

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Clare Mount Specialist Sports College

Reference No.	429
Assessment dates	10 th -12 th March 2020
Lead Assessor	Jonny Knowles
External Moderator	Rachel Read
Status prior to the assessment	Advanced
Advanced status applied for	Yes

Section 1: Context

About the Provision

Brief description of the provision made for autistic people:

"Clare Mount Specialist Sports College is a community special school for students aged 11-19. All students have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) with primary needs of Moderate Learning Difficulties, Autism, Speech Language and Communication Needs or Complex Difficulties. Students follow a differentiated and modified National Curriculum, personalised to meet their individual needs".

"Classes are typically 8-12 in size and the children flourish in the close knit environment and never cease to amaze us with their fantastic achievements year on year. There is a purposeful, calm atmosphere in the school where children have fun, are expected to work to the very best of their abilities, learn new skills and behave well."

Year 7 ASC transition classes run on a primary model until students are ready to transition to specialist teachers in specialist classrooms. Y8 ASC classes run on a 50% primary model. The school also has 2 SEMH classes for students in KS3 which run on a primary model with some individual inclusion lessons and Malala, a provision which aims to support the school's most vulnerable students to access education through individual transitions, timetables and curriculums.

Number of autistic people supported by the provision:

225 students are supported by the provision with 148 (65.8%) having a diagnosis of autism. "The % of students with ASC is increasing steadily year on year. Current Y7 cohort has 26 out of 36 with an ASC diagnosis (72.2%), whereas Y11 have 13 out of 31 (42%)."

Range of autistic people supported by the provision:

"Age: 11-19."

"Academically students range from mainstream ability (GCSE students) through to Entry Level students."

"Other diagnoses include MLD, SLD, SEMH, SLCN, HI, VI, SpLD and PD/SI

"All students at the school are verbal, there are currently 2 students are selective mutes." There are a range of differentiated visual support used across school to support students in their independence and their communication"

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

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2016 and was found to be Outstanding.

About the Assessment

The assessment took place over 3 days.

The school's adviser assumed the role of lead assessor with support from an external moderator on the first day of the assessment.

A presentation was delivered by the school's Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, and Assistant Head Teachers on how provision is made for autistic students.

27 sessions were observed by the assessment team over a total of 10 hours. Sessions observed included Maths, Paired Reading, PSHE, PE, Science, ICT, Geography, History, English, DT, Lunch, Break, and Work Experience. A member of the assessment team also attended training hosted at the service which was delivered to around 100 teachers from across the Wirral Authority.

Discussions were held with a number of staff members, autistic students and the families of autistic students during the assessment. Staff interviewed included the ASC lead, Director of Personal Development and Well-being, Careers Adviser, Outreach and Inclusion Lead, Deputy Head Teacher, Head of Year 11, Head of Post 16 and members of the Student Support team. Topics discussed included the curriculum, My Personal Best, CPD, Mental Health and Well-being, Sensory Support, Work Experience, Next Steps, Supported Internship programme, Social Communication Interventions, Staffs initial induction and student support.

6 family members spoke with the assessment team during a meeting hosted at the service. The assessment team also met with a panel of 4 students formally and a large number of students informally during the assessment.

Policy and procedure documents relevant to the provision for autistic students were reviewed, in particular; Autism Procedure, Transition Policy, Positive Handling Policy, SEN and Inclusion Policy, Team Teach Incident Report and Student Information Booklet, School Evaluation Form (SEF), School Improvement Plan(SIP), CPD and Training Evaluation and Plan.

Personal files were sampled from across the service, these included ASC Individual Support Plans, IEPs, One Page Profiles, Health Care Plans and individual risk assessments. Plans were made available to the assessment team during all observations.

The results of surveys carried out with the families of autistic people were also considered and are found in the appendix to this report.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

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

The school “adopt the SPELL approach throughout the school day. This ensures the school has structure and predictability for students, positive and empathetic teaching, a low arousal setting, and links to other schools, parents, professionals and agencies to maximise the provision for the students through a holistic approach.”

Staff regularly receive training in a wide range of autism specific best practice methods and approaches based on the needs of the current cohort of students. Strategies and approaches employed by the school are referenced throughout the report.

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

The school have a robust induction programme which covers all key areas of training in staffs first term. The school cover key classroom strategies during the first inset day so that staff understand how lessons should be structured. New staff are expected to attend autism specific training in ‘ASC Awareness and Classroom Strategies’, ‘ASC and Challenging Behaviour’, and ‘Sensory Processing Difficulties’.

All new staff also receive a “Staff Induction Booklet” which contains all key information about school, its policies and procedures. Staff described the handbook as “the bible” and “regularly referenced”.

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

There is a high quality programme of continuous professional development in place at Clare Mount which supports staff to have an in depth knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. All staff receive annual mandatory training in a range of autism specific best practice methods and approaches led by internal and external staff. The extensive CPD offer, which was reviewed during the assessment, includes opportunities for staff to further develop their knowledge and understanding of autism by attending external conferences, training and other CPD opportunities. After staff attend external training they are expected to evaluate the training and if appropriate cascade training to all staff during a staff meeting or INSET.

The school have a well-established Action Research project which is one part of staffs CPD. Staff are supported to explore a particular approach, strategy or area of interest with an individual or group of students. Staff reflect on the intent, implementation and impact of the intervention to support them to reflect on their practice and develop whole school practice. Previous topics led by staff have included Lego Therapy, Sport Aiding Communication and Independence, which were reviewed as case studies during the assessment.

The SLT evaluate the school using the School Evaluation Form (SEF). The SEF supports the SLT to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which informs the training needs of staff. The PM5 form is used during the performance management process to enable staff to express their training needs and wishes. Through lesson observations SLT identify the individual and whole school training needs of staff. Observations have a focus on ASC including the promotion of independence, the environment, differentiation, social communication and the sensory needs of the students. Staff are also asked to feedback and evaluate training so that SLT can further develop the CPD offer around their identified needs.

