to utilise the strategies with which they are familiar outside of the school environment.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

During observations timetables were seen consistently in all classrooms, indicators were placed so that pupils knew where they were in any day. These were seen to be adapted to suit the abilities of pupils as you go through the school. In addition, this was consistently seen to be adapted to meet the needs of individual children within a class across the school.

Autistic pupils were seen to be supported to do things to by themselves. Excellent use was made of additional visuals and resources across the school. Staff are not afraid to make use of a pupils table to provide any additional resources which were needed and could be written on tables to aid pupils to be successful in their activities. Staff were consistently seen to hold back on the support that they provided for pupils, enabling pupils to attempt to problem solve during their activities before providing support.

Pupils are regularly given the opportunity to express opinions and showed confidence in being able to do so.

Interventions are available to help pupils develop some of their independence skills. During one specific observation a pupil was able to confidently make his own cup of tea and share with a peer how to do this. During another observation a pupil confidently was able to share with his peers how to carry out the activity which they were completing and his peers were then able to effectively carry out the activity for themselves independently.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Pupil's plans identify the sensory needs of pupils, it shows the difficulties that pupils experience and the strategies which are in place to support pupils when they are beginning to show signs of distress. Although some plans identify sensory activities which pupils find positive and that they enjoy this is not consistent across all plans which were seen.

During interviews staff were able to identify the ways in which they supported the sensory needs of pupils with many examples shared of ways in which they supported specific pupils. Sensory boxes are available in each classroom adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. The school has a sensory trail in the corridors as well as a specific sensory circuit space used as part of timetabled sessions and when required.

Larwood school have a range of tools available to them to meet the sensory needs of pupils. The newest addition to the tools available across the school is a sensory path which goes through the corridor in the school. It has a range of activities within it that can meet the needs of pupils. Staff and pupils can use a part or all of the path with a pupil and return to class. Brain gym activities are available both inside and outside these encourage a wide range of movement types to meet pupils needs.

LASAs talked clearly about the adaptations that are made to whole school events which can enable pupil to be successful in activities and offered the same opportunities as all their peers. One example shared how pupils who had a special interest and love of singing were enabled to participate in the Christmas show with no pressure to perform, but encouragement to succeed in a way that was comfortable for them.

Sensory boxes are available in each of the classrooms, these come with a basic selection of items which are built upon by the class teams to meet the needs and interests of the pupils within their class.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Autistic pupils were seen to consistently access sensory experiences which they enjoyed, this looked different in each classroom where observations were carried out.

Pupils were seen to experience a range of sensory experiences as discrete lessons or as part of other opportunities across the school. During one lesson pupils were encouraged to tolerate a range of sensory experiences as part of a PE session providing them with the knowledge and understanding that they could get clean and dry after their lesson.

Pupils are exposed to a range of sensory experiences and interventions; sensory support and understanding is embedded throughout the school. Staff take the time to help pupils to identify their own sensory needs and activities which could help them to tolerate sensory experiences. During one observation a child was able to express their need for a sensory break, during another where children did not have the skills, the teacher supported the pupil to identify the need for a movement break.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Pupil's support plans show specific interests that pupils have, it also includes what pupils like in relation to play, activities which they enjoy but also those which they find challenging. This information is also included within behaviour support plans, these however also include when a pupil is most happy and what motivates them.

Behaviour support plans identify approaches and activities to help maintain well-being of pupils including proactive and preventative strategies to avoid anxiety and distress and support emotional regulation.

Staff all shared the importance of reflection and communication for ensuring the sharing of good practice. This has been of greater importance recently where support staff have been supporting unfamiliar pupils online. Due to the effective sharing of practice pupils remained confident in the support that was given and trusted that staff would understand and meet their needs even though staff were unfamiliar.

At Larwood a significant importance is placed on a child's emotional well-being and supporting pupils in ensuring that they are supported effectively.

