

## **AUTISM – INCIDENCE, PROVISIONS AND RESOURCES IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Autism Spectrum disorders (ASD) are widely regarded as severe communication disorders. There is a triad of inter related impairments as follows:

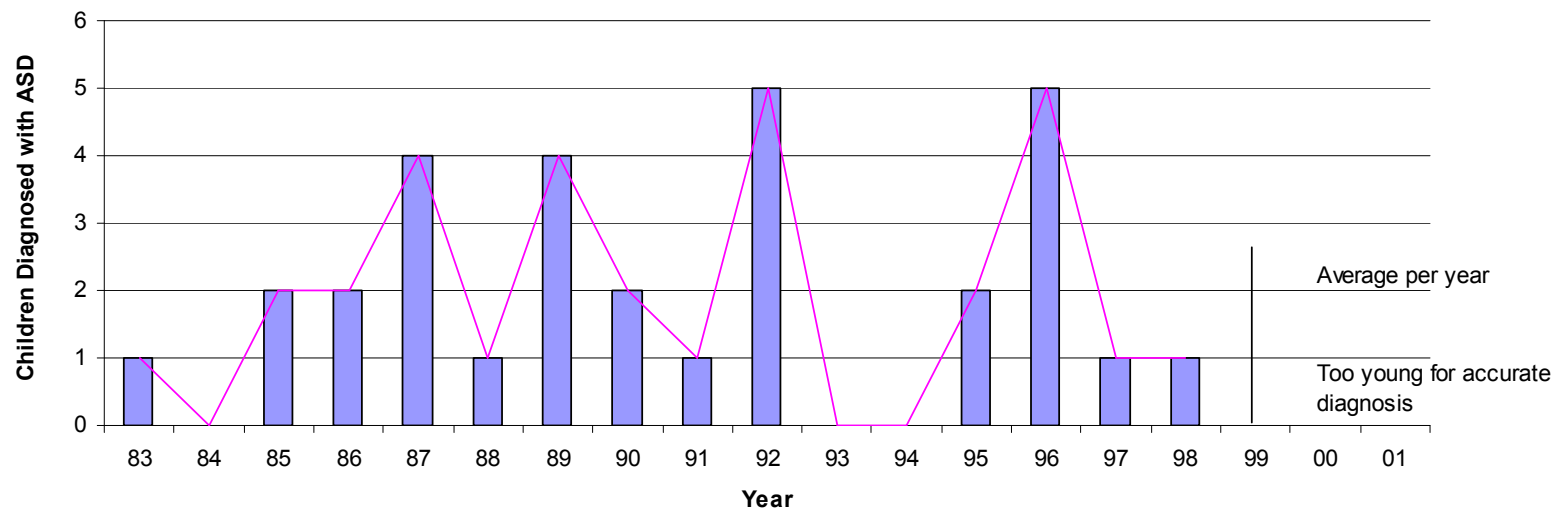
- **Difficulties in social comprehension, communication and imagination**
- **Delayed and deviant language development**
- **A restricted range of activities resulting in obsessions and rituals.**

Children with ASD vary in intelligence; most have learning difficulties but some are very bright, and they vary in the degree to which they are affected by autism from mild to very severe.