Section 2: Findings from Assessment

Personal Centred Planning

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

The school develop personalised pathways and transitions based on the individual needs of the students. There is an enhanced transition for year 6 students which includes a virtual tour, information booklet, transition days and an interactive welcome book. Staff from Clare Mount meet with students in their current provision and form tutors meet with parents during a transition meeting into the school to gather information and develop the student's documentation. The information collected informs staff so they are able to best differentiate, support and teach the student when they arrive.

The school support a more vulnerable cohort of students to transition into school through the Malala provision. Transitions are personalised around the needs and interests of the students to re-engage them and break down barriers to education.

3 out of 4 year 7 classes are based on a primary model to support the transition of ASC students into school. Students gradually access the specialist teachers and classrooms throughout the academic year when they are ready.

The school's Big Button programme ensures that staff have easy access to student documentation. Student documentation includes ASC Individual Support Plans, One Page Profiles, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Support Plans, Health Care Plans, Individual Risk Assessments. Documentation is informed by information from observations, the student, their families and other professionals.

"All students with a diagnosis of ASC have an 'ASC Individual Support Plan' created around their specific ASC needs, prioritising areas which are creating barriers to their inclusion in school." The plans include information on motivators and special interests, anxiety triggers, and sensory motivators, distractors and stressors. Specific targets are drawn up, through discussions with staff, and on the basis of their current 'baseline'. Strategies are then provided for staff in all subject areas to use to help the student to access all areas of school life. The plans are reviewed twice a year and discussed as part of the EHCP review process with parents and the students.

All students study a Core Curriculum (GCSE to Entry level) which includes Duke of Edinburgh. Careful consideration is made to the ever-changing curriculum so that it best meets the needs of the students. During the introductory presentation and through discussions with staff, staff shared case studies of the positive outcomes for students. The school sets aspirational academic targets for students and progress is analysed by each department. Spectrum Steps is used by the school to feedback progress to students and parents. The programme is consistent across school which ensures that the programme can be used and understood consistently by students and their parents.

The school's careers adviser attends all year 9 EHCP reviews. This enables the school to strategically plan long term adult outcomes and support students and their parents to understand their future opportunities and pathways.

CPOMS is used by the school to log and track a range of information across the school including Attendance, Behaviour, Mental and Emotional Health. The system has been powerful in providing detailed information of a student's journey and allows incidents not

just to be viewed in isolation. The Student support team regularly review the data to identify any patterns.

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Social communication strategies identified by the school include; Visual timetables, visual supports, social stories, calm cards, information boards, social skills training and lessons, targeted questioning techniques, lunch time clubs with a focus on social skills.

The school have a SALT in school 1 day each week. The SALT completes assessments of identified students, devises programmes of support and delivers training to staff. The programmes are delivered as part of social communication form time interventions and are reference within the student documentation.

Social communication is a focus during form time where staff facilitate, through planned sessions, opportunities for students to practise and develop social skills. Through these session staff also plan to develop friendships, resilience, social rules and engagement. The programme is based on elements of social skills training and includes a range of specific games and tasks to support students to develop social skills.

The school have developed a chill zone which students can access at break and lunch. The chill zone is available to students who struggle to manage unstructured social situations. Through naturally occurring situations within the Chill Zone staff aim to provide opportunity and purpose for students to practise and develop social skills.

In interviews, staff gave examples of how autistic people have been supported in their communication and social engagement and the positive outcomes this has achieved. ASC Support Plans identify what challenges or barriers each autistic person may experience in social communication and interaction. Plans also identify how each autistic person prefers to communicate and what approaches or tools should be employed to enable them to understand others and express themselves.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

During all observations staff communicated with students verbally. Staff differentiated their language when working with different students and in some cases staff reinforced verbal communication with visual prompts.

Within all observations students were able to communicate with staff verbally or through their individualised tools and devices. Students had access to individual prompts on their desks which enabled them to communicate with staff if they needed additional help or support. These included communication wallets and calm cards to support students to identify self-regulation activities.

Through observations staff facilitated opportunities for interaction and communication within lessons so that students could practise and develop social skills. During the assessment these included paired activities, peer marking and planned group work. Where best practice was observed, during year 7 form time, staff have introduced paired reading which gave year 7 students the opportunity to read and interact with year 11 students.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Strategies to promote independence identified by the service include; Visual timetables, clearly labelled and structured classrooms, timers, change boards, predictable routines, optional structuring of unstructured times, travel training, work experience and preparation for adulthood embedded into the curriculum.

All students have access to one week of work experience in year 11. Through the programme staff promote the development of independence and aim to empower students by raising/promoting their voice and giving them ownership of their own future. Employers are given key student documentation to enable them to understand the needs of the students. As a progression, when joining the sixth form, students reflect on their own levels of independence using the Individual Transition Plan. All students attend at least 1 day a week work experience, which may be an independent or a supported placement. During the assessment staff shared positive examples and feedback from the work placements.

The school are aspirational about the futures of the students and so preparation for adulthood outcomes are a focus from the year 9 annual reviews. The school have worked with the LA to adapt the annual documentation so that it reflects preparation for adulthood targets. The preparation for adulthood audit tool is used from year 9 to ensure the students' needs are being met through the curriculum.

Preparation for adulthood is a focus across the curriculum within school. The sixth form curriculum has been developed with long term preparation for adulthood as a focus using the Gatsby benchmarks. The carefully planned curriculum aims to empower students to be independent, build confidence and be aspirational about their futures. The curriculum also provides students with opportunities to consolidate and develop functional skills.

ASC Individual Support Plans identify approaches and tools which support students to carry out activities, transition, cope with changes and make choices. In interviews, staff gave clear examples of how they have adapted practice to support students gain independence.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Within all observations students could understand what they had to do now and next through a visual or written schedule. Schedules were seen to be differentiated across school depending on the need of the students. Some students also had individual whiteboards on which they recorded their own visual schedule. Where best practice was observed one student had their own now and next board which they had created based on their special interest so that they could further understand the structure of the lesson.

During all observations students were supported to do things for themselves rather than being reliant on staff and their prompting. Staff were seen to have high expectations of students in their independence. The structure within each classroom supports students to independently navigate the classroom to gather resources without a reliance on staff.

