



## Visual Impairment and Autism April 2008 - 2010

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The needs of children who have both visual impairment (VI) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) are poorly understood, and many staff working with these children would like additional guidance. There are few courses and publications which specifically address the needs of this group. Individual practitioners are left to develop their own practice, often relying on intuition and anecdotal reports. However, intuition is misleading when dealing with ASD (Jordan, 2005). The VI/ASD dual disability has extremely low prevalence, making it particularly difficult for staff to gain experience, and to network with and learn from colleagues.

It is not clear what constitutes good practice for children who have both VI and ASD. A project is therefore being established to address this issue. The intention is to develop resources to provide practitioners with information about approaches and strategies that have been used successfully with these children, and a framework that will support decision making when planning for individual pupils.

Partners in the project are: Brookfields School, the National Autistic Society (NAS), the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Sunfield. A formal bid is with RNIB Fund Raisers who are currently seeking funding for this project.

The project is intended to run for two years from April 2008.

### Reference

**Jordan, R. (2005) 'Educational implications of autism and visual impairment'. In L. Pring (ed.) *Autism and Blindness: Research and reflections*. London: Whurr.**