

Autism Accreditation Assessment

Queensmill School: Main school, Fulham primary, Fulham Cross girls, Fulham Cross Academy (Boys)

Reference No.	177
Assessment dates	14-17 June 2021: 15 March 2022
Lead Assessor	Hannelore Bout
External Moderator	Jean Mockford
Status prior to the assessment	Advanced
Advanced status applied for	Yes

Section 1: Context

About the Provision

Brief description of the provision made for autistic young people:

Information provided by the school states that "Queensmill School is an ASD specialist provision. The main school is housed in a purpose built building that is low arousal. Each classroom, as well as satellite provisions, are equipped with a range of specialist equipment including sensory equipment, interactive ICT and visual supports. Students have access to a comprehensive sensory suite (soft play, water play, sensory integration room and AV Room). In addition to classroom based learning, young people have access to a range of extra-curricular activities and community based learning. Staff are highly trained in autism specific strategies and theories as well as a range of interventions."

The assessment team considered evidence for the main school, Fulham primary, Fulham Cross girls and Fulham Cross Academy. The school also has a college, a residential provision, outreach, a transition to work project for adults ages 18-24, and is about to open a new school in Kensington. The school converted to Academy status in June 2021.

Number of autistic people supported by the provision: 258

Range of autistic people supported by the provision:

According to the assessment introduction form, "Queensmill School caters for children and young people aged 3-25 across a number of different sites. We assess young people using the SCERTS framework. The majority of young people at Queensmill are social and language partners whereas the majority of young people at the resource bases are language and communication partners."

Outcome of last statutory assessment (Body; date, outcome):

Ofsted; May 2018 short inspection, where the school maintained outstanding status.

About the Assessment

- The assessment took place over four days.
- The provision's adviser acted as an assessor with support from a moderator.
- A presentation was given on how provision is made for autistic pupils.
- The moderator was given a tour of the main school and visited Fulham Cross girls and Fulham Cross Academy.
- We did not visit Fulham primary as they were awaiting instructions after a reported Covid case. (One of the three classes were later instructed to self-isolate.)
- The assessment team observed 22 sessions in total, including a wide range of classroom-based activities, such as; Clonker board, art, food tasting, ASDAN, Lego therapy, maths, business enterprise, I Am Special, Duke of Edinburgh, café, PE Computing and work experience, and playtime, mealtime, arrival and departure transitions.
- Discussions were held with both the leadership team, teaching staff, family support and therapeutic staff, some autistic pupils and six parents.
- Student files were sampled across each key stage.
- Some key policy documents provided by the provision were read.
- The results of surveys carried out with autistic young people and their families were also considered.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

Main approaches or methods employed by the provision in supporting autistic people:

The school highlighted their main approaches used to support autistic people as:

- SCERTS framework for assessment, communication and emotional regulation support,
- TEACCH approach in classrooms,
- PECS,
- Zones of Regulation,
- Social Thinking,
- Preparing for Adulthood curriculum,
- Sensory Integration,
- Total communication,
- SoSAFE.

Training and professional development staff receive in these approaches and in their understanding of autism

There is a robust induction process that ensures that staff are supported when initially joining the school. In addition, the school have created a detailed 'Staff Handbook' alongside an induction session.

The school offers an extensive training record, delivering workshops and training on an impressive range of autism-specific approaches. The induction training sessions usually run three times a year and offer 10 to 15 workshops per cycle, although this was adapted in the first lockdown to focus on online and blended learning. When the school was operating a shadow school, workshops were delivered online and were delivered on Monday and repeated on Wednesday to ensure staff could attend.

Existing staff are encouraged to sign up for the workshop sessions and refresh their knowledge.

The school has delivered training in SCERTS, PECS, Team Teach to secondary teams and recently, Peter Vermeulen delivered 2 INSETs.

In-house training is delivered by staff who have attended full external training on specific interventions, such as So Safe, TEACCH, Signalong or Zones of Regulations.

