

<b>Special Educational Needs &amp; Disability (SEND) Service</b>		
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*Strictly Confidential*

### **Educational Psychology Advice for EHC Needs Assessment Key Stages 3-5**

<b>Name:</b>	Jo Xi	<b>Date of Birth:</b>	2015
<b>School/Setting:</b>	Church Road school	<b>CA:</b>	
<b>Date of Visit(s):</b>	18.07.24	<b>Year group:</b>	

### **Context**

This report consists of the Educational Psychologist's contribution to statutory Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment initiated by Wiltshire Local Authority in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014.

This report is intended to complement rather than duplicate the advice provided by parents/ carers and other professionals.

### **Key Points**

- lives at home with her mum and dad, Sharon Xi and Ben X. She has two older brothers who have now left home.
- [REDACTED] Jo is Jo is autistic.
- [REDACTED] Jo is a dedicated student who wants to learn and do well. Unfortunately, this drive has resulted in Jo putting undue pressure on herself to succeed and this led to periods of significant decline in her mental health. Her anxiety around school has increased her challenges around learning and has resulted in her being unable to attend school on occasions. Examinations cause particular stress. continues to attend CAMHS for support.
- Things improved for Jo when school implemented accommodations such as a reduced timetable and exceptions from some subjects which were causing her particular stress. However, she continues to present with periods where she experiences poor mental health which affects her mood, eating, and sleep. She takes medication to help these symptoms.

### **Sources of information**

This report is based on information from the following sources:

- Information held on Jo's electronic educational psychology file, including:
  - SSENS: Cognition & Learning visit record dated 10/04/19.
  - Autism Assessment Report from Wiltshire Children's Community Services dated 01/05/20.
  - SSENS: Communication & Interaction consultation record dated 19/10/22.
  - CAMHS report dated 14/03/24.
- Consultation with Jo's mum, Sharon [REDACTED], on 18/07/24.

- Consultation with Jo on 18/07/24.
- Consultation with Jo, Specialist ASD teacher, School on 18.07.24.

## Observations and Jo's views

I spoke with Jo in her home. She presented as a gentle, quiet young woman. She was willing to answer my questions. She presented with slower processing of spoken language, and she would often seek support from her mum or reassurance that what she had said was correct. She was articulate when speaking about topics of interest, which she would do for more prolonged periods of time and could recall past events in a way that could be understood. She could sometimes mix up her words or have some word finding challenges. She has a particular memory for dates and is very precise about these.

Jo could come across as quite immature for her age. She would also sometimes say things that may not have been regarded as entirely appropriate to report to a stranger, but she is very honest and will say things as she sees them.

Jo said she likes school and likes learning. The subjects she likes are English, maths, and PE. She said she is sporty and likes football, tennis, and the gym. She likes taking part as well as watching sports. She spoke animatedly about trips to see her football team. In school she prefers activities where she doesn't have to speak, and she prefers practical activities.

What Jo likes about school is homework. She finds it is easier if she can do this in school. She spoke to Jo about English homework that she had been given at the end of term to be completed over summer. She has this done and sought out help in school to get it completed before school broke up.

Jo said she might forget about the work over the holidays and so felt better that she had it already done. She also worries about getting into trouble.

Other things Jo dislikes about school include:

When plans change, especially when she has a substitute teacher because they do things differently.

She finds it hard to listen to the teacher and take notes at the same time.

She does not like the tie in her uniform especially on hot days.

She often feels she is going to fail when doing tests and activities and doesn't like that feeling.

In school, Jo reports things that have helped include:

- a reduced timetable.
- having a TA in the class who can check in on her, especially because she finds it hard to put up her hand to ask for help as she is very self-conscious. She does not like doing anything that draws attention to her or where she feels she is judged or may get shouted at.
- fidgets. She had a fidget with her as we spoke, and she says these help in class also because her body needs to move to feel better and concentrate.
- having a smaller room to do exams where there are screens up, so she doesn't have to see other people.
- supportive teachers who understand and help her.
- having a safe place to go at lunch and break. She has been trying to go to the canteen but finds it overwhelming.
- having routines. These are important to her.

