



Autism
Education
Trust

Schools

Standards Framework

This framework can be used by
leaders as a tool that enables them
to enhance and embed good autism
practice across their school



Funded by



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Introduction to the AET School Standards

The Autism Education Trust (AET) School Standards are a whole-school framework for leaders to enhance and embed inclusive practice and to improve outcomes for autistic pupils. They cover the continuum of provision (mainstream, resource base, special or specialist school setting) and support schools to reflect, plan, and implement school improvement processes.

These standards support leaders to meet special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy and legal requirements and their equality duties whilst complying with the Education Inspection Framework (2019) and the Teacher Standards (2011). They also align with the [Head Teacher Standards \(2020\)](#).

By using the AET School Standards, leaders and leadership teams can:

- Identify priority areas to work on.
- Create an action plan to improve school-wide practices.
- Implement reasonable adjustments for autistic pupils.
- Improve the engagement, retention, and academic achievement of autistic pupils.
- Monitor practice and provide evidence of embedding good autism practice.



Why is it important to have specific standards for autistic pupils?

Autistic pupils often face significant barriers to learning within the educational environment. These can be overcome by ensuring we create supportive teaching environments that are structured, consistent, and respectful of differences. As such, the AET School Standards support school staff to address the specific barriers to learning experienced by autistic pupils. The standards provide pointers to teaching approaches, methods, and resources to use in educational provision and practice to enhance the school experience for this group of learners.

The environment that autistic pupils require is one that should be saturated in high-quality teaching. High-quality teaching and inclusive teaching are not mutually exclusive and we cannot have one without the other.

For autistic pupils, the following need to be taken into account:

- Three key areas of difference in autism influence the way in which autistic pupils learn and experience their educational settings. Knowledge about autism and these areas of difference is crucial for understanding autistic pupils. Staff need to take into account differences in:
 - Social understanding and communication.
 - Flexibility, information processing, and understanding.
 - Sensory processing and integration.

- Autistic pupils often have uneven or spiky development, and each autistic pupil will have their own unique profile. For example, pupils can have relative strengths and needs in areas such as verbal or visual processing. They can also have relative strengths and challenges in academic subject areas or study skills.
- Autistic pupils often have additional co-occurring conditions and differences alongside a diagnosis of autism. As with all pupils, co-occurring conditions and differences need to be considered in educational planning.