Larwood have a contract with the Butterfly Room, therapists here provide mental health support and therapy for pupils. It enables Larwood to have access to a wide range of therapies that will be matched to meet the needs of pupils. The Butterfly Room work in collaboration with the school, families and pupils to provide appropriate support which supports their needs.

Hertfordshire Steps is used for physical intervention and de-escalation, there are three behaviour support assistants across the school who are available to support staff were required and provide de-escalation strategies. Behaviour support assistants will spend time in classes getting to know new pupils and assessing their abilities and need for interventions. These will be used to edit behaviour support plans.

Senior leadership team will meet once a week to discuss high profile children within the school who are needed a significant amount of support or causing concern. Information will be taken by all relevant staff members, strategies and support are discussed and fed back to class teams through the behaviour support lead. New pupils will remain on the high profile list for the first 4-6 weeks until they have settled into the school. Debrief and reflections plays a key role in understanding pupils and ensuring that the strategies which are put in place are right for the child.

Larwood School has a mental health lead, she is also part of the safeguarding team and has been integral in ensuring that pupil receive the support which is necessary accessing external professionals who can provide effective support. Where required crisis management plans are required these are shared with parents so that they have a clear expectation of what they need to do when their child goes into crisis at home. The mental health lead has also providing a range of training for the staff teams, empowering them to effectively support the pupils in their class.

Larwood has a comprehensive reward system where pupils earn points based on expectations in the classroom. The expectations of pupils are made clear and are displayed visually in all classrooms. Pupils are able to feel a sense of achievement and are encouraged to maintain expectations in order to achieve rewards. Although this is the main system of reward used within the school, this is adapted to meet pupils individual needs where this system is not appropriate or achieve the positive outcome for pupils.

Buddy the school dog is a significant asset to the school and the emotional well-being of the pupils. The dog is often used as an intervention for pupils, used for de-escalation or as a therapy dog during the week when the animal assistance dog is not available.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Larwood School had a very calm feeling across the whole school. Children were seen to be engaged in lessons, where pupils were identified as starting to struggle interventions were swiftly implemented to support pupils with their regulation and/or de-escalation.

There are a range of proactive strategies which are put in place for pupils across their school day as interventions, these are timetabled for the pupil at the optimum time during the day and are the proactive approach in addition to strategies which implemented in the classroom as part of regular practice throughout the day.

Pupils were seen to have tools readily available for them to help regulate their emotions, these are in addition to the explicit lessons which were seen to be taught as part of the PSHE curriculum where these emotions can be further discussed.

It was observed on regular occasions throughout the observation day where staff would give pupils respect in being able to make decisions and providing them with positive and meaningful feedback which helps to boost the confidence and self esteem of the pupils. One occasion where this was seen was where a staff member took time out to discuss specific worries that a pupil was expressing, taking it at his pace and establishing the reason for his worry as well as assuring him that a solution would be found.

Pupils were consistently seen to be engaged in activities throughout the school day, staff had given consideration for the abilities of the pupils. Pupils were encouraged to push their boundaries in learning through being set three levels of differentiation

within a lesson. Pupils were able to choose which level they participated in an activity and were consistently seen to stretch themselves by completing higher level activities. Pupils could consistently share what was expected of them and what they needed to do to achieve each level of the differentiation.

Pupils shared the reward system that is in place and were excited to share what they had achieved and what they needed to do to achieve the next level. There are many different ways in which rewards can be earned within the school and in some instances, these are even further adapted for specific classes or specific individuals.

Consultation with Autistic People

The pupil voice is integral to everything that is carried out at Larwood. The school council has regular meetings and determine changes which occur throughout the school. The staff shared how decisions regarding Friday activities, Thursday skills lessons and changes within the school have all been part of school council decisions.

Time is spent talking to pupils when they first start at school getting to know them, developing trust and relationships.

Crisis management plans include the pupil's voice, sharing how they feel when they are in crisis and how they wish to be supported or what they find difficult at this time.