During all planned and unplanned observations students appeared confident to express their opinion and independently make decisions. Staff facilitated opportunities for students to work together in some observations so that they could further develop these skills. Best practice was observed in Maths where students took complete ownership of their own learning and self-assessment facilitated by the classroom teacher.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Sensory methods and approaches highlighted by the school include a low arousal environment, fidgets, ear defenders and workstations available in all classrooms, dark dens and breakout rooms available in some classrooms and movement breaks planned into lessons. Students also have access to sensory rooms, relaxation rooms, outside sensory equipment and a permanent sensory circuit.

The school have developed a sensory circuit room. The sensory circuit room contains a range of alerting, sorting and calming activities. Each student has an individual plan which has been developed alongside the sensory lead so that all staff can deliver a consistent sensory circuit.

The school also have an outside gym equipment, sensory rooms/spaces, chill out zones and dark tents which are located across school. These are available for students to access at times of crisis, dysregulation or as part of a planned proactive intervention. Staff are creative in their use of space and Ofsted commented that "Clare Mount is an Oasis of calm".

In interviews, staff gave examples of how they have supported autistic students in their sensory regulation and how they have supported students to avoid sensory overload. Staff shared a range of case studies which gave examples of the unique and differentiated activities available to some students which have been developed around their individual needs and preferences.

ASC Individual support plans identify challenges each autistic person may experience in regulating sensory experiences and the approaches and tools to support them to regulate. The ASC support plans separate these activities into sensory motivators, sensory distractors and sensory stressors.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

The school and the classrooms are low arousal, consistent and structured. Considerations have been made by staff to the structure and content of displays in classrooms and on corridors to ensure that they are low arousal, purposeful and conducive to learning. Classrooms are consistent in their approach and many include safe spaces, dark dens or sensory rooms.

During all observations students had access to a wide range of sensory tools and strategies including ear defenders, sensory boxes, adapted seating and adapted tables. Staff were seen prompting students to access sensory activities if they appeared to be dysregulated based on the information in their ASC Support Plan.

Where best practice was observed, in a large number of observations, students were observed independently accessing sensory activities which they appeared to find relaxing and enjoyable. Students used timers to independently manage the time they spent accessing a sensory activity. In discussions with a sixth form student it is clear that the school have helped the individual to understand and be confident about their own sensory needs.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Mental health and well-being is a focus of the school and the school highlight their main strategies and approaches as; emotional thermometers in all classrooms, emotional regulation sessions as part of form time/life skills sessions, sensory interventions, the Support Team and the schools pastoral system.

The school is working towards a "Mental Health in Schools Award" devised by Leeds Beckett University Carnegie School of Education. The process has allowed staff to reflect on and audit the mental health of the whole school and the strategies and approaches in place.

"My Personal Best", a fortnightly programme which has recently been introduced into the school, focuses on developing identified fundamental skills through the curriculum, assemblies and form times. The programme facilitates the development of key character skills to enable students to develop effective relationships and employability skills.

Within school there is an explicit referral system for staff which is monitored by the Support team and the Director of Personal Development and Well-being. The system allows support to be strategically planned. The Director of Personal Development and Well-being is training to be a Mental health first aid trainer with the long term aim of training all staff to be mental health first aiders to further develop consistencies and culture within the school.

The Support Team, made up of 4 members of non-teaching staff are available to students throughout the school day. The team's role is to break down barriers to education and support students to be ready to learn. The team work proactively and reactively to support students to access their lessons. The Support team meet the students at the gate each day so that they can address any issues or concerns which may have been identified by parents or have occurred the previous day. The Support team are based in the Oasis. The Oasis, a relaxing and calm space, is available to the students throughout the school day for relaxation and support.

Student documentation reviewed during the assessment shows an appreciation of the activities which each autistic person finds enjoyable, relaxing or provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose. Individual Support Plans also include approaches or activities to help maintain the well-being of each autistic person including, where appropriate, proactive and preventative strategies to avoid anxiety or distress and support emotional regulation. One page profiles also celebrate 'fantastic things about me', 'how best to support me' and 'what is important to me'.

In interviews with staff and through the introductory presentation, staff gave examples of how autistic people have been supported to achieve positive outcomes in terms of quality of life and life opportunities.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

The school has a calm, positive and supportive atmosphere and staff were observed using lots of praise and positive language to reinforce appropriate behaviour and celebrate success. Staff and older students act as positive role models for the younger students and the school has a real community feel.

During all observation students presented as feeling safe and calm. Staff appeared to be in tune with the needs of the students and worked proactively to support students to avoid anxiety, confusion or distress from occurring or escalating. Where best practice was observed, in a large number of observations, students identified their own triggers and independently accessed a safe space or their own identified self-regulation strategy.

Teachers and support staff are extremely positive and adopt a can-do approach when working with the students. Throughout all observations it was evident that students and staff have developed positive and trusting relationships. Staff differentiated tasks to match students' likes/interests and academic level so that students had the opportunity to experience success and achievement.

Although the 5 point scale was prominent and consistently displayed in each classroom there were some missed opportunities for this to be referenced by staff during observations. Staff should continue to be supported to embed the 5 point scale into practice across school and into the planning and delivery of lessons, breaks and unstructured times.

Consultation with Autistic People

Throughout the assessment Clare Mount students were positive about the school. Students are clearly proud to be "Clare Mount students" and were confident to approach the assessment team to discuss the school, ask questions or show off their work.

Student voice is collected as part of the schools ongoing monitoring. Student voice is gathered periodically within departments to reflect on the curriculum, and by the pastoral team to reflect on the running of the school. The school also have a student council, made up of representatives from each form, who meet each half term to discuss developments in the school. Previously the school council have introduced a tuck shop, introduced the option of a tie to the school uniform, adapted the school menu and been central to wide range of other developments in the school which were discussed during the assessment.

The school have recently been working closely with the Youth Sport Trust to develop ways to gather student voice. The school have created a range of resources to gather student voice to enable the school to adapt the PE curriculum and so address the disparity between boys and girls participation in PE. The school have created and hosted inclusive focus groups and created a range of visual supports which have been shared with other schools within the project. Information from the project has supported the redesign of the PE curriculum within school and provided support and a model for other schools nationally.