Jo could identify things that made her calmer including having her dog in bed with her at night, fidget toys, relaxing music, and ASMR, especially the painting one.

Jo said that when she is older, she would like to work with animals by maybe doing dog walking or working in an adoption centre.

## Views of Parents/Carers

Sharon reports that Jo as presented with differences from Reception. At primary, interventions were put in place, but these were carried out during 'nice' activities for Jo such as PE.

Sharon reports that Jo loves school especially the routine it offers. She has an interest in learning and is a capable student when regulated. She uses her time well and tries really hard to achieve. She particularly likes sport and physical activity and recently took part in sports day.

However, the stress and pressure Jo feels around school has resulted in her having significant mental health difficulties which have reached crisis point at times. She will push herself and get so worked up that she will have difficulties sleeping, her eating will be affected, with her having significant periods of time not eating at all, and having extremely low mood. There have been times she has been unable to attend school because of this. The more she stresses, the less able she is to access learning in school and then she stresses about not being able to catch up and so works harder. She gets into a cycle until she reaches complete burnout, recovers somewhat, and the cycle begins again. [REDACTED] feels having a reduced timetable and other accommodations put in place in school have helped.

Sharon reports that Jo is already worrying about next year. She referred to the English homework mentioned above, and the fact that she is already setting alarms on her phone according to the timetable that has been agreed for her attendance in September.

When completing homework, Jo likes to have her mum sit by her or at least be in the room. She much prefers to have her homework done in school because only if her 'to do' list on her homework app is empty can she relax at home. She is very rule bound and this can increase her stress around school and what she feels she 'has' to do.

Sharon described how Jo can be upbeat and positive but will often obsess over things. She is working with CAMHS to develop strategies to allow her to relax and stop 'panic mode'. She feels is responding well to this.

Sharon reports that Jo has a sense of humour and prefers the company of adults. She is on her own a lot and will sometimes say she is lonely. She feels people think she is 'weird' and she can't cope with the 'drama' often involved with teenage girls' interaction and so does not seek out their company. Her friend in school is a year older and will leave the school at the end of the term. can be misunderstood at times. She can find it hard to express her emotions. Her need to know things can sometimes cause her to have no filter and she will just ask whatever is on her mind, which can affect her in social situations.

Sharon feels Jo is likely to work with animals and it is likely that a more vocational educational route would suit her better going forward. She is concerned about the changes that Jo will face in as the teacher with whom she has built up a good trusting relationship is leaving the school, as is her friend in the year above her. Longer term, there are concerns about Jo transition once she finishes in Hardenhuish next year. hopes that Jo will be provided with the support she needs to deal with the academic, social, and emotional demands of school going forward.

## **Psychological Perspective**

Jo is a gentle quiet young autistic woman. She appears to have found it increasingly difficult to cope with the academic, social and emotional demands posed particularly by the secondary school environment. She appears to have school-induced anxiety and, in my opinion, her drive for perfectionism and to achieve are resulting in cycles of autistic burnout. This is an emerging concept in research but has been well documented within the autistic community for many years. The National Autistic Society (based on Raymaker et al, 2020) provides the following definition:

*Autistic burnout is a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic life stress and a mismatch of expectations and abilities without adequate supports. It is characterised by pervasive, long-term (typically 3+ months) exhaustion, loss of function, and reduced tolerance to stimulus.*

Jo periodically experiences low mood, difficulties with sleeping and eating, and has had physical symptoms of anxiety that she was convinced indicated that there was something very wrong and she was having a heart attack. She has attended hospital as her distress was so great on a couple of occasions that she would only take reassurance from a doctor.