Themed lesson observations help identify priority learning areas for the staff team. Staff and Staff teams can request training on particular areas too.

Many Queensmill TA's have become teachers within the school, either through School's Direct or other pathways. Once qualified as a teacher, there is an expectation the staff must repeat the autism induction training. The autism induction training is reported to be intense but really useful.

Twenty-two members of staff have completed Postgraduate studies in autism. The school launched its first publication, "School-Based Interventions and Autism: Case Studies of staff Research at Queensmill School", in 2019. The school's long-term commitment and active involvement in a wide range of autism-related research projects inform practice and driving the schools' progressive thinking.

On-going support available to staff in working with autistic individuals

The school demonstrated that SCERTS systems, such as the appreciative enquiry observation forms, were used to support and improve practice and identify further training.

The school started this term with a well-being INSET day run by the mental health first aiders, which are available for general staff support. They also run breakfasts and have recently developed a Well-being policy to clarify the support available to staff.

Staff reported they felt supported by their team and by leadership, appreciating the reflective and collaborative ethos and the learning and career opportunities provided by the school.

Section 2: Findings from Assessment

Personal Centred Planning

Brief description of how individual support is planned, implemented and evaluated:

According to information provided by the school:

- There is a robust transition process. Often, young people referred to Queensmill are known to the outreach service already, which, together with observations and reviewing the young persons' documentation, helps determine how and at what Queensmill provision the young persons' needs are best met.
- The young persons' teacher writes an exploratory report within the first four weeks and shares it with the Speech and Language and Occupational therapists. The report is reviewed with parents and professionals after eight weeks. At this point, the team will start setting some short and longer-term objectives, reviewing and possibly reshaping the EHCP, to reflect assessments and specialist expertise.
- The school developed and designed an assessment system on the Onwards and Upwards programme to best assess and plan to learn and get the best meaningful progression for the young people at Queensmill.
- The school's progression framework and target banks are loosely attributed to the SCERTS partner stages and social communication and emotional regulation in particular.

Documents that are reviewed termly:

- Each young person has a Pen Portrait, which has Zones of Regulation embedded within the template.
- Emotional Regulation Support Plans, replacing the Behaviour Management
- Plans are working documents focusing on the support needs rather than the behaviour.
- Teachers, together with therapists, create a Personal Learning Plans (PLP) for each learner to establish and review individual targets, using SCERTS and "I can" statements.

The school produces compelling data to evidence pupils' academic and autism progress. This data demonstrates "the whole school average rate of progress for learning was 73% this is below the running school average of 80% (Queensmill secure) over the past five years", which can be explained by interrupted learning as a result of Covid.

Research projects and case studies demonstrate impact and progress, on topics as; social thinking, Zones of Regulation, Sleepwise, and environmental barriers.

Differences in Social Communication

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Queensmill has the support of school and NHS funded Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) who work alongside each other. The Speech and Language therapists lead on allocated key-stages, using the three-tier model: universal, targeted and specialist support. The family and therapy support worker assists the therapists. The SaLTs are involved with staff training and delivering training workshops to parents and families. During lockdown, the SaLTs also produced some videos for parents on topics such as using PECS at home, and young people could attend sessions such as Attention Autism at home through the Firefly App, providing a level of continuity.

The Pen Portraits identify how each autistic young person communicates and what help they need with communication, such as PECS. The Zones of Regulation sections on these profiles include communication strategies to help the young person when they are in a particular zone, for example, "*showing me a first and then so I know what is happening*" when they feel yellow.

PLPs and the evidence for learning stores evidence that each child is set realistic goals related to their communication and social engagement, and care is taken that skills are tracked before marked as generalised. Examples are; "*Within familiar routines a child can use their communication system to request a single item*", or developing communication skills to express their feelings using a topic board and developing social skills in small group games.

The Pen Portraits are informative and are designed around the Zones of regulation, with clear headings and detailed information. These might be developed further to indicate what SCERTS communication stage a child is at, or specify the PECS level the child is currently using.

