



Autism

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. One in 100 people are on the autism spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.

Autism affects people in different ways. Like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses. Below is a list of difficulties autistic people may share.

- Social communication and social interaction challenges
- Repetitive and restrictive behaviour
- Over- or under-sensitivity to light, sound, taste or touch
- Highly focused interests or hobbies
- Extreme anxiety
- Meltdowns and shutdowns

(Autism.org, 2020)

Autistic people may:

- Find it hard to communicate and interact with other people
- Find it hard to understand how other people think or feel
- Find things like bright lights or loud noises overwhelming, stressful or uncomfortable
- Get anxious or upset about unfamiliar situations and social events
- Take longer to understand information
- Do or think the same things over and over

(NHS, 2020)

Autism is also known as ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder. You may hear people mention 'they are on the spectrum'.

What causes autism?

No one knows why people have autism. More than 1 person in a family may have autism. It can be genetic.

If you feel that your child displays signs of autism, speak to your GP or discuss your concerns with the classteacher.

References:

- NHS website, 2020
- National Autistic Society, 2020: <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>
- Autism Education Trust, 2020: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/what-is-autism/>