Consultation with families of Autistic People

The families are fundamental, their involvement begins before the pupil starts at the school. The relationship developed is one of trust and understanding. Larwood are clear in their expectations and share with parents that they are prepared to have difficult conversations, but provide families with the support they require to get through. The teachers shared how they ensure that positive conversations are held with parents, often the first that they have experienced, due to the breakdown of previous placements.

Family support worker will be the first point of contact for families, she provides information and support for families when required. Informal coffee mornings and training are offered for parents, bringing groups of familiar parents together to network and share experiences.

Feedback from parents/carers in the confidential survey carried out by Autism Accreditation is mostly positive. Examples of some of the comments include:

"Larwood school and staff are amazing, my son has flourished since being there."

"This school has had a hugely positive impact on his and our lives. My son is 8 years old and for the first time in his life has been able to attend school full time, thanks to the staff at Larwood School."

"Larwood have been fantastic with my son he has changed for the better at being at this school."

"Larwood school and staff are amazing, my son has flourished since being there. The staff are very informative and supportive and always have new things they can do to help and support, they listen to your concerns and are always on hand to help."

94.34 % of families reported that the support provided is good, however this is in contrast to 79.54% who say that the advice they are provided is good. The school have reported that they provide advice on strategies which are happening at school so that they can be utilised at home. The Assistant Head teacher reported that additionally they would carry out home visits where required.

Involvement with the wider community

Larwood School have developed a substantial relationship with the local community. Pupils will participate in a range of activities to support the community from singing Christmas carols at an event for a local old people's home to collecting food for during families during COVID.

Pupils at Larwood link with a local special school for SLD/PMLD pupils. They go into school and participate in shared activities where Larwood pupils support their peers in completing activities.

Larwood are heavily involved in outreach within their DSPL area, however in addition to carrying out outreach within mainstream, they invite SENCOS and teachers in to observe practice within the school. There are plans for SENCOS in local schools to attend a professionals "speed dating" event where they get the opportunity to meet professionals outside of education, learn what they are able to offer and access their facilities.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

The quality of practice in supporting autistic pupils is of a consistent high standard throughout the school.

The provision for mental health for families is exceptional. They provide families with security and understanding in addition to access to professionals which may have previously proved difficult.

Animal assisted therapy is a structured programme led by a well-trained professional in canine assisted therapy, one of only 3 professionals in the UK. She uses her dog to help pupils to develop and understand their emotions and social skills. Specific support plans are created with targets developed from information in EHCPs. Information from sessions and plans are shared with classroom staff and utilised in everyday practice to support pupils.

Behaviour support and monitoring is focussed, pro-active and helps produce a great atmosphere with a focus on learning, well-being and progression. It guides interventions which are delivered across the school and adapted to meet the needs of the individual. The school during observations was really calm and where pupils were experiencing distress this was managed calmly without escalating the situation.

Larwood uses a wide range of programmes and activities which are fully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, although many these are timetabled this is adapted to need and pupils are able to access these programmes and activities when require during the school day.

Space Hub is an excellent addition to Larwood School which provides pupils with the opportunity to have a more of a nurturing programme with smaller numbers and a more individualised approach to their education.

What else the provision does well:

Reflection meetings enabled staff to have a shared understanding of pupils and regularly problem solve and share strategies for support. These meetings happen three times a week and give staff the opportunity to bring any difficulties or changes

in behaviour to the meeting so that it can be discussed by the wider staff team in a solution focused format.

Staff consistently adapt their language for the children they are communicating with.

Autistic pupils are enabled to have the skills and confidence to express their views and opinions during lessons, to ask for help when they need it and to participate in peer group discussions.

Class teams consistently work seamlessly in supporting autistic pupils'

Independence is promoted by staff holding back and giving autistic pupils space and time to problem solve by themselves as well as peer to peer support and the excellent use of visual scaffolds and prompts.

Sensory support and understanding are embedded throughout the school with pupils accessing a range of sensory tools to help them self-regulate,

Pupils have tools readily available for them to help regulate their emotions and to help them in their sensory regulation.