PLPs, Annual review reports and SaLT reports provide evidence that each autistic child progresses in their social interaction and communication targets. Including initiating interaction with peers or adults, developing a bond with a peer, sharing attention for 5 minutes, and choosing a peer to engage in a preferred activity. The school also uses 'I can' statements in reports such as "*I can initiate a bid for interaction*".

In interviews, staff describe how they have supported autistic children in their communication and social engagement to achieve positive outcomes. Examples include; progressing in PECS levels and learning to use their voice when PECS was not working to express their feelings. Other examples are genuine friendships developing as a result of a 'Social Thinking' group.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Within all observations, staff were making themselves understood using a range of approaches, including simplified verbal language, Makaton, bespoke visual supports and modelling. Staff were observed to allow processing time and repeat questions when required. In all observations, staff use visual aids to support simple verbal instructions. For example, the students using True / False flags to give an opinion about statements, yes-no questions helped young people answer questions, and differentiated work sheets helped students understand and access learning.

Young people can make themselves understood and record their answers to questions through access to augmentative or alternative communication systems; PECS, AACs with voice recognition, and Colourful semantics to request more. Where best practice was observed, the use of PECs and Visuals enabled spontaneous communication with adults. The use of communication and visual tool was consistently good and in around of lessons was superb and meticulously planned.

In almost all lessons, young people were provided with the opportunity and purpose to communicate as part of a group, staff, or each other. Where best practice was observed, students enjoyed playing a game together, shared resources, or making requests during food and café lessons. Role-play was used, and students used their preferred communication method, including a Pixon board, AAC's PECS or Colourful Semantics.

Communication support was differentiated and graded to the level the students were on. The communication systems were well prepared and organised and seemed to be a genuine aid to the students.

Although some staff carried lanyards or pouches with communication supports during play time, the main mode of communication was verbal and Makaton. The school should embed and further develop the communication systems which are available to pupils during unstructured times. For example, consider incorporating more communication boards into the outside spaces to enable pupils to develop their expressive language during outdoor play.

Problem Solving and Self-reliance

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

Queensmill school states in the Policy for Flexibility of Thought to Cope with Change, that they feel *"it is important that our pupils become as independent as possible, are able to make choices, are able to problem-solve"*. Therefore, the school uses an extensive list of strategies, including TEACCH, PECS and SCERTS, and Total Communication strategies to help children cope with change and anxiety.

Pen Portraits and PLPs identify each autistic child's skills and challenges in independent functioning and describe what help they need in their independent functioning, such as

staying on task or organising belongings. They use bespoke daily schedules, now and next board and timers to assist with transitions or making choices using topic boards and symbols. Examples are: *"The Speech and Language Therapist has introduced core boards, it seems as though X finds communicating through the core board more accessible than PECS"*.

PLPs identify approaches and tools for supporting autistic people in becoming more independent. For example, *"X benefits from self-care tasks being broken down into achievable steps, graded support and backward/forward chaining in order to develop his independence with these tasks gradually whilst supporting his success"*.

PLPs and Annual Review Reports provide evidence of realistic goal setting for each student, related to their independent functioning and achieve positive outcomes in carrying out activities and making choices with increasing self-reliance and autonomy. "I can" statements are used, such as, *"I can consistently use the toilet at school"*. Or *"I can use of Colourful Semantics strips to make requests, especially for chasing"*.

Review reports describe progress and targets for independent living and work experiences, such as having appropriate conversations with peers. There are meaningful pathways into work-placements, and enterprise work. Work experience has been adapted to meet Covid-19 guidelines. Still, young people continue to be provided with opportunities to develop work skills in class through Life Skills sessions or completing classroom jobs such as cleaning, organising or shredding.

Review reports also provide a narrative with photos of how maths and functional skills are developed, such as making a purchase or cooking to follow recipes and gain cooking skills.