Clare Mount offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities through the week to further enhance and enrich the curriculum. Clubs all aim to provide opportunity and purpose for students to develop social skills and peer relationships. The 92 weekly clubs are constantly being reflected on by students who can suggest additions and developments through their school council representative

A weekly open evening is hosted in the community café at school. The evening is open to ex-students to access the school for additional support after leaving Clare Mount.

4 students met formally with the assessment team during the assessment. Students were overwhelmingly positive about their experience at the school. Students highlighted strengths as;

- "The school has calm places that you can go to"
- "The staff are supportive and have a good sense of humour"
- "The staff understand my needs"
- "Teachers understand you and can help you"
- "Amazing staff bend over backwards to help you"

When asked for developments the school could make students discussed;

- "A wider range of more challenging books in the school library"
- "A climbing frame on the school yard"

When asked how the school had helped them to understand autism, students commented that;

- "You can tell teachers understand autism"
- "Staff explain autism very well and see it as a strength"
- "Staff have supported me to be more positive about myself and understand my strengths"

Consultation with families of Autistic People

"Parents/carers are the most important person in your child's life and as such it is really important that we work together and support each other in making sure your child gets the very best education possible. Our door is always open to you, so please feel comfortable to get in touch with us with any concerns"

Parent training is hosted at the school and planned around feedback from parents. The school also host a weekly coffee morning for parents each Friday in the community cafe. The session provides parents with an opportunity to seek advice and support from the Support Team and other parents. During discussions with parents they highlighted the support from staff during the informal sessions as "enabling a collaborative approach between home and school"

6 parents met with members of the assessment team hosted in the schools community café. During the meeting parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school and the support they have received. Throughout the meeting parents shared positive stories about the support and guidance they have received from the school and the staff.

Parents highlighted positives as:

- "A collaborative approach between school and home"
- "Understanding staff who are supportive and knowledgeable"
- "Communication is easy. Staff are approachable and make you feel comfortable"
- "Staff understand my child's needs and have adapted timetables and class groups to enable him to engage in education"

- "The parent support group allows you to build relationships with other parents"
- "The transition into the school was a positive experience supported by the additional transition days and the opportunity to attend summer school"

When pushed to identify developments in the school parents were unable to identify how the school could further develop. The host of the parent support group discussed ways in which the school plan to further support parents through additional transition days, allowing new parents to meet current parents, and hosting a parent conference for all parents within the federation.

84 family members provided feedback to the assessment team by returning completed questionnaires. The full results are shown as an appendix to this report. 77 family members (92%) stated that the support their relative is given is always or mostly good. 77 family members (92 %) stated that staffs understanding is mostly or always good and 71 family members (85%) stated that advice given by the school and the way that they are kept informed was good or always good. 22 family members chose to leave a comment on the questionnaire, a selection of which are found below:

"My son's needs are extremely well catered for. The knowledgeable support my son receives from well trained staff has helped him develop, academically and socially, in a way mainstream school could never do."

"Excellent school. Has done so much for my child. Some staff have gone way over and above for my child and supported them as much as possible and built strong bonds. Can't thank them enough."

Involvement with the wider community

Clare Mount is part of a federation of special schools on the Wirral who work in partnership to support students. The two other schools in the partnership, Hayfield and Orrets Meadow, are both feeder schools for Clare Mount. "The partnership exists to improve educational outcomes for the young people attending each school. The formation of the federation is built on a history of successful and informal collaborative work". The federation has enabled joint training opportunities, sharing of expertise and improved the transition of students between the schools.

Free training sessions are regularly delivered to around 100 staff from schools across the Wirral. The weekly training sessions include 'ASC Awareness and Classroom Strategies', 'ASC and Challenging Behaviour', and 'Sensory Processing Difficulties'. During one of the sessions, which was attended by a member of the assessment team, staff had a clear understanding of the skills and challenges that may be experienced by autistic people and staff were creative in their approach to support and mentor other professionals to develop their practice and understanding. Staffs' feedback about the training was positive with staff stating that the training has supported them to "develop their practice". One staff member stated that "I think that all staff in my school would benefit from attending this training".

The Next steps event is hosted by the school and attended by local colleges and providers for parents and students to explore their next steps after leaving school. The

school invite students and parents from other local schools to the event so that they can explore their future.

The community café regularly opens to members of the public and offers alternative work experience opportunities for students in sixth form. The café is open to members of the public and is a "valuable resource" to local schools who use it as an environment for their children to practise and develop daily living skills and community engagement within a safe environment.

Extra-curricular clubs offer a wide a variety of opportunities for community engagement. This include social groups within the community and inviting in local primary schools in to take part in the "Community Sports Night". The school has shaped the development and delivery of sport across the authority by piloting a range of initiatives and schemes including "Activities Across Ages" and "Find Your Tribe". Both of these pilots of provided opportunities for students to engage with members of the community and increased their community participation. The school also host a community Botcha festival at school and facilitate a tea dance for a local care home.

The school have shaped the delivery of PE to autistic children nationally by working in collaboration with the Youth Sport Trust and the National Autistic Society to create "All About Autism, All About Me". The publication was launched nationally to all schools as a resource to support them to meet the needs of students with ASC in Sport and PE.

The school, through the outreach programme, mentor local schools to support them to reflect on and develop their practice. The objective of the outreach is to ensure high quality inclusive sport and PE is taught across all schools to meet the diverse needs of all students.

The school work in partnership with a wide range of provisions to support them to reflect and develop their practice. The school regularly share their good practice with the Local Authority, Chamber of Commerce, National Forums and National Boards. The school are working with the Local Authority and employers to develop a supported internship model which can be rolled out across the authority in 2021.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

The school has an overwhelmingly positive, calm and supportive atmosphere. Throughout observations relationships between staff and students were seen to be positive, respectful and trusting.

Students were clearly proud to be part of the school and were proud to share their achievements with the assessment team. Staff and older students are positive role models to the younger students and have high expectations of them and their behaviour.

There is a high quality programme of continuous professional development in place at Clare Mount which supports staff to have an in depth knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. The action research projects support staff to continually reflect and develop their practice.