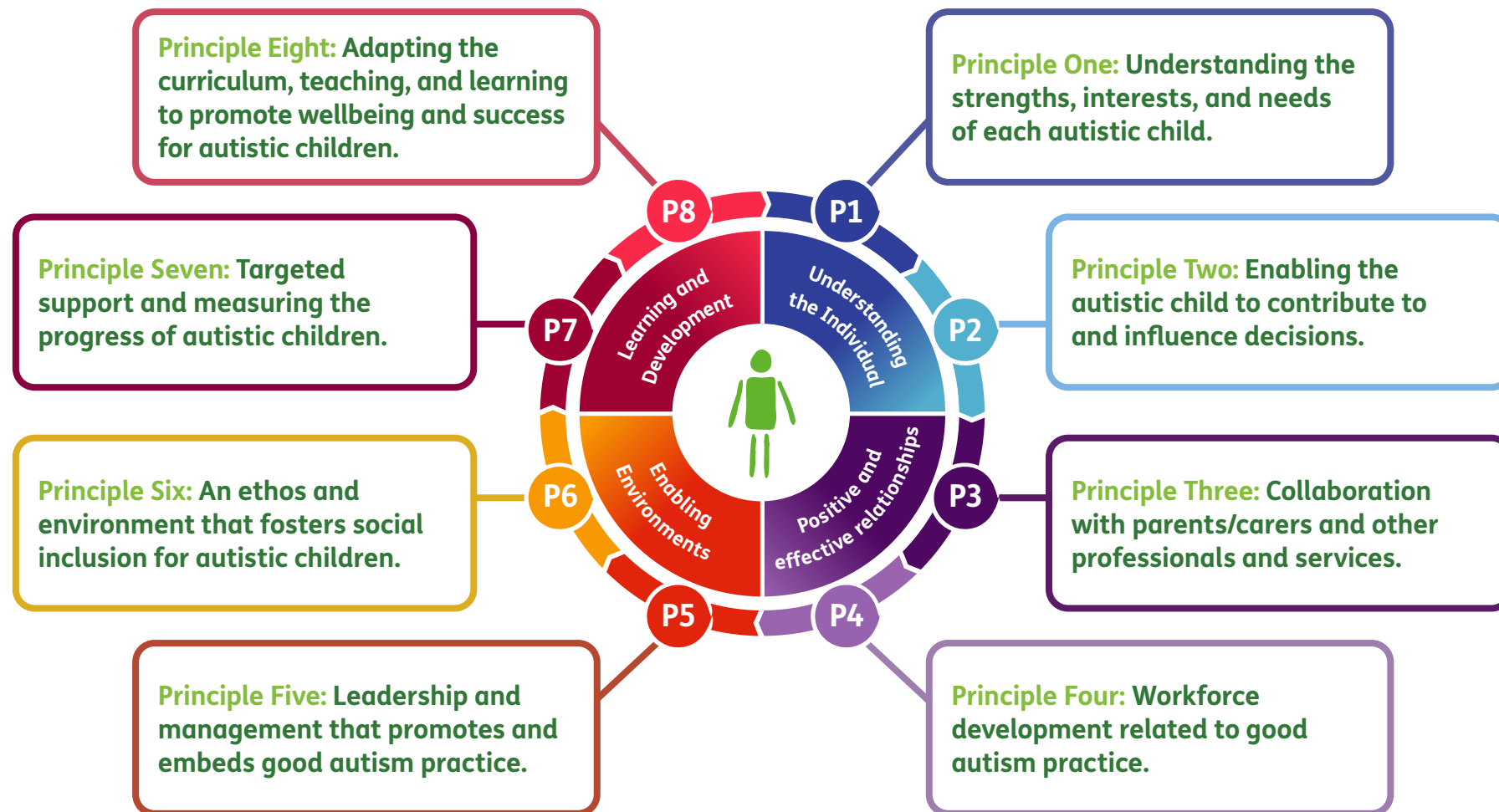
Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice

The AET School Standards are structured around eight key principles that provide the framework for the development of whole-school approaches (ages 5–16) to enhancing provision for autistic pupils and their families. For each principle, there are two standards.

These principles are embedded within the AET's key themes of 'Understanding the Individual', 'Positive and effective relationships', 'Enabling Environments', and 'Learning and Development'. The eight principles have emerged from an examination of the current evidence from research and practice, as well as key policies and the perspectives and insights of autistic individuals (Guldberg et al., 2019). The reports outlining this work are available for free on the [Autism Education Trust](#) website. They consist of two reports, the Good autism practice: full report, and a Practitioner guide to good autism practice in education.

The AET Eight GAP Principles

This is how the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are embedded in the four themes.



The AET Inclusion Promises

The eight GAP principles are also distilled into eight Inclusion Promises developed by the Autistic Young Experts panel. The panel created these promises so that the GAP principles were more accessible for autistic pupils.

We promise to:

1 Understand what you are good at, what you like doing, and when you might need help.

2 Listen to and act upon your ideas about how we can help you if you need it.

3 Listen to and work with the people who know you best and who you trust.

4 Make sure we are always progressing towards your goals and aspirations.

5 Make sure all staff know the best way to support you, both in and out of lessons.

6 Help you to get involved and be included in the activities you wish to participate in.

7 Work together to set achievable goals that are important to you, and that help you see how well you are doing.

8 Help you to feel safe, secure, empowered, and able to learn.

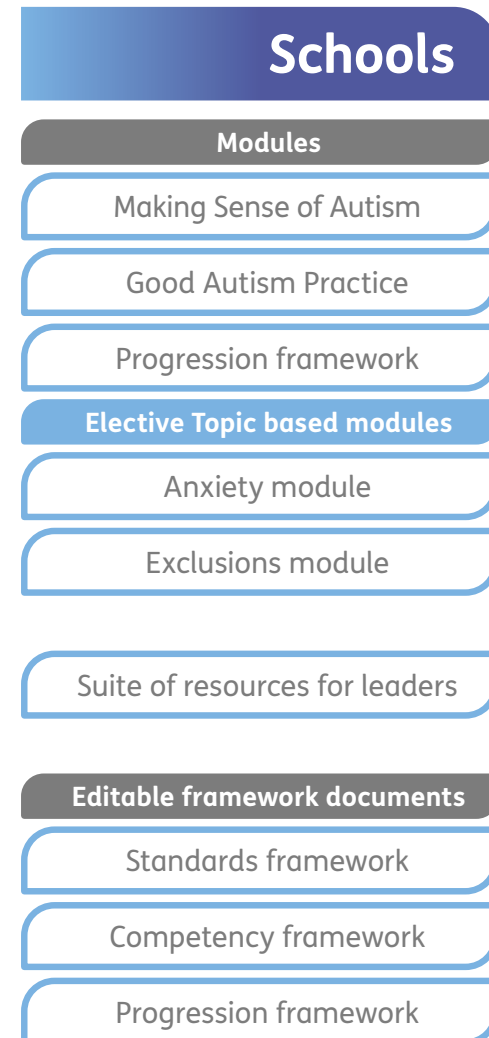
AET Schools Professional Development Programme

The AET Schools Standards Framework is part of the Schools Professional Development Programme. This Programme contains a set of modules and materials for staff working in Schools across mainstream and specialist provisions.

In addition to the Standards the AET Schools Professional Development Programme consists of:

- The Schools Competency Framework that enables practitioners to evaluate and reflect upon their own practice when working with autistic children.
- A Progression Framework that is a comprehensive interactive assessment tool that supports practitioners to identify learning priorities, set key learning intentions, and track progress for autistic children and young people in both mainstream and specialist educational provisions.

The Schools Professional Development Programme also has a range of training modules for those working in Schools educational settings. For further information, please visit the AET website: www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training



At a Glance:

The four key themes, Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice, the AET Autism School Standards, and the AET Autism School Competencies.



The following tables outline how the four themes, the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice, the AET School Standards, and the AET School Competencies are interlinked.



Understanding the Individual

Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic pupil.

STANDARDS

S1. We are committed to developing knowledge about autism, and we gather information from a range of sources to fully understand the individual autistic pupil.

S2. We take into account how each pupil's co-occurring differences, including anxiety and stress, can affect behaviour and can cause barriers to learning. We are committed to understanding the causes and functions of behaviour.

COMPETENCIES

C1. I identify the key strengths and challenges that autistic pupils face in the areas of social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing and understanding, and sensory processing and integration.

C2. I recognise that many autistic pupils have co-occurring conditions and differences. They experience high levels of anxiety and stress, and these can create barriers to learning. I know that a pupil may display behaviour based on a combination of factors and I work hard to understand the causes and functions of the behaviour.

Principle Two: Enabling the autistic pupil to contribute to and influence decisions.

STANDARDS

S3. We use pupil-centred approaches to support pupils to communicate their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

S4. We actively involve autistic pupils as part of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle so that the pupil is at the centre of educational planning.

COMPETENCIES

C3. I include, consult, and support pupils to communicate their strengths, experiences, and emotional wellbeing. I understand the importance of listening to the pupil and regularly consult and involve pupils in any decisions being made.

C4. I see the pupil as a partner in their learning and actively involve autistic pupils as part of the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle so that the pupil is at the centre of educational planning.



Positive and Effective Relationships

Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.

STANDARDS

S5. We actively listen to and involve parents/carers in contributing to decisions about their child's education and future prospects.

S6. We work collaboratively with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic pupils.

COMPETENCIES

C5. I engage with parents/carers and involve them in contributing to decisions about their child's education and future prospects. I establish and develop ways to communicate and share information, ideas, and progress.

C6. I collaborate with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic pupils.

Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.

STANDARDS

S7. We show a commitment to continuing professional development on autism across our staff and ensure they receive ongoing training that is appropriate to their role.