Jo appears to be masking in school and can become dysregulated which tends to happen quietly and may not be easily observed by others. She works best when she has the reassurance of support and has built trusting, safe relationships with adults around her.

## Jo's Strengths and Areas for Development

This section collates evidence from paperwork submitted as part of the statutory assessment, observation, consultation with Jo, her parents and with school staff.

Skills for Employment	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <div> <div></div> <div>Jo wants to learn and to do well at school. She is proud of herself when she does well.</div> </div> </li> <li>She is hard working and conscientious.</li> <li>She works best with facts and rote learning.</li> <li>She will make revision timetables and prepared best for exams by being given questions or past papers to complete. Making study cards, etc don't work for her as she does not see the point in this but can see a reason why she would complete past paper questions.</li> <li>Her attendance is good and a reduced timetable has helped somewhat with her school-related anxiety.</li> </ul>	
Needs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <div> <div></div> <div>Jo's reading is good, but her comprehension is poor. She tends to understand things differently and so needs clear explanation of what is meant by things she reads. Her higher-level skills require development.</div> </div> </li> <li>Jo finds it hard to keep up in class. She cannot listen and write notes as the teacher is talking in class, often because she feels she needs to write and remember everything the teacher says, as she finds it hard to know what are the key, most important points. She benefitted from having copies of PowerPoints available to her.</li> <li>During whole class teaching then, Jo may not be able to listen and so she will panic because she doesn't know what she has to do when set a task. When in this panicked state she cannot do well, often cries, and is described as being paralysed by fear, but when calm and the task is explained, she can often attempt it.</li> <li>School have noted that every year this cycle of panic and anxiety builds up over the course of the term and eventually Jo will reach the point where she cannot do any more and her mental health dips. Steps taken by staff to help her work through her anxiety have had limited success. She still tends to focus on the negative about her work in school.</li> <li>needs support in class when completing work due to the above, especially in English.</li> <li>She does not like to be called upon for an answer as she is afraid of getting it wrong and does not like attention being drawn to her. She will not ask for help.</li> </ul>	
Outcomes	
By the end of Key Stage 5 <div></div> Jo will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>obtain qualifications in English and maths, along with her other chosen subjects so that she can pursue further study or employment in the future.</li> <li>will demonstrate improved goal directed behaviour in relation to starting and finishing her work. She will be able to use a planning or organisational framework to think through how she will complete a complex task such as an extended project or piece of course work.</li> </ul>	
Provision	
Those working with <div></div>	Jo will have knowledge and experience of the needs of young autistic people,

and specifically in an educational context. The Autism Education Trust's Post-16 competency framework ([Framework Documents](#) | [Autism Education Trust](#)) should be available to all staff.

Teaching staff should implement accommodations in their lessons which have been discussed and agreed with Jo and her key member of staff, which are likely to include, not calling on her for an answer or contribution in class, unless she raises her hand; allow her extra time for the processing and completion of tasks; repeating instructions individually; checking for signs she requires help or having a non-verbal way for her to communicate this; recognizing effort as well as success.

Jo requires an identified and familiar adult (TA) in each lesson in order to ensure the following strategies are consistently implemented and monitored:

- Check Jo's comprehension of the task at the outset of all tasks, providing additional explanation and reinforcing instructions as required.
- Embed the use of a task list and redirect Jo back to this to help her refocus on the task at hand.
- Using checklists or apps to support her organisational skills and focus her attention on what she needs to do.
- Intervene when Jo experiences difficulty, offering support before the point of withdrawal; there will need to be careful balance between allowing [REDACTED] Jo the opportunity to experience tolerable levels of challenge (so that she learns to persevere and succeed), whilst making sure challenge does not reach the point of becoming emotionally overwhelming for her. Initially this is likely to happen very early in a task but should improve as she experiences more instances of success and builds confidence as a learner.
- Building a bank of strategies that Jo can use to help her manage attention difficulties. Examples might include having a movement break, a sensory break, a change of task, pausing for a drink of water, etc depending on which works best for Jo. Evaluate with how effective the strategy was and add useful strategies to a visual list that she can begin to refer to independently.