In interviews and case studies, staff describe how they have successfully supported young people in becoming more self-reliant and making decisions. Such as progress in choice-making, becoming more independent, developing work skills, through a social thinking programme confidence has grown, and young people now enjoy expressing themselves in front of their peers. Other examples are a young person learning to self-regulate through Zones of Regulation, and progression in joining mainstream lessons and asking for breaks when they reach their threshold.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Throughout all observations, young people could work out what they must do now and next with support from a wide range of differentiated strategies and schedules. Bespoke systems are in place, supported by a clear visual structure, to aid transitions and independence.

In all observations, choice activities are planned into the various stages of the lessons and students were supported to make choices using their preferred communication supports. Students appeared confident in expressing themselves throughout, whether this was to request more bubbles or choose toppings, drama characters, or explore and discuss learning resources.

Within all observations, young people were provided with opportunities to consolidate and develop daily functional skills. In an example of best practice staff effectively used reflective questions to gauge understanding and promote road safety and independence skills. Good practice was observed in all lessons in the effective use of creative, playful and sensory motivating resources to engage children, bringing lessons to life and consolidating skills.

Young people were consistently supported to do things by themselves rather than needing to be directed by a member of staff, with some excellent examples of promoting independence, the majority of lessons were planned to a high degree, and the clear structures, transactional supports and clear steps enabled students to develop independence and to take control of their choices. While structure and organisation were consistently good in all observations, in around half of observations practice was exemplary.

Observations of the primary lunchtime showed missed opportunities to develop independence and social skills due to the way pupils were sat and the food was distributed. Consideration should be given to how the good practice observed in the secondary lunch hall could be learnt from.

Sensory Experiences

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school has a team of in-house Occupational Therapists (OT), assisted by therapy support. They deliver induction training on sensory processing, limited diets, self-care, toileting and whole school training during INSET. In addition, all new staff receive training on using the sensory rooms, the equipment and the sensory circuits. Next to the core offer, the school or class team may identify or request training. OTs, also provide training for parents and created videos on how to support young people at home.

The OT reports document collaborative approaches such as linking Zones of Regulation and the Interoception curriculum. In addition, the reports have individualised targets and outcomes, such as "by the end of KS1 A will be able to show awareness of what it means to be in different zones", showing partially achieved progress. Other examples are an increased acceptance of a range of food, using the toilet in school or accepting a range of sensory strategies to achieve or maintain a calm-alert state, with photos of equipment such as weighted blankets, vest, or Chewy Tubes.

These plans identify sensory experiences which have a positive experience on a young person such as, *"he is particularly benefiting from the low arousal environment at*

Queensmill and the low arousal approach from staff whereby demands are reduced as appropriate in response to their needs”.

Pen portraits list individualised sensory support strategies within the different Zones of regulations such as “When I feel yellow, I... may struggle to sit still. You can help me by offering me a tray with rice / sensory break”.

Support documentation specifies what approaches or tools should be employed to help young people regulate sensory experiences or avoid sensory overload, such as a

- Supportive and low-pressure eating environment.
- OT to model eating strategies to teachers and family to help introduce new foods.
- constant access to fidgets throughout the day.
- Use weighted equipment for up to 20 minutes then remove. Do not use again for at least 20.
- X does weekly yoga sessions, uses the sensory spaces around the school and participates in quiet time.

In interviews and case studies, staff describe how they have supported autistic young people in their sensory regulation and helped them achieve positive outcomes through intensive support and collaborative work with teams and home. The SCERTS in Action observation forms are used to support staff and students, give a clear insight into the classroom’s strengths and needs, set targets for class teams and students, and measure the progress. The therapy team also ran Parent-Led Feedback sessions to empower parents to use support strategies at home, demonstrate clear developments in the relationships at home and have a real positive impact on families, and also noticed in the classroom, such as increased attention or spontaneous communication.

Another example is helping families support their child with sensory seeking behaviours, when all community activities had to close because of Covid, by identifying activities and equipment they could use at home.

Teachers reported that children were learning about interoception linked to their Zones of Regulations, which helped them take breaks and self-regulate effectively whilst attending mainstream lessons.