S8. We audit staff confidence levels, understanding and knowledge of autism, and the changes staff make to their practice as a result of undertaking professional development.

COMPETENCIES

C7. I engage in professional development that enables me to address the needs of autistic pupils and to enhance and embed inclusive practice.

C8. I reflect on, note down, and gather data on the implications of my learning and development for my own practice, and ultimately for the autistic pupil(s) I work with.



Enabling Environments

Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.

STANDARDS

S9. We promote a supportive environment where leaders and managers are knowledgeable about autism and cascade information to their staff. We encourage our staff to reflect upon, discuss, and evaluate their practice.

S10. We develop mutual understanding, communication, and support between autistic pupils and staff, between autistic pupils and their peers, and between parents/carers and staff. We address the risk of social exclusion for autistic pupils.

COMPETENCIES

C9. I create enabling environments based on what I know of the individual pupil and through making reasonable adjustments accordingly.

C10. I create positive, supportive, and caring relationships, between autistic pupils and staff, between autistic pupils and their peers, and between staff and parents/carers. I work hard to address barriers to learning. This includes reducing the risk of social exclusion.

Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic pupils.

STANDARDS

S11. Our enabling approaches foster a calm low-arousal learning environment and we promote a sense of wellbeing, security, and belonging for all our pupils.

S12. Our learning environments are structured, understandable, and predictable. We adapt learning environments to enable pupils to participate fully in learning.

COMPETENCIES

C11. I understand the importance of focusing on identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the three areas of difference, namely social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing, and understanding; and sensory processing and integration.

C12. I provide a clearly organised classroom and an environment that takes into account the needs of autistic pupils.



Learning and Development

Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic pupils.

STANDARDS

S13. We use a holistic approach to assessment that includes a pupil's sensory needs, emotional wellbeing, and preferred way of communicating, interacting, and learning.

S14. We develop and implement targeted pupil-centred education plans in partnership with pupils and parents. These are regularly reviewed to monitor progress.

COMPETENCIES

C13. When assessing progress towards learning goals, I have a holistic approach that builds on strengths and interests, whilst addressing skills and understanding that autistic pupils may find difficult as a result of their autism.

C14. I am involved in and contribute to the development and implementation of pupil-centred education plans in partnership with pupils, parents, and other staff. These include details of how the staff can support the pupil.

Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic pupils.

STANDARDS

S15. We provide a broad, flexible, and balanced curriculum that addresses the learning needs of autistic pupils and their social and emotional well-being, communication needs, and life skills.

S16. We always promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all of our pupils and staff.

COMPETENCIES

C15. I strive to understand autistic pupils and I embed inclusive practice in my teaching approaches and learning environments.

C16. I promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all the pupils I work with.

How to use the AET School Standards

The School Standards can be completed by leaders within a school or a group that make up a leadership team. The framework will support leaders to enhance and embed inclusive practice and to improve outcomes for autistic children by identifying priority areas for the whole school to work on.




Schools are encouraged to develop an action plan using the AET School Standards to review provision for autistic pupils and to prioritise areas of development, in line with the schools improvement focus plan.

Every standard will be linked to a section on the AET website with more examples, further reading, practical materials and templates to help you develop and implement that standard.

For each standard, you should aim to collect:

- Documentary evidence (e.g. records of training events, assess, plan, do, review documentation, accounts from children, children's outcomes, observation schedules, and policy documents).
- Photographs, or video clips of relevant practice.

1. Give each standard, and each example under that standard, a RAG (red, amber, green) rating:

-  **Room for improvement:** Work needs to be done to develop practice in this area.
-  **Developing:** Work has started on this area of practice.
-  **We do this really well:** This standard is well developed.

2. Use this information to decide which standards are most important to focus on in your school.
3. Create an action plan for the standards you are focusing on by documenting your actions for the standards that need improvement.
4. Include specified time frames and nominated team members for implementation of this.
5. Collect data before and after so you can document the change of implementing the standard.

Theme one: Understanding the Individual





Understanding the Individual

Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic pupil.