According to the confidential survey carried out by Autism Accreditation, a clear majority of parents/carers (77 %) think that the understanding that staff have of their child's autistic needs is always good.

What the provision could develop further

There were no significant areas of development to improve practice in supporting autistic pupils identified by the assessment team.

Larwood staff are highly reflective in their practice and have adapted their practice for the benefit of pupils within the school and those who have received both inreach and outreach support. Larwood staff could consider carrying out action research projects which show their increasing understanding and development of practice which then is shared with a wider population outside of their DSPL area.

Year 6 pupils get the opportunity to experience residential trips, Larwood could consider how they further develop the necessary skills and confidence to ensure that all pupils and parents are confident and can enjoy the whole experience.

The school could consider developing the pupil support plans to show what motivates pupils to socially interact and the challenges and barriers they face in social interactions?

Sensory plans should consistently show sensory experiences which are positive for pupils or those which provide a positive experience.

The school should investigate why a significant minority of parents/carers (22.5%) rate the advice they get from the school on how to help their child as less than good.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEYS

Families of Autistic Persons

Please note all comments accompanying survey ratings are routinely removed from the final Accreditation report once they have been shared with the provision. This is to eliminate the risk of any individual being identified from these comments should the provision share or publish the report

1. Feedback questionnaire on Larwood School to be completed before 30/04/2021

1. The support my relative is given is...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better		5.66%	3
3	mostly good		16.98%	9
4	always good		77.36%	41
			answered	53
			skipped	0

2. The understanding that staff have for my relative's autistic needs is...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better		3.77%	2
3	mostly good		18.87%	10
4	always good		77.36%	41
			answered	53
			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		3.77%	2
2	ok, but could be better		3.77%	2
3	mostly good		24.53%	13
4	always good		67.92%	36
			answered	53
			skipped	0

4. The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		0.00%	0
2	ok, but could be better		20.75%	11
3	mostly good		22.64%	12
4	always good		56.60%	30
			answered	53
			skipped	0

APPENDIX 2: COMMENTS FROM THE PROVISION

Feedback from school emailed directly to adviser



“In terms of the residential trips expanding I proposed the following which has been approved to start from September 2021:

Thinking ahead to next year, I would like to build into the curriculum experience a gradual build from KS1 to the current year 6 trip (non covid times). I think that this would add to the Larwood culture and give children wonderful experiences to look forward to each year, build up resilience to being away from home that gets increased each year.

KS1 - after school play/snacks/outdoor activities/early dinner - 6/7pm pick up - £85
inflatables hire + snacks approx £100-120

Year 3 - dinner/open air cinema at school - 8pm pick up - £120-160 screen hire plus £5 a head for dinner approx

Year 4 - Onsite overnight camping - £5 per head, I believe we still have tents and camping equipment

Year 5 - Offsite camping (Church farm for example) 1 night - current prices are £10 per child and £16 per adult but have made contact to see if I can get a deal.

Year 6 - PGL trip (budget already allocated)

Space Hub - a combination of the above depending on the ages/needs of the pupils and most likely in group split over the three terms. approximate cost £100

Another thought to add on to this is a Larwood Trust Camp over where Year 7s from Brandles could be allocated to buddy with year 6s who are going to Brandles and have an onsite camp here. This could be SEMH wide including HH and Batchwood and Faulkner so that all pupils had the same advantage.

Sean will also be leading on a research project. The first research topic will be in relation to how covid disruptions have impacted SEMH pupils. “

APPENDIX 3: ADVANCED APPLICATION FORM

In order to achieve an Advanced Award you must show that you are an outstanding and innovative provision that goes well beyond similar provisions. Please complete this form to give examples of initiatives that make you stand out and most important of all the impact they have had for autistic people. Copy and paste where you may have more than one example. However the entire application including case-studies should not exceed a 1000 words.

Please note you are also required to include case-studies (please refer to additional guidance) as part of your application. It is also important to recognise that the application form and case-studies are only part of a bigger picture, with considerable emphasis being given within the award process to observation of practice, personal centred support plans and surveys.