[REDACTED] Jo needs to have access to individual subject teachers' PowerPoint presentations to refer to after lessons. She will also require a paper copy of these presentations or any handouts before the class so that she can handwrite on them during lessons so her feeling the need to write everything down is lessened. If possible, an audio recording of the lesson would be of benefit. This will be organized by a TA or admin staff.

Jo will receive support from a TA or other key adult in relation to study skills, time management, organisation, etc which she will need to be successful in her studies. This will take the form of an approximately 4 week intervention either 1:1 or in a group maximum 1:4 near the start of the new school year so Jo can get used to using the methods that work for her before taking exams.

Jo will be given appropriate access arrangements for exams and assessments, e.g. extra time, a separate room.

When the time is right Jo would benefit from having an interview with a careers advisor to discuss post-16 and post-18 options and any other career interests that she may have and routes into these careers. Careers advice and guidance can also be accessed through the National Careers Service via the following link: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>.

## Independent Living

### Strengths

- [REDACTED] Jo is able to express her views and her wants and needs verbally with people with whom she feels safe.
- She is a resilient young woman who will always try her best.

<b>Needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jo is currently spending a lot of time at home, and she requires a lot of support from her family.</li> <li>When overwhelmed and her anxiety reaches high levels, she cannot eat or sleep and her mood is very low.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jo can become overwhelmed by a lot of sensory input, such as crowds and items of clothing.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>
<p>By the end of Key Stage 4, Jo will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>link the relevance of independence skills (such as budgeting and independent travel) with her developing goals for the future.</li> <li>have developed a range of strategies to manage her sensory needs in situations that challenge her.</li> <li>begin to learn how to self-advocate for her wants and needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision</b>
<i>Special educational provision</i>
<p>Jo will need increased time and opportunities to establish trusting relationships with key adults in her education setting. It is essential that regular dedicated time is available for her to spend time with key individuals so that she can problem-solve any areas of difficulty, ask questions, and share her thoughts. In this way, Jo can be encouraged to advocate for herself and learn how to express her wants and needs with others. Initially this should be a daily session (each day for up to 30 minutes) but over time, it is envisaged that this will be reduced in time and frequency with the agreement of both Jo and her school. It is also important that is given information about the access and whereabouts of key individuals at different times of the day so that she knows who will be available to offer support when she needs it most.</p> <p>Jo's key person/school mentor will check-in once per term to establish if Jo wants to and is able to access support with developing independence skills and link these to how they will be required in her future education/career plans, e.g. independent travel.</p> <p>A sensory audit of her educational environment should be carried out with Jo by her teacher so that her sensory preferences can be accommodated as far as possible. <a href="#">Sensory Audit for Schools and Classrooms (education.gov.scot)</a> is a useful pdf template for this.</p>