Standard One: We are committed to developing knowledge about autism, and we gather information from a range of sources to fully understand the individual autistic pupil.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We collate information through observations and/or discussions with the autistic pupil, their parents/carers, other professionals who work with them, and from previous reports and assessments.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We use pupil-centred approaches to gather information on the strengths, and differences of each individual pupil in the areas of social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing, and understanding; and sensory processing and integration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We understand the importance of taking time to build rapport and spend time finding out about the pupils interests.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:96).

Head Teachers Standards (2020), Standard 5i: Headteachers ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities.



Understanding the Individual

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Understanding the Individual

Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic pupil.

Standard Two: We take into account how each pupil’s co-occurring differences, including anxiety and stress, can affect behaviour and can cause barriers to learning. We are committed to understanding the causes and functions of behaviour.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Staff are informed about co-occurring conditions and differences, including potential disturbed and erratic sleeping, eating, and toileting. Staff are aware of how each individual pupil’s co-occurring condition or physical/mental health needs might affect learning and/or behaviour and how this may differ across settings.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Staff work closely with parents/carers, other professionals, and the pupil to identify and understand the reasons for and the functions of behaviour, with a particular focus on understanding behaviours that signify distress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Staff implement individual strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance the wellbeing of children.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual’s needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:96).



Understanding the Individual

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Understanding the Individual

Principle Two: Enabling the autistic pupil to contribute to and influence decisions.

Standard Three: We use pupil-centred approaches to support pupils to communicate their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We enable autistic pupils to identify and celebrate their strengths, hopes, dreams, and aspirations. We help them to record this information in their one-page profile.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Staff identify developmentally relevant methods for each pupil to communicate their views and experiences, support and encourage them to use them, and use a range of tools to capture the pupil's voice. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their current and future needs and wishes.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We regularly arrange times for pupils to meet with a trusted key person to discuss the support they are receiving and whether this is suitable to meet their needs.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Head Teachers Standards (2020), Standard 5ii: Headteachers establish and sustain practices that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively.

Teacher Standards (2011), Standard 2: Teachers promote good progress and outcomes by pupils and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this impacts on teaching.



Understanding the Individual

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Understanding the Individual

Principle Two: Enabling the autistic pupil to contribute to and influence decisions.

Standard Four: We actively involve autistic pupils as part of the ‘Assess, Plan, Do, Review’ cycle so that the pupil is at the centre of educational planning.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We take on board the perspective of the autistic pupil across the range of activities in which they engage and we consider the preferences of pupils on how they can best be supported in their day-to-day activities and tasks, as well as their social preferences.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Pupils have regular opportunities to give feedback and participate in decision-making and we note the pupil’s perspective in review meetings and transition planning.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We engage pupils in making choices about curricular and extra-curricular activities.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Guidance

SEN should arise from a four-part cycle, known as the graduated approach, through which earlier decisions are revisited, refined and revised, leading to a growing understanding of the pupil’s needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes’. (NASEN: ‘SEN support and the graduated approach’, 2014:2).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child established the right of all children to express their views and to have these views listened to and taken seriously when decisions are being made that affect them.



Understanding the Individual

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:

Theme two: Positive and effective relationships





Positive and Effective Relationships

Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.

Standard Five: We actively listen to and involve parents/carers in contributing to decisions about their child’s education and future prospects.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We involve parents/carers in their child’s education. This includes the identification of their aspirations and learning goals for their child.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We proactively engage with parents and carers to establish and develop ways to communicate and share information, ideas, and progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We understand the needs of parents who themselves may have diagnosed or undiagnosed autism as well as families from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Local authorities, Early Years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about the child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, teachers and others may have differing expectations of how a child’s needs are best met. Sometimes these discussions can be challenging but it is in the child’s best interests for a positive dialogue between parents, teachers and others to be maintained, to work through points of difference and establish what action is to be taken (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:21).



Positive and Effective Relationships

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Positive and Effective Relationships

Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.