Part 1: Professional Development
Initiatives or innovations that impact on staff insight into the personal experience of being autistic e.g. regular involvement of autistic people in professional development activities or review of practice.
<p>Description – regular training for staff through Tuesday twilight training program. Led by Bianca Osobu and other staff who are completing masters. Reflection on pupil feedback through student council, pupil surveys and Larwood assertive mentoring and videos – what it means to be autistic to me, links to The Butterfly Room – with whom we work closely and use for CPD and joined up work. https://www.facebook.com/100063760050066/videos/495283045171361</p> <p>Annual audits of the classroom Lesson observations and feedback Development of mainstream staff via 'inreach sessions' whereby 25 Stevenage based primary schools have had the opportunity to train with Larwood Staff for one day (See below)</p>
Impact – staff are better equipped to support pupils and our drip feed approach to training means that we can regularly revisit areas of importance in our practice or introduce new concepts that are relevant for our pupils.
Initiatives or innovations that ensure that specialist approaches or techniques are fully understood, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.
<p>Description – staff surveys are sent out following training which allows us to quality control the training and provides the trainee with feedback as well as the opportunity to revisit areas that need more focus.</p> <p>We also have no notice -drop in lesson observations weekly which means that senior leaders are seeing a true reflection of staff practice and how this directly impacts on pupils.</p>

Daily reflection – 3 times per week our staff meet after school to discuss strategies that work with individual pupils/don't work or to celebrate magic moments.

Impact – all of our staff receive the same whole school training regardless of their role within the school. This is one way to ensure that staff are 'singing from the same hymn sheet' and our pupils receive the best in terms of consistency and practice.

Reflection is a key part of our practice so that again, we approach pupils with consistency and communicate in a way that is effective and meaningful to them. It is also a way to informally check that what we are learning through training is being applied in practice.

Part 2: Outcomes for individuals

Initiatives or innovations that have had a considerable impact on the quality of life and inclusion of autistic people e.g. programmes; projects; therapeutic interventions social enterprises etc.

Interventions

we have 4 full time intervention staff as well as 4 others who offer interventions as part of their timetable. This enables us to offer interventions for ; lego therapy, art therapy, theraplay, cooking, sand tray, animal assisted therapy, pet therapy, phonic, sprite, maths, reading, writing, active start, brain gym, sensory break, nurture, physical break. We routinely review the interventions on offer (half termly) and average 70+% of our children who have at least one intervention. In addition, we refer pupils for therapy/counselling to The Butterfly Rooms – on average we have 7-10 pupils receiving this at any one time.

Space Hub

Space Hub was set up in November 2019 as an intervention area for children with Autism diagnosis, according to their Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). The pupil's differences in learning, cognitive processing, emotional intelligence along with their displaying behaviours as described in the Behaviour Iceberg (Schlopler, 1994), meant that they were unable to fully access our specialist Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) schooling. The main aim of the Hub is to encourage the children to achieve, believe in and be themselves, learn to self-regulate, learn life skills and improve their knowledge about social interactions. Baron-Cohen (1990) recognised that these skills could be learned overtime. Once the young

people are able to achieve these skills to an appropriate level they may be returned to the main school to help to develop these further.

The area designated to the Space Hub is the old residential unit that closed down in November 2018. As a school, we had noticed a declining need and request for residential care, yet we had an ever-growing number of pupils waiting for a day space. Following extensive consultation and planning, we decided to close the residential unit and create an additional 12-day school places. This was justified due to the reducing need of residential plus those pupils waiting placement, as well as many more pupils displaying more complex needs, particularly in connection with autism.

Impact – Pupils are making better progress in social skills, academic abilities, happier, better attendance as well as significant improvements in behaviour.

Add examples in here to prove the point!

What about adding in academic data to prove the point (those that did SAT's etc)

Hub 2019/2020

All pupils are making both academic and social progress in the Hub. This can be seen in a variety of ways and is different according to needs and starting points.

