



Press Release
Immediate Release
29 September 2025

Bury-Based Hospital School Awarded Autism Accreditation

Forestwood School has been awarded an accreditation from the National Autistic Society (NAS).

The Autism Accreditation is an autism-specific quality assurance programme for those providing services to autistic people. The internationally recognised award is a way for organisations to show they offer excellent support to those with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Forestwood School is the education provider for all young people admitted to the Cygnet Health Care hospital, Cygnet Bury Forestwood. The Education team at the Cygnet Health Care service have been working towards the accreditation since September 2023. The achievement formally recognises the person-centred and autism-focused nature of the service that Forestwood School provides.

An initial audit provided a deep dive into all aspects of school life. This informed the creation of a long-term working plan for development and improvements. The key areas that underpinned this plan included commitment and consultation, positive outcomes for the autistic person and sensory experiences.

Staff then worked hard on this plan to meet the requirements to gain accreditation. The final report from an intensive 2 day visit, praised staff for having “a comprehensive understanding of evidence-based approaches associated with good autism practice” and for their “thoughtfully adapted approaches to ensure that support is person-centred and tailored to individual abilities, interests, preferences and challenges”.

It was recognised that “the person-centred activities and daily routines supported independence and that self-advocacy was actively promoted with students encouraged to express their needs, preferences and goals with growing confidence”.

Rachel Rix, National Head of Education and SEND Case Coordinator for Cygnet Health Care schools said, “Our autistic people continue to shape our thinking, help us to identify what we do well and what we could do better. They often provide innovative ideas and tweaks for things we had not even considered. This project has confirmed that if we are meeting the needs of our autistic people in the classroom every student benefits”.

As part of the feedback process one parent said, "My child has always struggled with education but the staff at Forestwood School have been able to tailor an individual education package that suits them. They are now learning and enjoying it after two years out of education".

The National Autistic Society provided detailed and quality feedback from their inspection. It was a positive report that recognised all the hard work from the education staff and provided guidance on areas for future development. Christine Flintoft-Smith, Head of Autism Accreditation and Projects at the National Autistic Society, said: "We are delighted that Forestwood School has achieved the Autism Specialist Award. The team should be exceptionally proud of their achievement and commitment towards improving support for autistic people."