Standard Six: We work collaboratively with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic pupils.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We develop links with professionals across services and contexts according to the needs of pupils. For example, this can include Educational Psychology, CAMHS, specialist autism teams, and the transition support service.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We follow the graduated approach in the SEND Code of Practice and are confident in collecting assess, plan, do, review evidence for submitting to external professionals.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We bring together professionals within and beyond the setting in a multi-disciplinary approach and all staff are aware of the Team Around the Pupil.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Teacher Standards (2015), Standard 8: Teachers develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action (Keeping children safe in education, 2020:5).



Positive and Effective Relationships

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Positive and Effective Relationships

Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.

Standard Seven: We show a commitment to continuing professional development on autism across our staff and ensure they receive ongoing training that is appropriate to their role.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We recognise the importance of high-quality professional development in the education of autistic pupils. As knowledge is continuously being developed, there is a need to regularly update the knowledge, skills, and practice of the educational workforce.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Our setting empowers and supports staff to share, learn, and develop knowledge and skills in order to develop greater understanding of autism and common co-occurring conditions. Ongoing continuous professional development and learning (CPD) includes self-directed learning, mentoring and coaching, and discussion and collaboration with colleagues.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We use the AET School Competencies to identify the professional development needs of all staff.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

The local authority must set out information in its Local Offer on securing expertise among teachers, lecturers or other professionals to support children and young people with SEN or disabilities. This should include professional development to secure expertise at different levels (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:68).



Positive and Effective Relationships

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Positive and Effective Relationships

Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.

Standard Eight: We audit staff confidence levels, understanding and knowledge of autism, and the changes staff make to their practice as a result of undertaking professional development.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Staff complete self-evaluation forms about their knowledge, confidence and practice related to autism before and after undertaking continuous professional development (CPD). For example, this can include using the AET self-evaluation checklist.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We gather information from staff about the changes they make to their practice as a result of professional development and for performance management purposes.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We frequently share and cascade knowledge and learning among staff.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Teacher Standards (2015), Standard 4: Teachers take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues.

Headteachers standard 6: Ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs.



Positive and Effective Relationships

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:

Theme three: Enabling Environments





Enabling Environments

Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.

Standard Nine: We promote a supportive environment where leaders and managers are knowledgeable about autism and cascade information to their staff. We encourage our staff to reflect upon, discuss, and evaluate their practice.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Senior leaders have attended training and have a good understanding of autism. They are aware of the strengths and differences associated with autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Information about how we support autistic pupils is referenced in our development plan, in policies (particularly the SEND policy and the behaviour policy) and in our Equality Duty objectives.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Leaders use a coaching model with staff and regularly monitor how staff are working with pupils. They provide specific feedback on their interaction with children in order to develop consistency across the school.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

The leaders of Early Years settings, Schools and Colleges should establish and maintain a culture of high expectations that expects those working with children and young people with SEND to include them in all the opportunities available to other children [...] There is a significant overlap between children and young people with SEN and those with disabilities and [many] are covered by both SEN and equality legislation (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:27).

Leaders are to ensure all learners, including those with SEND, get the information, advice, guidance and support to achieve their next steps and progress [...] Leaders are to provide the support for staff to make this possible (Ofsted Education Inspection framework, 2019).



Enabling Environments

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Enabling Environments

Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.

Standard Ten: We develop mutual understanding, communication, and support between autistic pupils and staff, between autistic pupils and their peers, and between parents/carers and staff. We address the risk of social exclusion for autistic pupils.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We create an inclusive learning environment through promoting positive attitudes and behaviours toward autistic pupils. Our staff build effective relationships by actively listening to and observing pupils, and by communicating regularly and positively with parents/carers.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

School systems and structures are proactively adjusted to promote social inclusion and to reduce school exclusions.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Our school implements approaches to develop the mutual understanding, communication, and support between autistic pupils, their peers, and staff. For example, we set up buddy systems and peer mentoring schemes.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA, 2017) report highlights that a lack of accountability is an important factor in the rise of school exclusions for autistic pupils.

The evidence suggests that children on the autism spectrum are regularly unlawfully excluded, with consequences for their academic progress, self-esteem and mental health. (APPGA: 'Autism and Education in England', 2017:13).

Teacher Standards (2011), Standard 5: Teachers adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils and have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn, and how best to overcome these.



