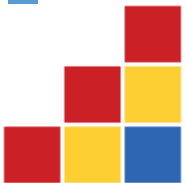




Social Skills at Step by Step School



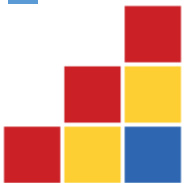
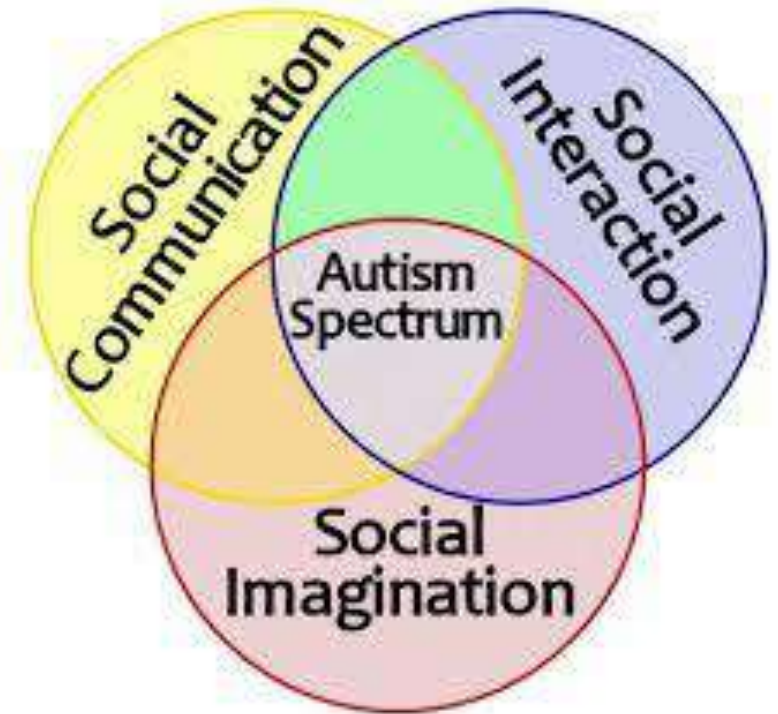
INTENT → **IMPLEMENTATION** → **IMPACT**



Autism and Social Skills

Pupils with autism typically experience difficulties with social communication, social interaction, and social imagination. Every individual will experience different challenges, these can include difficulties with:

- Understanding verbal communication
- Initiating interactions with peers
- Sharing imaginative play
- Understanding gestures and body language
- Responding to others
- Staying on topic during conversations
- Forming or maintaining friendships
- Following social rules (e.g. waiting in a queue)
- Adapting behaviour to suit social contexts

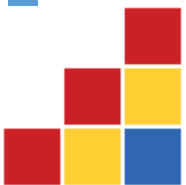


Intent

Why are Social Skills Important?

At Step by Step School our mission is to maximise the potential of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) through evidence based, individually tailored, outstanding teaching to enable them to thrive and live happy, confident lives.

Social Skills play a fundamental role in our interactions with the world. It is important for pupils to develop their confidence in using these skills to enable them to thrive both in and out of school, and beyond education. At Step by Step development of social skills is a priority learning area and is embedded throughout all phases of the curriculum.

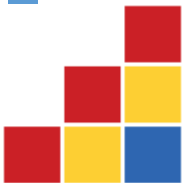


Intent

Why are Social Skills Important?

Pupils are supported to develop appropriate communication and life skills which allow them the fullest possible active participation in their day-to-day experiences. These skills enhance the social and emotional growth of the pupils.

In developing these skills, pupils also learn to form positive, caring relationships with their peers and with staff.



Implementation

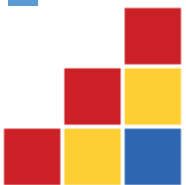
Social Skills Goals

At Step by Step School pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their social skills, including:

- **Personalised targets, taught during 1:1 teaching**

IEP TARGET	TARGET STRATEGIES	BREAKDOWN STEPS	Date Introduced	Date Mastered	C
		Social Skills			
To follow conversation rules regarding eye contact, turn taking and distance during a role play situation	█████ to read a conversation 'rule book' which outlines the key conversational rules for different social interactions. Regularly review appropriate ways to start a conversation, and rules about distance and eye contact. Use structured conversations about preferred topics to practice turn-taking in conversations with tutors. Build towards █████ practicing conversation rules during conversations with peers.	To list three ways a person can demonstrate active listening (e.g. eye contact, nodding, mirroring) To demonstrate active listening (e.g. eye contact, nodding, mirroring, not fidgeting) during a conversation with a tutor about a preferred topic. To follow conversation rules regarding eye contact, turn-taking and distance during a role play situation with a tutor. To follow conversation rules regarding eye contact, turn-taking and distance during a role play situation with a peer.	08/07/2019 01/10/2019 08/10/2019 22/10/2019	30/09/2019 07/10/2019 21/10/2019 Ongoing	

Primary and Secondary pupils all have individualised social skills objectives on their Individual/Personalised Education Plans targeting specific areas for development.



Implementation

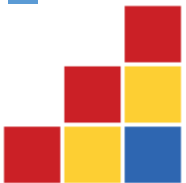
Social Skills Goals

At Step by Step School pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their social skills, including:

- **Access to a range of group activities**



Within curriculum and SALT groups pupils work on skills such as greeting peers, shared attention and turn-taking. In addition to this, pupils may participate in other groups which are specifically focused on social skills (e.g. 'team games' groups).



Implementation

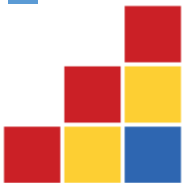
Social Skills Goals

At Step by Step School pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their social skills, including:

- **Learning through play at break times**

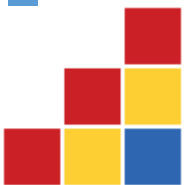


At break times pupils are encouraged to play with their peers and, where possible, staff aim to fade their presence so that pupils can play independently together.



Parallel Play

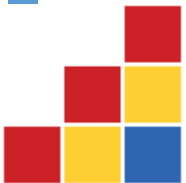
For early learners and pupils who display limited interest in their peers, a great starting step for developing social skills is to build parallel play skills. Pupils initially learn to play alongside one another with separate items and work towards playing with a shared activity (whilst each still following their own agenda, e.g. playing next to each other at a sand or water tray).



Implementation

Building Social Skills

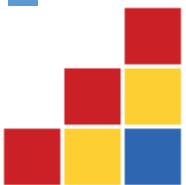
Parallel Play



Joint Motivating Activities

Once pupils have learnt to play alongside their peers they are encouraged to access shared joint activities which do not require additional skills (e.g. turn-taking or cooperating).

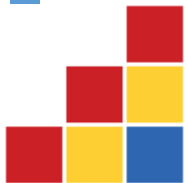
For example, pupils might watch a video or listen to story together which they both find motivating. Pupils may also practice this skill with more peers (e.g. 'DVD groups'), and it is also included within 'Stages 1 and 2' of Attention Autism (SALT) groups.



Implementation

Building Social Skills

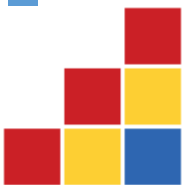
Joint Motivating Activities



Turn Taking

Turn-taking is often introduced during activities where there is a clear end to each pupil's turn (e.g. the end of each video during DVD group). This is also the case within Stage 3 activities at Attention Autism group (e.g. 1 water balloon each)

Pupil's will then learn further skills (e.g. waiting and knowing when to take a turn) during 1:1 teaching before putting these skills into practice with peers or at groups (e.g. playing a board game together or taking turns with an item).



Implementation

Building Social Skills

Turn Taking



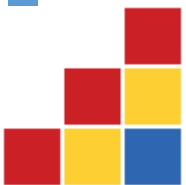
A pupil taking a turn at an Attention Autism group activity



Communication

Every pupil at Step by Step has individualised targets to help them improve their ability to communicate with others.

This can range from greeting people or making a simple request to a peer during a fun activity (e.g. “jump”), to more complex skills such as staying on topic during a conversation, understanding body language, or learning to request and pay for a preferred item at a café using Proloquo2go.



Implementation

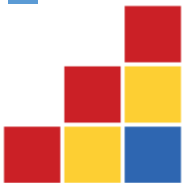
Communication



Building Social Skills



Talking about likes and dislikes using visual support.

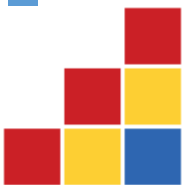


Working Collaboratively

Another key social skill that pupils learn at Step by Step is how to collaborate with their peers to achieve a goal.