<b>Friends, Relationships and Community</b>
<b>Strengths</b>
<p>Jo is a quiet polite child who school staff describe as having excellent behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jo can interact socially when engaged about her topics of interest.</li> <li>Jo is beginning to build up a bank of strategies she can use when she feels she needs to calm through her work with CAMHS.</li> </ul>
<b>Needs</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [REDACTED] Jo has had input from CAMHS due to mental health difficulties. Medication had been prescribed.</li> <li>• has had one friend in the year above her throughout secondary school. This pupil will have left the school in September.</li> <li>• does not engage in interaction with peers during class or breaks. She seems to need time on her own during breaks so that she can take time out from others and recover her energy for the rest of the day.</li> <li>• did not speak during social skills groups in school. She needs a lot of scripting and prompts to help her through verbal social interactions.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of Key Stage 4 [REDACTED] Jo will have developed a toolbox of strategies that she can [REDACTED] draw on to support her emotional regulation. She will be coping better with anxious feelings and will be able to explain to others what she needs.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By Post-16 Jo will have developed social contacts in her area.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision</b>
<i>Special educational provision</i>
<p>will require continued psycho-education around anxiety and emotional regulation, specifically in relation to autism. This will be carried out once a week by a suitably qualified and skilled adult (e.g. ELSA) who has a knowledge and understanding of autism. Work undertaken with CAMHS will be built upon as [REDACTED] Jo progresses. This may be undertaken by health professionals and, if s [REDACTED] Jo's key person in school should liaise with these professionals for guidance as to how they can best take this work forward from a school point of view.</p> <p>Jo will require a social skills programme to help her prepare for the transition to adulthood. This will be carried out once a week by a suitably qualified and skilled adult (e.g. ELSA) who has a knowledge and understanding of autism. <i>Preparing for Life the Complete Guide to Transitioning to Adulthood for those with Autism/Asperger's Syndrome, by Jed E Baker</i> is an appropriate resource.</p> <p>Jo will be encouraged by key adults whom she comes to trust and feels safe with to begin to make meaningful connections with her peers, most likely achieved by connecting through mutual areas of interest, such as animals or making PowerPoints.</p> <p>Jo and her family should be provided with up-to-date information about social and leisure opportunities in her local area. This would include information about autism specific opportunities and provision, and, when she is ready, groups that are centred around issues [REDACTED] Jo ha [REDACTED] as an interest in or cares about, e.g. animal</p>

<b>Remaining Healthy/Healthy Living</b>
<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jo is becoming aware of her challenges for which she requires support and the sort of support which is helpful/unhelpful for her.</li> </ul>
<b>Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jo needs continued support on understanding her autism and how it affects her so that she can take steps daily to ensure she keeps physically and emotionally healthy.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>
By the start of Post-16 Jo will have developed a sound, neuro-affirming understanding of her autism and have developed life skills appropriate to her.
<b>Provision</b>

### *Special educational provision*

- It will be helpful for [REDACTED] Jo to be aware of websites that support young autistic people with developing life skills. The Centre for Autism, Middletown, have online resources including a section on 'Teenage Issues and Strategies' which would be helpful for [REDACTED] to look at: [Teenage Issues and Strategies - Teenage Resource \(middletownautism.com\)](https://middletownautism.com/teenage-issues-and-strategies-teenage-resource). The workbook 'Embracing My Neurodivergence' by AuSome Training may be useful for [REDACTED] Jo to work through with a suitably trained ELSA which should be shared with her parents at home.
- Given that Jo is likely to be experiencing periods of autistic burnout, she will require an understanding of how her autistic differences can affect her physical and mental energy levels. The concept of Energy Accounting developed by Maja Toudal and Dr Tony Atwood will be introduced to her as well as the associated concept of autistic burnout. A useful resource combining both can be found at [www.dralicenicholls.com/energy](https://www.dralicenicholls.com/energy). The Autism Education Trust have an Autistic Young Experts YouTube channel and one of these videos explore autistic burnout in young adults. [REDACTED] Jo will be encouraged to identify situations which [REDACTED] use up her energy and how she can recharge her energy. Jo will work through these resources with trusted suitably trained adult/ELSA once a week for a 6 week period, with

twice termly check-ins subsequently to ensure she has embedded these concepts in her everyday life.

Arrangements for monitoring progress should be agreed at school-based reviews. Jo's needs, outcomes and associated provision will change over time and so should be updated by school staff in partnership with parents and Jo. Wherever possible and appropriate, Jo should be included in making decisions. It will be important that she is helped to make informed choices.

This report is confidential to the person concerned and their parents/carers. The report should not be circulated without the author's knowledge and parental permission. It is best practice to copy reports in full.

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Jo Xi

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Date: 29 July 2024

Original: SEND Lead Worker

Copy to: Electronic File

Young person

Parents and professionals will receive a copy from the SEND Lead Worker once the EHC assessment is complete