Enabling Environments

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Enabling Environments

Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic pupils.

Standard Eleven: Our enabling approaches foster a calm low-arousal learning environment and we promote a sense of wellbeing, security, and belonging for all our pupils.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

We identify, monitor, build, and maintain the mental and emotional wellbeing of autistic pupils and involve pupils in communicating how they view their ideal school.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We do the best we can to organise classrooms and the wider school environment to manage sensory differences that may be distracting or uncomfortable.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We observe pupils to find out more about their sensory differences and preferences and adjust the environment accordingly.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action (Keeping children safe in education, 2020:5).



Enabling Environments

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Enabling Environments

Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic pupils.

Standard Twelve: Our learning environments are structured, understandable, and predictable. We adapt learning environments to enable pupils to participate fully in learning.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Staff consider the accessibility of the learning environment for autistic pupils by taking account of potential physical barriers and processing difficulties, sensory needs, and social demands of working with or being with their peers.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We support verbal and non-verbal communication through a range of approaches, including the organisation of the setting, visual aids, reducing and simplifying language, and providing sufficient time for processing and understanding of instruction.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers to participation and enable autistic pupils to access the curriculum, break and lunchtimes, extra-curricular activities, residential trips, work experience, or exams.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Teachers' Standards (2011), Standard 7: Teachers manage classes effectively, using approaches that are appropriate to pupils' needs in order to involve and motivate them.



Enabling Environments

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

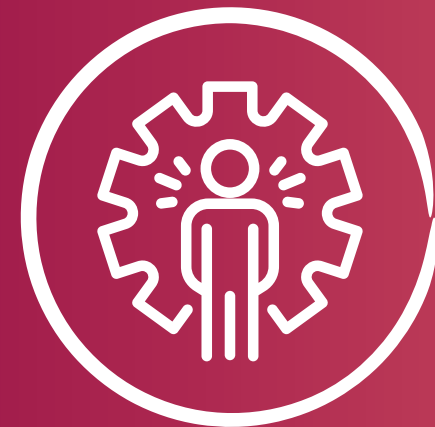
What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:

Theme four: Learning and Development





Learning and Development

Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic pupils.

Standard Thirteen: We use a holistic approach to assessment that includes a pupil’s sensory needs, emotional wellbeing, and preferred way of communicating, interacting, and learning.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Parents, pupils, and external professionals (as appropriate), are actively involved in the identification of strengths and needs, in setting shared learning objectives, and in reviewing and assessing progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

The assessment approaches we use are adapted in line with the needs of the pupil and include tools developed specifically for students with autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We use a variety of assessment approaches to build a comprehensive profile of the pupil’s performance of key skills across a range of environments.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual’s needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:96).



Learning and Development

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Learning and Development

Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic pupils.

Standard Fourteen: We develop and implement targeted child-centred support plans in partnership with the child and parents. These are regularly reviewed to monitor progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

All autistic pupils have a pupil-centred education plan that is tailored to their strengths and needs, has clear learning targets and strategies, and monitors progress. The education support plan aims to improve the pupil's quality of life by reflecting their strengths, needs, skills, and experience.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Pupil-centred education plans are initiated promptly, focus on communication and joint social interactions, and include opportunities for peer collaborations and home/school links to support the generalisation of skills.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We are committed to preparing pupils for adulthood through the holistic development of their daily living skills and we embed Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes (community, independence, life skills) in all education plans.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Early years providers, schools and colleges should know precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development. They should ensure decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of children and young people themselves; have high ambitions and set stretching targets for them; track their progress towards these goals; keep under review the additional or different provision that is made for them; promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development, and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact on progress (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:25).



Learning and Development

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Learning and Development

Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic pupils.