Examples can be seen in all of the children whereby they all initially found interaction, friendships and social expectations difficult but progress can be seen on their Social Progress forms (found in Hub) and on video/photo evidence.

Academic progress can be seen through their Lines of Progress (DOL) and through their books, conversations, video and photo evidence.

The social and emotional transformation is huge for some of these children. They can be seen growing in confidence and in the way they react to others. For example; one child's anxiety was causing disruption and caused him to scream and strip on a regular basis. Since he has been in Hub he has started to self-regulate his anxiety and is now one of the children we use to help others. He also thrives with maths and computing and we utilize his ability to teach the other children. This has helped him to thrive.

Transition back into the main school has been successful (case study provided)

Initiatives or innovations that empower autistic people as experts in their own lives e.g. examples of co-production; working in partnership; developing effective consultation tools and processes to ensure that autistic people have a voice etc

Description – use of Larwood assertive mentoring (details of this shared through paperwork and interviews)

Student council meetings – Can share examples upon request

Student surveys

Class meetings for learning topics

Impact – we value pupil voice and endeavour to allow choice where possible/suitable. Pupils enjoy learning (Ofsted reported that pupils at Larwood School are 'wired to learn')
Pupils feel important, valuable and part of a community.

Part 3: Sharing of Expertise and development of knowledge and understanding

Initiatives or innovations that have had a significant impact on how families, other professionals or members of the public understand and respond to autistic people e.g. outreach support; training for other professionals, families; sharing best practice at events etc.

Description

1. Delivery of intensive family support sessions.

Intensive Family Support Sessions:

We offer a bespoke intervention for all of our families, with a planned process of delivery in response to family crisis, challenges, and behavioural issues in the home. We deliver planned intervention sessions over a four-week period to address the pupil/family individualised circumstances and highlight any unmet health, mental health, social care, education, and behaviour needs and offer training, referrals, and management of this in the home.

2. DSPL2 Mental Health Advisory Service. Commissioned to Support all Mainstream Primary Schools in our DSPL locality of Stevenage.

Weekly Mental Health Surgery/Advisory Service for professionals in the DSPL2 area. This service is for Education professionals to discuss individual cases where there are mental health concerns for a pupil they are supporting. We will look together at supportive pathways, external referrals and targeted interventions to support the needs of the child and family.

3. Point of contact with The Butterfly Room www.thebutterflyroom.org . Offering bespoke/ private and immediate therapeutic intervention for our pupils, families and staff when needed.

4. We provide systemic family therapy for a pupil who has ASC and there are complex mental health issues within the family.

5. Monthly Network meetings with Health professionals (CAMHS) and SEMH School professionals across Hertfordshire to share good practice, solution circle work, Share referral pathways and network with commissioning health services to change processes of referrals, identification and implement new working relationships.

6. We have “best practice” completed teacher ASC assessment forms, which are filled in by staff here and then compared, to our best practice pro forma.
7. Robust admission and transition programme.
8. Thera play training for intervention staff.
9. MIM and Theraplay techniques – Parent training.

Tier 3 In-reach and outreach Support

In-reach Year One - An Overview

Since starting the tier 3 outreach service we have launched our very own in-reach service that

began in January 2019 and was led by our Outreach lead Joe Scales and LASA mentor Lea Hipkin.

In that time we have created a LASA / LSA / TA intervention focused morning which utilised a

number of our staff here at Larwood who were able to offer insightful, practical ideas and advice

to adults who are supporting with children with SEMH difficulties. Creating this additional service

saw colleagues from 25 schools across Stevenage and its surrounding villages attend one of our

courses (every school in the area received an invite):

Tier 3 Outreach Service

Overview of Service

The service is delivered to mainstream primary pupils in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 within the DSPL 2 area (Stevenage).

Our Outreach team is led by Joe Scales - a serving practitioner here at Larwood who has worked previously in mainstream, as well as working alongside the Deputy Headteacher at Larwood with various behaviour related projects. The team is continually evolving and growing to ensure we meet the need of the area.

Pupil focused support-varied between pre, during and post covid phases.

