



Wombwell Park Street Primary School

Doing our bit to raise awareness of Autism!

Wombwell Park Street Primary School's ethos is very much centred upon inclusion of all children. We firmly believe that it teaches children strong and important messages about including, valuing and respecting everyone, no matter their ability, age, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, beliefs, values, religion or disability. Understanding the need for equality is at the heart of the school and taught through a lot of what we do. Autism is a disability which will affect many of you, whether it be yourselves, friends and possibly your children who attend our school. It therefore made sense to celebrate such a day, by wearing silly socks, to raise awareness and understanding amongst our school community. We provide this handout to help raise awareness, understanding and respect for children and adults with Autism. We hope it helps you and those living with Autism in some small way 😊

What is Autism?

Autism is a type of disability, which presents itself in many different ways. There are many needs which come under the umbrella of 'Autism Spectrum Disorder' or ASD. You cannot always tell that someone has Autism, but there are many of us who have it – approximately 1 in 100 of us do. Autism is a lifelong developmental disability and there is no cure. However, there are lots of ways in which the person, their family and their friends can support each other and make the diagnosis more manageable for everyone. Some people with Autism are able to live autonomous lives, whereas others need a considerable amount of support, possibly in specialist residential care. People with Autism have said that:

'The world to them is a mass of people, places and events which they struggle to make sense of, which can cause them considerable stress and anxiety'

What might cause Autism?

No one really knows why children and adults have Autism – but it is definitely NOT because of bad parenting, far from it! Recent studies show that more than one person in a family may have it; Autism can be genetic and pass from parent to child, but not in every case.

What do people with Autism find difficult? The 'invisible' disability...

Social communication; social interaction; social imagination

People with Autism can find it quite difficult to meet new people and form new friendships, largely because they often find it difficult to understand what other people think and feel. As a consequence of this, they equally find it tricky to tell people what they need and how they feel. As well as this, some people may find co-ordination difficult, making it hard to use everyday objects eg scissors. People with Autism can find some things difficult, but equally, might excel in certain subjects or aspects of life (especially when someone models this to them)! It is important that we celebrate these things! Their ability to concentrate on one thing at a time will help this a lot. Sometimes, people with Autism may have other difficulties too eg Dyslexia or Dyspraxia etc, but certainly not always. People with Autism see their world in a different way to others and the rest of us have a responsibility to help them manage their thoughts and feelings.

How might Autistic people behave? Quite often people with Autism may:

- not speak and use sign language or other methods of communication OR speak a lot (or have a literal interpretation and understanding of language)
- not understand the words which others use
- not understand the feelings of others (and not be able to express their own feelings)
- only talk about their 'favourite thing' or play their 'favourite game' or have obsessive behaviours
- find it hard to take part in activities, games and sports, which others would eagerly
- find certain things difficult (learning disabilities)
- find gestures, facial expressions, or tone of voices tricky to read
- not understand sarcasm or jokes

'For people with autistic spectrum disorders, 'body language' can appear just as foreign as if people were speaking ancient Greek'

Do sensory issues matter?

Sometimes, people who suffer from sensory issues regarding sound, sight, touch, taste and smell, may have Autistic tendencies and behaviours as mentioned above, but equally they may not! Eg some people who struggle with bright lights or loud noises may be Autistic, but some may not. Their sensory issues may be intensified (hypersensitivity) or under sensitive (hyposensitivity). If parents/ carers suspect their children suffer from such tendencies, a sensory assessment may be advisable with such agencies as Children's Occupational Therapy, to allow suitable strategies to be implemented. People with Autism may love routines as the world around them can often be unpredictable

Getting a diagnosis:

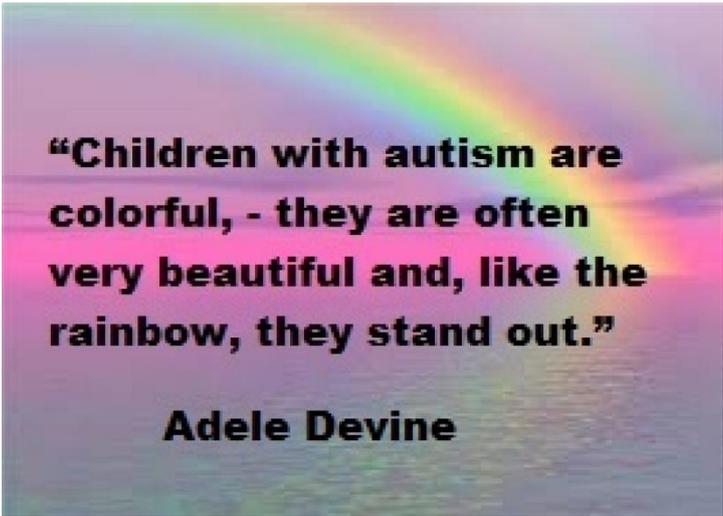
Normally a team of professionals meet to discuss each case and decide on a diagnosis, which should ultimately help individuals and families by making them more aware of services which could help recommend support, activities and routine in everyday life.

Who can help?

There are a number of agencies who could help post diagnosis. These include:

- Schools (the Leadership team, Mrs Sian Vaughton and Mrs Carol Hitchens at Park Street)
- Community Paediatrics (Post Diagnosis Workshops)
- Learning Disability Nurses
- Short Breaks
- BESST (Barnsley Education Specialist Support Team)
- The National Autistic Society (online and Facebook) and Early Bird courses
- CAMHS (Child & Adult Mental Health Services)
- Everyone...if only people took the time to research, learn and act accordingly, we could make the lives of ASD people very different and much more manageable. Please think carefully about the following quote and try not to JUDGE people and families...

* Always
* Unique
* Totally
* Intelligent
* Sometimes
* Mysterious



"Children with autism are colorful, - they are often very beautiful and, like the rainbow, they stand out."

Adele Devine

With love, Wombwell Park Street Primary School TEAM x