Standard Fifteen: We provide a broad, flexible, and balanced curriculum that addresses the learning needs of autistic pupils and their social and emotional well-being, communication needs, and life skills.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Improving social communication skills is often a priority for families. It is also the foundation for learning and a key predictor of positive long-term outcomes. It is a central element of our curriculum.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We develop and promote social and emotional skills through relationships and sex education (RSE), personal, social, health, and economic (PSHE) education, as well as in the wider curriculum. Autistic pupils have access to enhanced and differentiated learning and teaching in these areas.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We plan engaging activities that build on the strengths and interests of the pupil to deliver the curriculum.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Early years providers, schools and colleges should know precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development. They should ensure decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of children and young people themselves; have high ambitions and set stretching targets for them; track their progress towards these goals; keep under review the additional or different provision that is made for them; promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development, and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact on progress (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:25).



Learning and Development

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:



Learning and Development

Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic pupils.

Standard Sixteen: We always promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all of our pupils and staff.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Examples of how we can do this:

Neurodiversity is embraced and viewed as a strength in our setting and we promote awareness and acceptance of autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We have a vision of including all pupils, and our positive approach to diversity and inclusion is proactively shared in our communications both internally and externally.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

We use positive language to describe autism in our school and see autism as a different way of being rather than as a disorder.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

WE DO THIS REALLY WELL

Links to statutory frameworks

Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people (Equality Act, 2010:17).



Learning and Development

How do we document evidence of working on this standard?

We document evidence of working on this standard through case studies, one-page profiles, and the goals we co-produce with parents/caregivers and children (where possible), and by documenting our Reasonable Adjustments and the impact of those.

Evidence to show how we meet this standard:

What has been the impact of implementing this standard?

On staff:

On parents/carers:

On children:

Additional information

Please click [here](#) to access further information on:

- AET materials
- Guidance, legislation, and statutory frameworks
- Further examples of how to action the Standards
- Useful websites
- Further reading



Author and Acknowledgements

Lead Author:

Professor Karen Guldberg

The AET standards and competencies have been co-produced with a number of people. Although Karen Guldberg has been lead author, the standards/competencies are the result of input from a number of people representing a range of perspectives. We are grateful to a number of people who have been involved in creating and co-authoring these frameworks. Co-authors have included the members of the AET's Autistic Young Experts panel who have provided input on key concepts, ideas and terminology, The Bridge London Trust and Liverpool's Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service have provided invaluable input into the development of content and advice on drafts, as has Emma Chantler, AET Content Manager. The Birmingham Communication Team shared valuable resources.

Training Partner Co-Authors:

For the early-years based materials Rachel Read, Specialist Advisory Teacher with the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service (SENISS), Liverpool: providing advice and support for children with special educational needs, in order to promote their inclusion within mainstream and nursery settings, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Natalie Reaney, Specialist Advisory Teacher with the Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service (SENISS), Liverpool: providing advice and support for children with special educational needs, in order to promote their inclusion within mainstream and nursery settings, enabling them to achieve their full potential.

For the school-based materials, the training partner co-author was Dr Jamie Galpin, Developmental Psychologist, Lead AET Trainer and Researcher at The Bridge London Teaching School. A member of The Bridge London Trust, a unique Multi Academy Trust consisting of three special schools, one mainstream primary school, a teaching school and outreach service.

With thanks to:

Alice Gair, Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist in The Sensational Thinking Project with Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: advocating for the needs of children and their families affected by sensory processing differences including raising awareness and education of the impact of sensory processing and integration on daily living in an effort to contribute to better wellbeing, health and education outcomes for children.

Pam Simpson, Autism advisor and previous AET hub lead for Birmingham Communication and Autism Team: providing a local authority approach to raising the capacity of schools to meet the needs of autistic pupils through the implementation of the AET standards and competency frameworks and the delivery of training. Pam is a member of the AET Board.

The AET expert reference group: Phil Christie, Glenys Jones, Vicky Jones, Alison Reevey, Kevin Baskerville, Wendy Peel, Vanessa Foulds, Alison Levy, and The NAS Autism Knowledge and Expertise Team.

Thank you to the whole AET network for contributing in the early stages to the redevelopment of the Early Years and Schools Professional Development Programme.



**Autism
Education
Trust**

Autism Education Trust

393 City Road
London
EC1 VNG, UK

e: info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk
t: 020 7903 3650

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

All rights reserved. Not to be photocopied.
Ref:School Standards Framework_T-HUB-Sc-Mt



Funded by



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