The well planned and progressive curriculum ensures that students make academic, social and emotional progress. Spectrum steps ensures that learning is sequential and consistently delivered, assessed and reviewed across school.

Staff are flexible in their approach and are constantly reflecting on their classes to ensure that the curriculum and the groupings best meet the needs of the students.

What else the provision does well:

Students feel "accepted" at the school and throughout observations students were caring, kind and considerate towards each other. One student stated that "Staff and my friends have supported me to be more positive about myself and understand my strengths"

The multi-purpose community café, on site at Clare Mount, is a well-used positive resource. The café facilitates opportunities for community engagement as well as being used for breakfast club, community visits, family drop-in sessions and work experience.

There are a wide range of sensory activities on offer to students to access throughout the school day. Staff are creative in their approach to incorporate sensory spaces and activities into classrooms and the delivery of lessons.

Transitions into the service are bespoke to each individual. The enhanced transition in Year 6 and the primary model classes in Year 7 provides additional support to enable students to make a successful transition into the school.

The post 16 curriculum has a focus on developing independence and preparation for life beyond Clare Mount. The school effectively combine the preparation for adulthood outcomes and the Gatsby Benchmarks into the curriculum.

Students have access to a wide range of residential trips throughout their time at Clare Mount which all have a focus on being fun and increasing the cultural capital of students.

Preparation for Adulthood outcomes are embedded into the school curriculum from year 7 to support staff to focus on long term goals and outcomes when planning lessons. Work Experience is a positive experience for students and encourages them to be aspirational about their future.

The "My Personal Best" programme facilitates the development of key character skills to enable students to develop effective relationships and employability skills.

The work done with the Youth Sport Trust and the National Autistic Society developing "Strategies to make Physical Education and Sport Accessible for all" has supported schools nationally. The school are recognised as a "Lead Inclusion School" and a "Lead school for Health and Wellbeing" by the Youth Sport Trust.

The school are identified as a centre of excellence on the Wirral providing outreach, training and support to a wide range of provisions. The school have been recognised as a national centre of excellence making shortlists for national awards from the National Autistic Society (Most Inspirational Provision), Pearson National Teaching Awards (Making a difference) and the Youth Sports Trust (Outstanding School Award).

ASC Individual Support Plans are truly person centred documents which support staff to deliver consistent support. One Page Profiles and ASC Individual Support Plans give a real sense of the individual and their personality.

The school's 'Celebration Booklets' both celebrate success and provide motivation for students to engage in activities or events.

What the provision could develop further

Areas to consider:

Continue to support staff to embed the 5 point scale into practice across school and into the planning and delivery of lessons, breaks and unstructured times.

Continue to develop the supported employment programme, alongside the local authority, as a continuation of the work done in the Preparation for Adulthood curriculum.

Consider how the AET framework, due to be introduced to the school in the next academic year from feeder schools, will work alongside the current documentation and the Spectrum Steps.

Explore a tiered approach to student documentation so that teaching staff have access to the key information they need to support them to deliver the lesson, rather than all of the documentation which may be available to a form tutor.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEYS

Clare Mount Specialist Sports College FAP 24/02/2020

Feedback questionnaire on Clare Mount Specialist Sports College to be completed before 24/02/2020

The support my relative is given is...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		1.19%	1
2	ok, but could be better		7.14%	6
3	mostly good		23.81%	20
4	always good		67.86%	57
			answered	84
			skipped	0

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		8.33%	7
3	mostly good		17.86%	15
4	always good		73.81%	62
			answered	84
			skipped	0

The way I am kept informed and asked my views about how my relative is supported is...

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		4.76%	4
2	ok, but could be better		10.71%	9
3	mostly good		25.00%	21
4	always good		59.52%	50
			answered	84
			skipped	0

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

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	poor		4.76%	4
2	ok, but could be better		10.71%	9
3	mostly good		26.19%	22
4	always good		58.33%	49
			answered	84
			skipped	0

Comments: Please note you are not required to comment below, if you do so they may be quoted in the final report. Our questionnaires are anonymous and Autism Accreditation cannot be held responsible for comments which identify any individual. (22)

1	21/01/2020 17:31 PM ID: 134356183	Best decision I ever made
2	21/01/2020 17:33 PM ID: 134356319	My child has flourished in himself & excelled within school after moving from one secondary SEN school to this one (Clare Mount). All the staff are fantastic.
3	21/01/2020 17:35 PM ID: 134356424	The support and help for our Grandson has been excellent which is helping him in his life skills

The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...			Response Percent	Response Total
4	21/01/2020 17:40 PM ID: 134356682	My only criticism would be that there is sometimes short notice of events/things happening in school which makes it hard to prepare my child for.		
5	21/01/2020 17:42 PM ID: 134356750	The school is extremely good but in some areas there could be an improvement		
6	21/01/2020 17:49 PM ID: 134357090	As I am divorced from my child's mother I find it difficult to get any feed back as not on good terms! I would like to be more involved in the school activities but unfortunately I have been told that it must be ran by my child's mother first which will never go in my favour. There should be rights for fathers too		
7	21/01/2020 17:53 PM ID: 134357271	My son is a complex case and they have done all that they can to understand and support him through his journey to feel safe, attend school and improve communication. I can't Thank them enough		
8	21/01/2020 18:05 PM ID: 134357856	Very happy with Claremount School.		
9	21/01/2020 18:07 PM ID: 134357930	My sons transition into Claremount has been seamless. He is very happy in his class and within the school. His teacher understands his reactions and works with him to find a solution to enable him to engage and interact. One example was the school trip when students would be taking a train. His teacher took time to understand why he was refusing to go (crowds, hustle and bustle) and put a plan in place for him and a couple of other children to travel in the school bus.		
10	21/01/2020 18:11 PM ID: 134358108	All the staff at Claremont school do a fantastic job teaching the children and very supportive in every way possible threw good days and challaging days when the children are struglerling. I couldn't ask for a better school for my child.		
11	21/01/2020 18:16 PM ID: 134358382	6th form staff are brilliant & helpful		
12	21/01/2020 18:17 PM ID: 134358395	A fantastic school for children with autism. Children's individuals needs are catered for and staff are caring and enthusiastic.		
13	21/01/2020 18:17 PM ID: 134358427	My son's needs are extremely well catered for. The knowledgeable support my son receives from well trained staff has helped him develop, academically and socially, in a way mainstream school could never do.		
14	21/01/2020 18:19 PM ID: 134358503	One parent's evening in a year is not sufficient for students with additional learning needs. With the exception of mathematics, no homework is set, so different abilities and a desire to do better is not encouraged on an individual basis. Some core subjects, such as English have no homework set, no feedback on progress and no merits written in the diary. This isn't good enough for additional needs students. However, I feel most of the staff are knowledgeable around Autism and I feel that largely the school is a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for my child. Mr Vasey in particular offers superb pastoral support as do other key teachers within the school. The administration office and learning mentors are very		

