Below is an overview of strategies you could adapt to support students who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD affects the way a person experiences the world around them, communicates and relates to others.

Main areas of difficulty:
- Social understanding – differences in understanding social behaviour and the feelings of others, which informs the development of friendships and relationships.
- Interests and Information Processing – Differences in perception, planning, understanding concepts, generalising, predicting, managing transitions, passions for interests and ability to absorb auditory or spoken information.
- Sensory processing - Hypo (low) sensitivity, Hyper (high) sensitivity which can affect all 5 senses, and proprioception which can lead to lack of understanding of personal space, or the overwhelming need for personal space.
- Communication and interaction – can be SLCN as per the previous slide, or range from highly articulate (which can mask a deeper misunderstanding) to non-verbal.

How might it manifest itself?
- Problems with recognising understanding the feelings of others and managing their own feelings.
- Difficulty forming friendships.
- Difficulties with non-verbal communication eg eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice.
- Difficulty understanding inferred meanings of language eg idioms.
- Issues with understanding or predicting other people's intentions and behaviour.
- Difficulty imagining situations outside of their own experience.
- Inflexible thinking and behaviour due to difficulties with imagination.
- Struggle to manage transitions and resistance to change.
- Reactions to sensory stimuli that may seem out of proportion.

Classroom strategies:
- Reduce unpredictability with very clear classroom routines.
- Keep classrooms clear of clutter and keep noise to a minimum, including noise from open windows, speakers left on but not in use, etc.
- Try to use visual stimuli for instructions, routines and give advance warning about changes in routine.
- Speak clearly and break down instructions or processes.
- Avoid sarcasm or metaphorical language eg idioms.
- Use pupil names when speaking to them.
- Be very specific with success criteria, even for straightforward tasks eg "I would like you to think of 3 reasons and write them on your whiteboard."
- Create opportunities for peer interaction, but give clear roles and structures for the interaction.
- Carefully scaffold tasks that require imagination or empathy