Supporting the development of effective behaviour management strategies.

Guidance for creation, implementation and review of behaviour support plans.

Creating, and supporting staff to create, resources to support learning.

Strategies to assist with inclusion.

Advice on differentiation and curriculum development.

Facilitate discussion with parents and other professionals for additional support.

Discussion to generate, implement and review ideas and strategies.

Newly Developed Tier 3 Outreach 'Phase Support' Proposal

Due to the nature of tier 2 supporting cohorts and growing numbers of individuals being identified

as requiring tier 3 support as a result of this support (sometimes 3 or more from the same cohort),

Autism practice across the Trust – In February 2021, Brandles SEMH joined our MAT and we have begun the process of supporting them with better practice for their ASC pupils as well as initiate the Accreditation process.

Impact:

1. **IFSS** - With sessions delivered over a four-week period, we ensure that we have a formal process to follow which makes the targeted work “smart” and measurable. It also means we have capacity to offer to more parents/carers as we have a timetable for when and how these sessions will start and end. .
2. Mental Health Advisory Service. Provide specialist support in the DSPL2 area to mainstream schools when managing referrals processes and pathways identifying need and a direct link and triage service for a specialist Therapeutic intervention (The Butterfly Room) for families who require this.
3. The Butterfly Room. We can ensure than any pupil, parent or staff member can access therapeutic input when needed. We work closely with the therapists who give us weekly session reports and make recommendations for support in the class and at home. They also provide crisis recommendations when needed and are involved in our crisis management plans.
4. Systemic Family Therapy – Impact - to support home with intensive therapeutic input over a long-term basis to support the pupil and parent who have ASC and complex mental health issues. Positive behaviour strategies in the home.

Impact

In-reach Impact

- This resulted in 92% of those attending rating their understanding of individual needs for pupils with SEMH as much or vastly improving (the remaining 8% saw some improvement as a result of the morning).
- 96% leaving with a much or vastly improvement range of strategies they could offer children in their setting (the remaining 4% saw some improvement as a result of the morning).
- 76% heading back to their setting with the perception that they would see much or vast improvement in the behaviour of the children they support

(the remaining 24% expected to see some improvement in their behaviour as a result of what they had learnt that morning).

The overall feedback from the in-reach service offered this year was overwhelmingly positive and attendees told us that moving forward: They particularly valued:

- Demonstrations, observations, sharing of knowledge, inspirational, insightful, environment, consistency, RRR, calmness, seeing it 'live/1st hand', ideas, chance to reflect and discuss strategies.

Believed that to further improve we could:

- Continue the service; offer more opportunities, more shadowing, longer sessions, EYFS focus and examples of the paperwork used.

Outreach Year One Impact

An Overview

We have:

- Supported 26 children in their mainstream settings
- From Reception through to year 6 and every year in between.
- Supported 12 schools in Stevenage and its surrounding villages.
- Completed 136 visits as well as an additional 11 monitoring visits
- Accepted 94% of cases submitted to panel.
- Introduced monitoring visits from Easter of this year to show our ongoing support for the children, class teams and schools we work with.
- Improved 62% of the children supported attendance.
- Increased 73% of the children supported time tables so that they are accessing education for longer durations.
- This has led to 77% of the children now attending school full time or at least for an increased duration to when we started working with them.
- All of the children supported were at risk of permanent exclusion when the support began and now 56% of those children are no longer at risk of permanent exclusion
- Out of those still at risk of permanent exclusion our outreach support has helped to place 4 children in to SEMH provision, 2 more in a pastoral base provision, 4 are part of an ongoing project of which we are supporting and 1 is being monitored.
- Based on the DSPL area data there has been only 1 more permanent exclusion that last year (whereas permanent exclusions doubled the year previous) and there has been a huge reduction in

fixed term exclusions from a rising trend that peaked at 265 last year from 187 the year before to just 93 this year.

Outreach 'Phase Support'

Accessed by 3 schools already this half term with very positive feedback.