The advice I get from the service on how to help my relative is...			Response Percent	Response Total
		supportive and understanding of the difficulties that autism can present and the challenges that parents face. More parent/school collaboration is required to best support individual student needs.		
15	21/01/2020 18:24 PM ID: 134358722	My Child has made amazing progress both academically and personally at this amazing school, I feel confident that with the continued support from Claremount my child has a future I could never have imagined for them a few years ago.		
16	21/01/2020 19:51 PM ID: 134362352	I recommend this school, it has helped my daughter so much being here, I trust that the teachers genuinely care about the students both academically and emotionally. This school has helped to boost my child's confidence, she has made friends even!! I could not be happier		
17	21/01/2020 20:09 PM ID: 134363042	We owe Claremont massive amounts off credits for helping our Son so much from yr7 the moment he started were he continued to progress,they always had time when ever he needed it nothing was too much trouble. He is now thriving and we couldn't be happier		
18	21/01/2020 22:27 PM ID: 134367201	A truly fantastic school in every aspect.		
19	22/01/2020 12:57 PM ID: 134396619	Terrific school, terrific staff and great ethos. I have two very different children at this school each with different needs. This school manages very effectively and efficiently to meet them both. There is no one size fits all here. Maintaining great community spirit each child is nurtured and taught whilst meeting their needs as much as possible as an individual. With understanding and compassionate staff this provides them with the best possible educational experience.		
20	22/01/2020 18:24 PM ID: 134424928	Excellent school. Has done so much for my child. Some staff have gone way over and above for my child and supported them as much as possible and built strong bonds. Can't thank them enough. Sometimes communication between staff could be better as this is very important when dealing with children with such complex needs but overall it's an excellent school that is willing to do what it takes for the kids. In my experience anyway		
21	23/01/2020 17:15 PM ID: 134482942	my child is supported well in school ,		
22	23/01/2020 17:21 PM ID: 134483302	This is an excellent environment for my child. His needs are fully met and when he faces his challenges he is supported appropriately and successfully. Staff keep me fully informed and always work in partnership.		

APPENDIX 2: COMMENTS FROM THE PROVISION

APPENDIX 3: ADVANCED APPLICATION FORM
APPLICATION FORM FOR ADVANCED STATUS

Name of registration:	Clare Mount Specialist Sports College
Date when provision was last accredited;	March 2017
Contact person:	Tracy Rowland
Adviser:	Jonny Knowles

Comments made by the provision should be factual and if necessary can be evidenced.

Criteria 1: Does assessment of the provision confirm that there are many considerable areas of strength within the service in relationship to the Autism Accreditation Standards with no or minor actions for development? *This will be addressed within the assessment report and does not require further comment.*

Criteria 2: Is the service considered to have outstanding features in meeting statutory requirements related to outcomes for autistic people?

Plases provide a website link to the relevant reports and any additional comments that might be helpful in interpreting the reports. If the service is not accessed by a statutory body please write n/a

Our latest OFSTED report (2016) with Outstanding rating is available below:
<https://www.claremountssc.co.uk/policies-documents/>

Criteria 3: Is a high-quality programme of continuous Professional Development in place.

Does it ensure that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches?

Please provide a description of the professional development programme specific to autism (max 250 words)

All CPD sessions at Clare Mount are targeted at meeting the needs of students with ASC, and often involve adapting generic school training to make it autism specific. These sessions included: Safeguarding; Epilepsy; Rewards v Sensory Needs; Positive Behaviour Strategies; Typicality in T&L (which includes all the strategies to engage students with ASC such as visual schedules); How to be a Rights Respecting School; Mental Health & Well-being in Adolescence; Use of IEPs, Support Plans and CATs data to plan lessons around strengths & motivators and reduce negative impact of weaknesses & distractors; and De-escalation Training.

Autism Specific training has included attendees at the NAS conference, and 2 Julia Dyer courses – Making Sense of Behaviour and ASC sensory interventions and circuits. All of the new information gained from attendance at these courses was cascaded to all staff when the attendees returned to school.

Clare Mount hold 6 Annual training sessions in twilight INSET which involved attendees from schools across the Wirral, as well as teachers and TAs from our own school. This is part of Annual Induction training which has expanded as part of our Outreach Offer across the LA. Sessions included ASC and Classroom Strategies, ASC and Challenging Behaviour, and Sensory Integration.

In January 2020 a whole INSET day is devoted to Alex Lowery, a young man with Autism, discussing his perspective and experiences on topics including Autism Myths, Sensory Processing, Anxiety, and Mental Health. It is crucial to hear the views of People who live with ASC in order to best meet the needs of the young people we work with at Clare Mount.

Criteria 4: Is feedback from autistic people and their circle of support excellent showing that the service is held in very high esteem and its work is greatly valued? *This will be primarily based on surveys carried out by Autism Accreditation as part of the assessment process.*

Please provide any further evidence of feedback from autistic people or their families e.g. results of surveys etc. (max 250 words)

School have a wealth of excellent feedback from parents and carers as evidence of the value placed on the provision. This is collected at parents evenings and welcome evenings, and is also shown in feedback from emails, letters and cards sent to school following events and when students leave. There are evidence files in school with examples of how Clare Mount is viewed by both parents and carers, and in the community.

