Classroom Environment (BasedontheTEACCHmodel)

#	ACTION	Tick √
1.	Dimmed / natural lighting – no flickering lights!	
2.	Pastel coloured display boards – no bright contrasts.	
3.	No 'busy' displays or posters around the whiteboard.	
4.	Minimal background noise	
5.	Clearly defined working areas for each student.	
6.	A designated group table specifically for group work.	
7.	A visual / colour coded timetable - either on a wall or on each desk.	
8.	A daily schedule including times of transitions – either on a wall or on each desk. Include a digital clock on the wall to help students track time and prepare for changes.	
9.	A simple, positive rules / behaviour targets list - either on a wall or on each desk.	
10.	A 'job list' for each lesson, either for each student or for the entire group – put up at the beginning and tick as you go.	
11.	Secluded, quiet working area/s for 'time out' or 'independent study'.	
12.	Clearly labelled areas for equipment, books, students to put their belongings.	

Whole-Class Approaches – Teaching & Learning

#	ACTION- Each student with ASD requires an individualised approach because their cluster of difficulties will be particular to them. However, there are some 'catch-all' strategies that will benefit all students with ASD, and are likely to benefit other students as well.		Tick √
13.	**Do Now Starters**	are short introductory activities. They usually last around five minutes. The main requirement is that they are fun and factual: quizzes, anagrams, labelling hangman and odd one out puzzles all set a positive tone for the lesson. Students should ideally begin this activity the moment the lesson begins to provide immediate structure.	
14.	**Visuals**	Language is a key problem for students with ASD so picture cues should be used as much as possible. Temple Grandin, who has Asperger's Syndrome, explains in *Thinking in Pictures* (Vintage, 1996)*: 'Words are like a second language to me'.* Supporting a text with colourful pictures and highlighting various phrases is straightforward with the aid of PowerPoint and a data projector.	
15.	**Show, Don't Tell**	One of the ways that ASD difficulties manifest themselves is in a difficulty sequencing tasks. In practice this means that the instruction *"Look at the article, highlight the important points and fill in both sections of the answer sheet"* may as well be given in Chinese for the student with ASD. Before you reprimand the student who sits staring into space, humming to him or herself, ask yourself if they have understood your	

		instructions. Instead of telling, *show* your pupil what to do and guide them through step-by-step.	
16.	**Rewards**	Every student responds to positive feedback from the teacher, but any learner with ASD is especially in need of some <u>tangible</u> and <u>targeted</u> measure of success.	

Strategies Tailored to Individuals

17.	**Clear Communication**	say exactly what you mean. Anything merely *implied* will probably not be understood. For example, asking, 'Would you like to get your work out now?' may get the very honest (but unintentionally annoying) answer, 'No!' Similarly, you may ask, 'Can you just sit over there?' or 'Can you pick up that piece of paper and put it in the bin?' and get the answer 'Yes', followed by no action: the answer has been truthful, but the pupil may well not have understood that you were actually asking them to carry out the action	
18.	**Direct Language**	avoiding the use of double meanings, sarcasm, teasing, complex open questions or subtle jokes, unless you are really sure the pupil understands. Make sure that you have his attention before communicating. Use his name, but don't necessarily expect to gain full eye contact – this can be difficult for pupils with an ASD.	
19.	**Slow Down**	allow several seconds for the pupil to process new information and to respond before you give more information, or repeat your request.	
20.	**Check Understanding**	He may not necessarily understand just because he can repeat back the instruction you have just given. Processing verbal information tends to be harder for pupils with an ASD. Visual aids can help.	
21.	**Clear Expectations**	for example, where he should be in the classroom or for each lesson; how to negotiate around the school site; what homework is expected; where he is able to go at break and lunchtime, if being in the playground causes too much stress, or what time the day trip will return to school. Most difficulties occur as a result of insufficient information about what to do in different social situations.	
22.	**Be patient**	A few pupils will seem to be intentionally aloof (avoiding eye contact), rude or disinterested. This is rarely the case. Pupils with an ASD usually do not have the basic social understanding to realise how they appear to others. Occasionally they may say or do things that seem to threaten your authority in school. Try not to take this personally, but deal with it in a calm way. The person's difficulties are the result of biological differences in the parts of the brain that regulate social behaviour and understanding.	
23.	**Planned Exit Strategy**	available if a pupil has difficulty regulating his behaviour in class, for example, a quiet room he can go to when stress levels get too high, or a particular quiet area.	
24.	**Calm Tones**	Avoid confronting an angry/upset pupil by arguing or raising your voice. Many people with an ASD are very sensitive to noise, some finding loud noise physically painful. A raised voice will not help him understand what is wanted. Use a calm, neutral tone of voice – do not shout, or expect him to be able to read facial expression and gesture. Instead try to divert and defuse the situation. For example, allow the pupil to 'exit',	

		giving a clear alternative choice, a compromise if possible. Sometimes a visual support, such as a card with a photo of the quiet room, will help him to understand what you want him to do next. If there is no room for compromise, make the request a couple of times, allowing plenty of time for him to process this information, then calmly, with few words, follow through the consequences of non-compliance if necessary (which should already have been explained very simply and clearly).	
25.	**Home/ school Diary**	Home/school diaries and/or school planners can help reinforce what is being communicated and keep parents informed.	

More Support Strategies to Investigate

26.	**Visual Aids**	Children with an ASD often find it easier to understand the world about them through visual aids. Many companies publish Vas you can buy and others produce software to use for sequencing actions visually.	
27.	**The Picture Communication Exchange System (PECS)**	Teachers use pictures as symbols to teach children the names of different objects. Gradually a child is taught to exchange a picture for the object he or she wants, to construct simple sentences using the pictures, and indicate choices between various objects.	
28.	**Social stories™**	Children with an ASD who can read may be taught how to cope with different situations using the technique of social stories™, first developed by Carol Gray.	
29.	**Comic strip conversations**	Comic strip conversations assist children with autism to develop greater social understanding, by providing visual representations of the different levels of communication that take place in a conversation, using symbols, stick figure drawings and colour.	
30.	**TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children)**	This approach is widely used within special schools and can be adapted for use within a mainstream setting. It focuses on altering the environment and using visual supports, such as timetable and schedules, to help provide structure, reduce stress by making it clear what is to happen throughout the day, and improve understanding.	
31.	**SPELL**	The SPELL framework has been developed by The National Autistic Society's schools and services to understand and respond to the needs of children and adults with autism.	
32.	**Buddy / Mentor**	Buddies and mentors should also have a good basic awareness of ASDs and how they affect an individual.	