



SECTION Five

- [Committee decision](#) – **to be completed by the Quality Manager**
- [Next steps](#)





Section five

Committee outcome

What happens at the end of the assessment?

At the end of the assessment, the consultant will arrange a meeting to give you verbal feedback.

The consultant will feed back on what the service does well and what it could consider developing further. The consultant will also summarise findings from the surveys.

The consultant cannot comment on whether you have met the criteria for Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced status as this is not their decision.

The consultant will complete an Assessment report which will be submitted to the Accreditation Awards committee.

Within a month of the completion of the assessment, you will be informed by email of the Committee decision - whether you have been awarded Aspiring, Accredited or Advanced. This will be based on our award criteria.



Section five

Committee decision and next steps -

Completed by the quality manager on behalf of the committee



Committee decision:

Advanced

Date of committee decision:

12/12/2025

Comment:

The Autism Accreditation Committee found clear evidence from the report that staff at Hedgewood School have a robust working knowledge of evidence informed approaches associated with good autism practice. They consistently adapt these specialist approaches to ensure support is highly person centred and tailored to individual abilities, interests, preferences, and challenges.

A total communication approach ensures children's and young people's communicative preferences are understood and respected. Preference assessments enable staff to motivate learners effectively, while tools such as Essentials for Living provide a structured framework for developing functional skills. Learners were observed engaging confidently in problem solving, self care, and independent navigation around the school, reflecting the strong emphasis on autonomy. Community visits and clubs further enrich their experiences, promoting confidence and social development.

The school's low arousal approach and wide range of resources create a calm, enabling environment where children and young people feel safe and well regulated. Zones of Regulation is embedded across the school, with highly individualised support for each child and young person. Strong, respectful relationships between staff and learners were evident throughout.

Case studies submitted by the school highlight initiatives aimed at improving practice, such as the implementation of a strengths based, person centred curriculum prioritising communication, independence, emotional regulation, and functional life skills. Systematic assessment tools inform personalised learning plans, supported by a transdisciplinary approach. Extensive staff training ensures consistent, high quality practice, while bespoke programmes such as the Speakers Initiative and Alert Programme have enabled children and young people to develop lifelong communication and emotional regulation strategies. Individual examples include learners progressing from non verbal to picture based or spoken communication, improving transitions, and gaining independence in daily living skills—outcomes that significantly enhance autonomy and quality of life.

A minority of feedback from young people and their parents identifies scope for improvement which the school will no doubt wish to explore further. However, a clear majority of feedback from young people and their families is excellent.

The Committee concludes that Hedgewood School should be given an Advanced Award in recognition of its outstanding standards of excellence in supporting autistic children and young people. Congratulations to the entire team for demonstrating exemplary practice and creating an environment where learners thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Section five

Next steps



Maintaining and progression

Once you have agreed terms and conditions, you can expect to receive your certificate and logo. You can continue with your current Autism Accreditation plan or amend it by increasing or reducing the number of consultation visits.

Please contact your consultant to discuss your options.

You will also be asked to complete an online survey about your experience of the process. Your feedback is very important to us so please take the time to complete it.

You can expect to receive a final version of your assessment report and the date and level achieved will be published in our directory. We do not publish the assessment report but you are welcome to share or publish it if you want to. You may wish to share or publish a sample of the report, rather than the full manuscript. We are happy for you to do so but request that this is done in a way which does not misrepresent our findings, for example, by only publishing what we found you do well without acknowledging that we may have also identified some areas of development. If you are not sure what would be acceptable, please feel free to ask.

We recommend that you undergo another assessment in three years' time to show that you have maintained standards or progressed to a level where you can be given a higher award. You can request an earlier reassessment if you don't want to wait this long.





Section five

Committee outcomes

Applying for Beacon Status

If you have achieved an Advanced Award, you can now apply for Beacon Status. This is awarded to provisions which in addition to providing consistent high quality support to autistic people, share their knowledge and understanding of good practice with families, external professionals and the local community.

Application forms can be obtained from your consultant and should be returned to the Autism Accreditation Quality Manager at

Stephen.dedridge@nas.org.uk.

The Panel can award Beacon Status if the application form provides clear evidence that the provision carries out exceptional work that has had a significant impact on how:

- families understand and support relatives who are autistic
- other professionals understand and work with autistic people, including helping them to appreciate the personal experiences of autistic people
- the local community or members of the public understand and work with autistic people; autistic people are socially included within their community
- the provision contributes to developing knowledge and understanding of autism, for example, by contributing to research.

The application form should also explain how the provision works in partnership with autistic people. Beacon Status will be withheld if the provision requires improvement in meeting statutory requirements.



About the National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society is here to transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people.

We transform lives by providing support, guidance and practical advice for the 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK, as well as their three million family members and carers. Since 1962, autistic people have turned to us at key moments or challenging times in their lives, be it getting a diagnosis, going to school or finding work.

We change attitudes by improving public understanding of autism and the difficulties many autistic people face. We also work closely with businesses, local authorities and government to help them provide more autism-friendly spaces, deliver better services and improve laws.

We have come a long way but it is not good enough. There is still so much to do to increase opportunities, reduce social isolation and build a brighter future for people on the spectrum. With your help, we can make it happen.