Some examples since September are shown below:

- Could not have asked for a better school. My son has made huge strides forward academically and emotionally (Yr11)
- So pleased with Reeve's progress I highly recommend this school as it's changed our lives as a family. Thank you. (6th form)
- Thank you for the work done to transition my child from his old school, the enhancements that were put into place and the effort made by the staff have been nothing short of fabulous! (Y7)

Criteria 5: Is the service established as a centre of excellence in the field of autism, sharing its expertise through quality consultation and training as well as actively contributing to research into autism and innovations in practice?

Please provide any further evidence. (max 500 words)

Clare Mount is established as a centre of expertise and excellence in the LA and nationally. We have a high demand for our outreach service, which comprises Inclusive PE and Sport to schools on Wirral, consultations for individual students with ASC in primary and secondary settings, INSET training for staff in other schools, and Twilight Training sessions termly in Clare Mount for all schools in Wirral (these sessions attract over 100 attendees from primary and secondary settings across Wirral, and feedback is consistently outstanding. Evidence file of feedback is available in school).

Clare Mount has, for the last 8 years, been the Youth Sport Trust Lead School for Inclusion for Merseyside; part of a national network of lead practitioners aiming to improve the landscape for young people with ASC and other factors affecting inclusion in PE, sport and physical activity. We are also a Lead School for Health and Well-Being and a founder school of the North West 'Healthy Futures' Network. Over the course of the last 12 months K Byrne, Clare Mount's Director of Personal Development and wellbeing and J White, Clare Mount PE Teacher and YT Development Coach for Inclusion have delivered the following CPD for professionals across the education sector:

- July 2019: Physical Activity Interventions to Improve Mental Health: Association for Physical Education (AFPE) National Conference: Burton on Trent
- November 2019: 'My Personal Best.' Character Education in Special Schools: Youth Sport Trust Lead Schools Conference: Coventry
- September 2018 - December 2019: Inclusive Physical Education: Half-Day course delivered to over 400 professionals across the north west of England.
- October 2018: Improving Social, Emotional and Mental Health through Physical Education: Wirral PE Conference: Birkenhead
- September 2018 - Dec 2019: 18 half-day Development Coaching sessions completed with lead practitioners from 12 north west schools
- October 2018-March 2019: Healthy Futures Network Conferences: University of Chester, Warrington

The over-arching aim of each of the above has been to improve access to high quality PE, sport and physical activity for young people with ASC and other special educational needs and disabilities. Clare Mount has an outstanding reputation nationally for delivering high quality PE and for helping other organisations to improve inclusive practice.

Find Your Tribe is a project aimed at supporting female students with Autism at both Clare Mount and another local secondary mainstream school to access physical education, school sport, and physical activity. Using inclusive focus groups based on the principles of best autism practice, this project has delivered opportunities in water sports, UV dodgeball, football and combat sports for female students, based on student voice. Student voice is also being used to shape the PE curriculum in both these schools, led by Clare Mount across both settings.

For members of staff from Clare Mount have also been commissioned by the NAS and Youth Sports Trust to create a resource supporting Autism and Sport, which has been published and rolled out nationally with excellent feedback from schools. The link below will take you to the resource:

<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/all-about-autism-all-about-me>

At the last Accreditation Review the school were awarded a Commendation for the Action Research which staff carry out each year focussing on an individual student or small group and implementing a new and often creative intervention to manage an area of need identified for them. These are recorded on a pro-forma which shows Intention, Implementation and Impact for each study, and these are shared amongst all staff to ensure practice continues to be innovative across the school.

Criteria 6: Are assessments informed by specialist expertise and grounded in a robust understanding of the nature of autism?

Is assessment data collated and presented in a range of formats so that it is accessible and of practical value to staff who have different levels of contact with the autistic person, as well as the autistic person and their circle of support?

Please provide any further evidence (max 500 words)

Assessment of students in Clare Mount is collated from a wide variety of professional expertise, both within school and from partner professionals. Students arrive with an EHCP which contains outcomes derived from their primary school setting and includes Educational Psychology cognitive profiles; Health Care professionals including Speech and Language therapy, CAMHS, Paediatricians, specialist health teams such as Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Epilepsy and ADHD nurse teams; Social Care teams, including CWD and CLA specialists; Charity sector organisations such as Autism Together and Caritas; and, of course, families and carers of the students themselves. This expert knowledge is built on as students are baselined by subject specialists in school, CAT testing, sensory assessments in house, and pastoral lead staff who know students very closely.

Academic progress is continually assessed through Spectrum Steps evaluations across all subjects. This system has been developed as a visual representation of progress in each subject, especially to address the understanding of students with ASC so they are aware of what they have achieved and what their next target needs to be. Social Communication skills are taught discretely in form time, as are emotional well-being lessons, and generalised across the whole of school life. These are taught in conjunction with advice from SALT as part of our aim to provide a 'Total Communication' environment for all our learners. Progress is assessed qualitatively and reviewed in Individual Support Plans, which include accurate and regularly updated information on presentation across all areas of need within the autism spectrum. Pastoral staff meet regularly in year groups to target individual students and plan for interventions, and the Clare Mount Support Team are integrated into all this work, with their expert knowledge of support available from other agencies when assessment warrants external input.

Criteria 7: Does the service provide highly creative and very personalised support based on a thorough and up-to-date understanding of how each autistic person communicates and socially interacts; their independent living skills and the impact of external factors including sensory input on their emotions and well-being? *This will be primarily based on observations of practice carried out by Autism Accreditation as part of the assessment process.*

Please provide any further evidence (max 250 words)

Each student has a personalised Support Plan, which outlines their specific strengths and needs, and strategies used to support them. The plan has sections for Special Interests and Motivators, Dislikes and Anxiety Triggers, Sensory Motivators / Distractors and Stressors. It also has a 4 part section in which priorities for support are identified and strategies detailed; Communication, Independence, Sensory and Emotional. These plans are reviewed regularly, and are used to feed into the EHCP at Annual Review.

Each student has a One Page Profile, which is compiled by staff who know them well and the student, and parents / carers are invited to contribute through the Annual Review meetings. The document highlights 'fantastic things' about the individual, what is important to them, and how to best support them.