Outreach Mid-Year Data (Year 3 2020-2021)

Available on separate PowerPoint

Outreach 3 Year Overview

Available on separate Excel document (Year 3 data only to Easter)

Outreach Feedback from staff

Available on separate Excel document

Brandles – limited impact as very early in the process.

Part 4: Validation

Validation from other bodies or professionals s e.g. awards; summative evaluation data; inspections etc.

Example

Following on from your recent nomination acceptance in the **Education and Training Awards 2021**, the judging panel have made their final decisions and I am delighted to be the one to share the results with you.

It brings me great pleasure to inform that **Larwood School** has been awarded:

Most Supportive SEMH Educational Environment - Hertfordshire

Larwood School, like all our victors, have demonstrated excellence and commitment in these tough times and we shall be proud to help you promote that to your best advantage.

How was Larwood School chosen and what are the next steps?

The judging panel uses the case file built by our research team and any supporting evidence submitted by the nominee to make the decision as to who is successful in the programme. Our dedicated researchers used merit-orientated research via the public domain, taking into consideration a number of different factors. Once finalised, the file is presented to our judges for their consideration. To move successfully from nominee to winner there must be evidence of

expertise within a given field, dedication to customer service and client satisfaction with an ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation.

Relevance – this was awarded at arguably the most challenging time for schools and pupils. Our staff worked incredibly hard to support our pupils and families and provide them with as much routine, continuity in terms of education but also mental health and wellbeing.

I have included a link to a video which highlights some of the positives that our school came away with related to the most recent lockdown.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqISnH-1WU&t=2s>

Ofsted report and quotes:

HIP quotes:

2019:

Overall Outcomes for Pupils grade: 1/2

Brief comment on grade

Does this align with the grade currently presented in the school's SEF? **Yes**

Outcomes have improved significantly since the last inspection (in January 2014). There has been year-on-year improvement and particularly so in writing. The school provides a really stable environment, with excellent behaviour management, so that pupils new to the school quickly settle in and concentrate on their learning. This enables them to make optimum progress in nearly all cases. Given their starting points, the vast majority of pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress. For nearly all pupils, their progress is secure and rapid.

HIP Quote:

2020:

The school has very well-established systems in place to promote pupils' personal development and to support their pastoral / emotional and mental health needs. Discussion with senior leaders indicates that pupils and staff are responding well to the support that is being provided to promote their well-being in relation to Covid. A virtual tour during the 'visit' showed that the school has clear systems in place for promoting the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

Criteria for Autism Accreditation Advanced Award

CRITERIA	NOTES
Statutory Inspectors consider service to have outstanding features. Nothing is scored as less than good.	The Committee will consider ratings from the last statutory report and quality of life outcomes for the autistic individuals attending the provision.
There are many considerable areas of strength with no or minor actions for development. Highlighted areas of development are likely to address issues that the service is already working on or fine-tuning practice which is already of a very good standard.	The Committee will consider evidence of what the provision does well and what it needs to work on from the latest Autism Accreditation assessment.
A high-quality programme of continuous Professional Development is in place. It ensures that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. Overall support is clearly based on methods and approaches that produce positive outcomes for autistic people.	The Committee will consider evidence from the latest Autism Accreditation report of what training and professional development staff receive and how this is evident in observed practice. It will also refer to Section 1 of the Application form.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how each autistic person communicates and socially interacts	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people to become more independent,	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.
Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their sensory regulation	The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.

<p>Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their emotional well-being</p>	<p>The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.</p>
<p>Feedback from families and/or autistic people shows that an overwhelming majority are happy with the service e.g. over half very happy and the rest happy/ Only a tiny minority are unhappy e.g. one or two respondents.</p>	<p>The Committee will consider surveys carried out by Autism Accreditation. An overwhelming majority would normally be defined as 75 % or more respondents.</p>
<p>The service shares expertise through quality consultation and training as well as actively contributing to research into autism and innovations in practice.</p>	<p>The Committee will consider part 3 of the Application form and relevant case studies.</p>