This is taught through different group activities across the school. For example:

- 'Team games group' where pupils need to work together to complete tasks (e.g. keep the ball balanced on a parachute).
- Creating a large art piece collaboratively at curriculum group.
- Following peer instructions at Lego Therapy groups.



Implementation

Building Social Skills

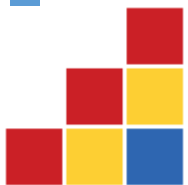
Working Collaboratively



Sixth Form Team Games Group



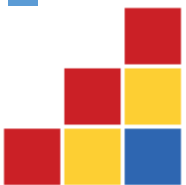
Lego Therapy Group



Social Skills Group

Some classes in the school currently have a weekly 'social skills group', working on skills such as listening to peers, asking questions, taking turns and encouraging others.

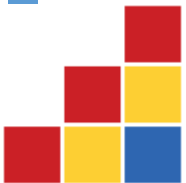
Peers earn balls for demonstrating specific social skills and put these balls into a jar. As the jar fills up, pupils earn different elements of a party (e.g. music, drinks, snacks). Once the jar is full pupils can have their party.



Implementation

Building Social Skills

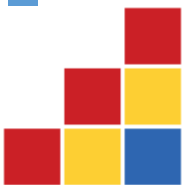
Social Skills Group



Peer Mentoring

Where possible throughout the school day, play opportunities are provided to pupils that enable them to practice supporting their peers (e.g. teaching them to play a game they have not played before).

To build on this skill some pupils have recently started to be 'peer mentors', using their strengths to support others who have difficulty with certain tasks, e.g. reading. They get to wear a formal badge whilst completing this responsibility.



Implementation

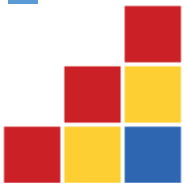
Building Social Skills



Being a reading mentor for the class



Teaching a peer how to play a new game on the Wii by giving instructions about how to use the controller.

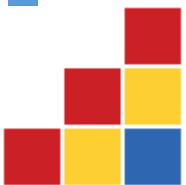


Pupil Progress Scores

Social Skills is one of the five priority learning areas that form part of the pupil progress judgements at Step by Step.

Here is an example of the end of year scores for a Primary Class. Three pupils made 'outstanding' progress with their social skills, and two pupils made 'good progress'.

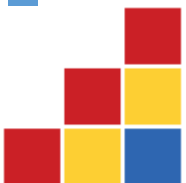
	Communication	Behaviour	Social Skills	DLS/ILS	Community	Average
Pupil 1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Pupil 2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Pupil 3	1	2	1	1	2	2
Pupil 4	1	2	2	2	3	3
Pupil 5	1	2	1	3	1	2



Progress Scores – Pupil Example

At the start of the year, Pupil 5 had difficulties with greeting people appropriately (e.g. would always say “I like your hair” rather than saying “hello”), rarely interacted with other pupils, and often avoided group situations (e.g. did not consistently attend curriculum groups). By the end of the year his group attendance had improved, he was able to greet people appropriately (e.g. say hello or hi), and he now regularly plays together with 2 other pupils in the class (one who he refers to as his ‘best friend’).

	Communication	Behaviour	Social Skills	DLS/ILS	Community	Average
Pupil 5	1	2	1	3	1	

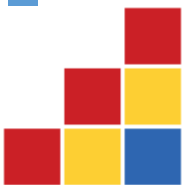


Building Social Skills – Generalising Skills

The overall goal is for pupils at Step by Step to be able to utilise their improved social skills in the wider community. This helps them to develop positive relationships with others and gives them the confidence to experience new social situations.

It is therefore crucial that pupils practice generalising newly learnt social skills to a wide range of contexts. This might include playing with unfamiliar pupils from a different class, practicing social interactions at cafes or shops, or practicing speaking to novel people (e.g. handing out leaflets at the school charity fair).

It is fantastic to hear from parents when pupils generalise these skills to home, for example: having a conversation with a sibling or approaching an unfamiliar group of children in the park to play. It is great that Earwig provides a platform where parents can share this progress with school if they wish to do so.



Building Social Skills – Generalising Skills



Practicing playing with novel peers – primary and secondary pupils playing together.

