



Supporting Neurodiversity at Aspire School

There is no 'right' way of thinking – everyone's brain is different. Children with Autism or ADHD are sometimes called 'Neurodiverse'

Here are some of the things we do, and don't do at Aspire, to support our pupils and celebrate Neurodiversity.

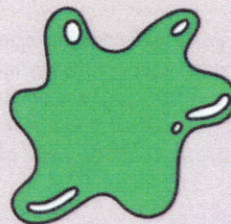
Things We Do



Sensory and Messy Play

These activities support regulation and engagement.

Children might come home with paint, glitter, mud or slime on their clothes.



Prioritise wellbeing, and Emotional Regulation

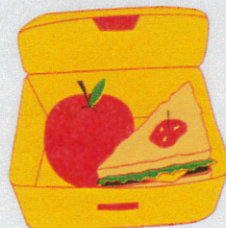
We all need to be regulated to engage in tasks. Sometimes, more of the day will be spent learning regulation skills, than completing academic learning.



Give Pupils Options in Their Routines

Neurodiverse children can find loud or busy environments overwhelming and become dysregulated. We encourage children to share when they are finding something difficult, and we find ways to support them

For example, your child might eat lunch in their classroom, or in another space that they are comfortable in.



Focus on Life Skills

We develop skills our pupils will need for their whole lives. This could be toileting, communication skills, understanding and regulating their feelings, or developing independence e.g. telling the time or asking for help.

These skills are really important to our pupils. Your child's progress will be measured in lots of areas, not just reading, writing and maths.



Make sure pupils are comfortable

Some children can find the feel of wearing particular clothes or shoes really uncomfortable, or even painful.

Some children find it easier to swap parts of the school uniform for something more comfortable e.g. jogging bottoms or trainers, or take their shoes off completely



Communicate in Different Ways

Not everyone communicates verbally – we use a Total Communication' approach and value what everyone has to say, no matter how they say it. *Your child might use symbols, Makaton signs or spoken language.*



Learn in Different ways

Pupils all learn in their own way, at their own speed. Sitting still and listening can be very dysregulating for our children and is not the expectation in many of our classrooms.

We don't expect our pupils to sit still during lessons. Children experience a whole range of learning experiences, that meet their learning styles.



Things We Don't Do



Offer 1:1 For every child

Aspire offers small class groups with a high ratio of adults. Most of our pupils are able to engage with learning without additional adult support

Your child will work with a team of core adults in their class room



Expect every child to complete homework

For some children, asking them to do extra work at home, leads to frustration and anxiety, and we believe that families should have time together. For some of our children, focussing and concentrating at school, can be really tiring.

You will not be given homework by your class teacher, unless you specifically ask for some, and it is relevant to your child's learning.



'Cure' Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is a lifelong difference. Trying to change the way your brain works, to be more 'typical' can cause long term mental health problems.

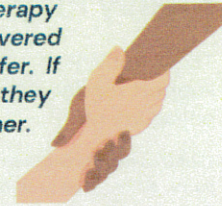


We support children to understand and celebrate their differences, and advocate for what they need to succeed.

Give Everyone the Same Supports

All pupils at Aspire are different, and they need different supports to be able to achieve. We get to know our children and we can usually offer them the right supports if and when they are needed e.g. Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Play Therapy, Sensory Supports,

Not everyone will receive specialist therapy or additional support, because it is delivered in the classroom as part of our Core Offer. If you feel your child is not getting what they need, please talk to your class teacher.



Teach Typical Social Skills

Teaching 'neuro-typical' social skills to neuro diverse people can lead to masking, and poor mental health.

We aim to teach self-advocacy, self-regulation and perspective taking, where children are ready to learn these skills. We also give lots of opportunities for socialising with other children who share similar interests.



Expect Neurotypical Play

Everyone plays in their own way, and for neurodiverse children, this may look different to what is expected. We encourage and value all types of play.

We do not measure children's progress against 'typical' developmental norms. Instead we have a range of ways to track progress.



Useful links and websites for information and support



<https://www.adhdsheppey.com>



<https://www.meadowfield.kent.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/Parent-Carer-Brochure-2023-2024.pdf>

<https://www.meadowfield.kent.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/MIDAS-Course-Blank-Booking-Form-PARENT.pdf>

<https://www.autismapprentice.co.uk/>

<https://attentionautism.co.uk/professional-online-training/>

<https://salusgroup.org.uk/>

<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>

<https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>

<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/>

<https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-kent-children-young-peoples-mental-health>

Please use the links above to access a range of support organisations for ASD, ADHD, support with sleep hygiene and self referral to children's and young adults mental health services.