Each year group complete a PCP booklet in form time which is completed with individual information and targets, based on form time discussion sessions, enabling students to develop a thorough understanding of their own strengths and development areas and reflect on their progress.

Both the Support Plans and One Page Profiles are available to all staff on the school's internal information system and are used to plan lessons and activities, support the individual during lessons and unstructured times, and communicate with parents and carers to ensure a partnership approach is at the core of our provision.

Criteria 8: Has the service collated an impressive range of qualitative and quantitative data which provides compelling evidence of the considerable positive impact it has had (both in the short-term and in the long-term) on the lives of autistic people? Can it demonstrate that it is truly inspirational in what it is able to achieve?

Please provide any further evidence (max 1000 words)

Outcomes for students at the end of KS4 are outstanding. Departmental SEFs are available to show the progress students make from Y7 to Y11, which illustrates the inspirational affect the school has on students' lives. In 2019 61% of Y11 students achieved 5 GCSEs (or equivalent); 61% of students achieved English GCSE and 54% Maths. In addition to this; there was 100% pass rate in Art & Design, 3D Design and Media GCSE Option groups, six students achieved a Hospitality & Catering Vocational Level 1 or Level 2, five students achieved Performing Arts BTEC Level 1, twenty students achieved Silver D of E and five more achieved Bronze, six students achieved Sports Leaders qualifications, and every student achieved a Personal, Social & Health Education ASDAN Award. This academic portfolio enables students to move on to college and work with the best possible aspirations to achieve what they are truly capable of.

Destination outcomes for students leaving Clare Mount are exceptional and shows evidence of the considerable positive impact on students and the preparation which goes in to building independence skills in KS4 and 5:

23 students left 6th form last year (July 2019) and 100% of them secured a college placement. Courses include Prep for Life, ICT, Art Childcare, Health and Social care, Sport, Travel and Tourism, Animal Care, and one student has enrolled on a Supported Internship at 'Geek Retreat'. All students still in their placement at end of December term.

11 students left at the end of Y11 in 2019 and 100% secured a college placement in one of the following; Construction, Engineering, Motor Vehicle, Music, Prep for Life and Sport. 4 students have gone to a college placement out of borough and are successfully travelling independently to study Childcare, Animal Care and Horticulture in North Wales or Cheshire.

Preparing students for life after Clare Mount includes a considerable focus on Work Experience to generalise the skills taught in school.

All Y11 students undertake a week of Work Experience in January, and the following experiences are booked in for this years' students: British Red Cross Shop, Bowling Alley, Hair Salon, Farm, Theatre, Primary Schools, Retail, Garages, Library, Dog Groomers, Day Centre, Hotel, Cinema, Gardening, Bike shop.

6th form are constantly striving to develop their curriculum to offer the most dynamic education to their young adults. We have developed strong links with local employers through Wirral Chamber of Commerce and our well established Work Experience programme, which students attend one day a week as part of their preparation for transition and independence building. The variety of experiences this year's group are getting includes the following: Catering, Hair Salon, Day Care settings, Charity Shop, Retail, Sport, Primary Schools, Hospital, Cinema, Riding School and Farm. Students leave with confidence and high levels of employability. To strengthen this further, we are the first secondary school in Wirral to offer a Supported Internship programme starting in September 2020.

Activity Across Ages is an intergenerational project based around the power of sport and physical activity to change lives, both young and old. Clare Mount have shaped

this social action project from the Youth Sports Trust as an employability and inclusion project for our KS4 and KS5 students. Students delivered TopSportsability sessions in Care Home settings, leading to one student securing a placement at one of the settings. We have also made bids to Government to support us in becoming an Active Age Hub.

Clare Mount has responded to the ever diversifying needs of the students by establishing a primary base for students with ASC but with their main presentation as SEMH. These students have been difficult to place in other settings and the objective is to decrease the presentation of challenging behaviours by meeting ASC needs in a small, structured, primary model class with high staff ratio. This provision has now extended to 2 classrooms and caters for a total of 10 students currently. 3 students have already transitioned out into the main body of the school and are now fully integrated. These students have seen a decrease in challenging behaviours since joining the base, and incidents have decreased in frequency and duration. Such an impact has been made by removing the barriers to learning by specialised staff in these classrooms, that these students are now able to have real and achievable aspirations for adult life.

In September 2018 Clare Mount established a provision – Malala Base - for highly anxious ASC students who were not attending their school placements in other settings in Wirral. The aim was to improve the students' mental health and well-being and enable them to attend school, hopefully transitioning eventually into the main body of the school. All of these students have succeeded and all but one have attendance this year of over 90% (1 at 85%), and one has 100%. This provision has had an inspirational impact on the lives of these students and their families, and the outcomes for the emotional well-being of these students is outstanding.

3 other students have transitioned from mainstream settings into Clare Mount, after being non-attenders, and have been subject to very personalised, enhanced transition plans to enable them to attend. One student started with us in September and his attendance for the first month was only 2.5%. In October and November this increased to 23.1% and 41.4% respectively, and in December it now stands at 42.5%, with the student attending every morning. A recent meeting with parents and his CAMHS workers celebrated this amazing progress which no professionals expected to see so quickly due to his acute anxiety and attachment issues. Case studies for this student and others are available in school to illustrate the impact of Clare Mount on these very vulnerable young people.

A very recent example of the outstanding positive impact Clare Mount has on the lives of autistic people and their families can be seen at the Annual Shakespeare Festival in October. 17 students from Y10,11, and 6th form, performed to an audience of 500 at a professional theatre. Feedback was tremendous and included the following from the event organisers:

'It was unexpected, it was powerful and it was the perfect way to finish the show that evening. The whole audience went out talking about the issues affecting young people in the UK today - proving the show to be an absolute success. Thank you so much for bringing this show to the Floral Pavilion - it was a daring and well produced piece of performance that was a complete privilege to watch. Performing Shakespeare's words on a professional stage takes bravery, resilience, and creativity. You should be immensely proud of what you and your teachers have achieved.'

Advisor Comments: (These are optional and should only include additional information not already included in the assessment report)

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Further areas to work upon: (Accreditation use only)

Adviser Comments:

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