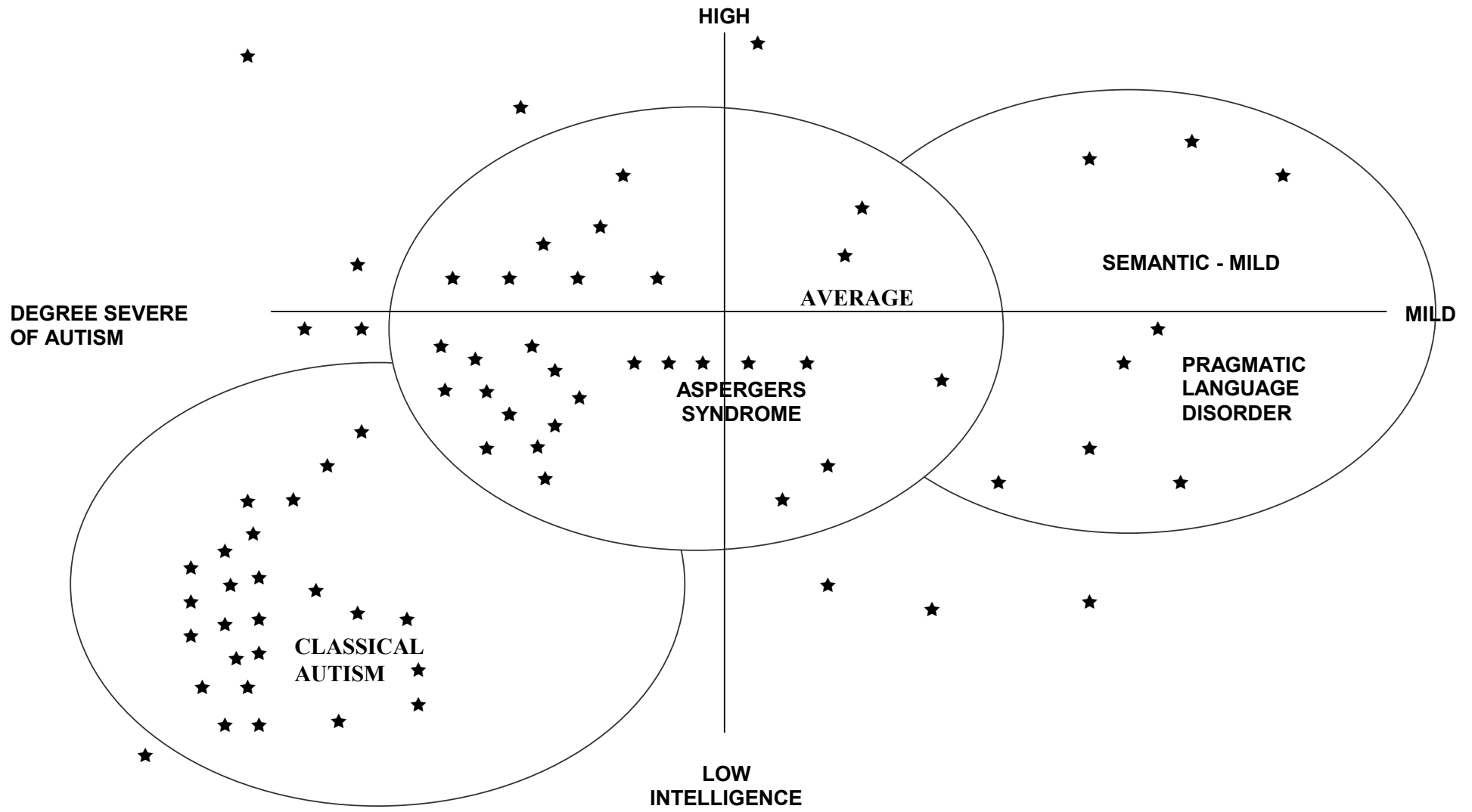
### **INCIDENCE IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

In a survey of incidence in Hereford and Worcester in 1997, we found a figure of 15 children in 10,000 suffered from ASD. Current figures give much the same statistic. We were able to identify 39 children with an ASD diagnosis between the ages of 5-16 years in Herefordshire. Reviewing the birth dates of these children show a range which number between 0-5 per year giving an average prevalence of 2 ASD children per year. There is remarkable consistency over a 15 year period as follows:

### Incidence of ASD in Herefordshire



**AUTISM – DISTRIBUTION IN RELATION TO I.Q.**



Out of the 39 children diagnosed, approximately one third of children with ASD will have severe learning difficulties and will properly be placed at one of our three special schools; one third will be able to cope in ordinary schools and the remaining third will be properly placed in a small primary or secondary unit catering for their needs but with access to ordinary school and the ordinary curriculum.

In Herefordshire we have a good early years provisions for children with Autism at the CDC and at the Early Years Centre in Leominster.

**On school entry the available resources are:**

Blackmarston School ) for children with ASD and  
Westfield School ) severe learning difficulties  
Hampton Dene Language Unit – children with ASD  
Ordinary school – for children with mild ASD

**at secondary level we have:**

Barrs Court School  
Ordinary school  
Out-country resources such as Coddington Court

The ASD class would have one specialist teacher plus one trained support assistant (in line with NAS recommendations).