Another child has made progress tolerating being amongst their peer during wet play.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

The environment was well planned with an autism focus. The classrooms were almost all low arousal, with plenty of outside space and separate rooms to allow sensory regulation. The main school was particularly well designed and resourced with 4 sensory rooms, soft play, and a wet room. The environment at Fulham ross girls is an outstanding example of a low arousal, calm ASD environment.

Most lessons incorporated a high level of sensory engaging and motivating activities, capturing pupils’ attention and interests to support the curriculum, for example exploring food was made fun, the Clonker Board incorporated fun sensory resources,

sensory trays were available, and tactile objects were shared to support subject learning.

Young people could explore and tolerate a range of sensory experiences within a safe and secure context, such as water play, pretending to eat play- or real food or feeding it to a puppet, popping water pearls, making noises with a distorted microphone etc.

Food-related lessons were particularly colourful, appealed to the sense of taste, touch and smell, sensory toys were available for students whilst they were waiting, or, the teacher engaged the students with changes to the pitch in their voice and positive praise. The pace made the lessons fun and engaging.

Within all observations, young people were supported to regulate sensory experiences which interfere with what they are trying to do or cause them discomfort. Young people were offered access to highly differentiated resources such as; ear defenders, request for time out, work stations, low arousal approaches, Chewy Tubes, weighted blankets, weighted or squeeze vests, special seating etc.

The school should consider introducing more play equipment to provide more opportunities for structured or free play in the outdoor play areas, creating opportunities for communication, and socialisation and reducing waiting times for popular equipment such as the swings.

Emotional Well-being

Key outcomes identified from personal support documents and staff discussions:

The school has shifted focus from behaviour management to supporting well-being and self-regulation since their last assessment. The Policy Guidance on Strategies to Reduce Pupils' Stress states, *"to enhance our ability to manage and avoid childrens' stress and to develop the ability of children to manage their own stress, the school will use the SCERTS framework and methodology to inform our practice"*.

The school introduced Pen Portraits to include detailed Zones of regulation information and support strategies when a young person feels blue, green, yellow or red. The school is in the process of replacing Behaviour Support Plans with Emotional Regulation Support Plans. Emotional Regulation Support plans focus on transactional supports to avoid a young person becoming anxious or stressed. These include risk factors for dysregulation, signs, transactional supports, skill development/ goals, and progress review. For example, *"I can take a break in the classroom"* linked to PLP and SCERTS targets. These new plans align with Zones of Regulation and reflect a detailed, informative insight into specialist autism and pupil-specific support strategies.

The school has de-escalation specialists who work in class, observe, help shape, advise, and model support strategies. Occupational and Speech and language reports

demonstrate collaborative supports to set targets for a child to be able to express how they feel and understand what they need to regulate their emotions using their voice and visuals. For example, one OT report states, "*X has managed to accept strategies when in the yellow zone (Feeling silly, excited or anxious) in order to prevent self-harming but this is not yet consistent*".

These plans show transactional supports that each young person finds enjoyable, alerting, relaxing, calming, or providing a sense of achievement and purpose. For example

- Offer comfort, e.g. head rub, deep pressure massage.
- Use a working for a deal to encourage them to have a go at activities he is unsure of.
- Use dark den in sensory corner.
- Create a calm class environment with clear routines.
- Use rewards.

The emotion regulation plans, annual reviews, and PLPs identify positive achievements and progress impacting each young person's quality of life. Such as

- They are able to recognise strategies within the zone with minimal support.
- They understood the new class strategies, Zone of Regulation tool-box, and can, with support, apply the strategies to the zone they are in.
- I can find a space to calm.
- I can take a break.
- Secure- x will always ask when he wants to spend time out of the class or make an effort to explain the reason why.

In interviews, staff can give examples of how young people have been supported, resulting in positive outcomes in terms of quality of life and life opportunities. For example, "*X emotional regulation has most definitely improved over the course of the year. X is expressive in his emotions more verbally and physically throughout the day and seems to be expressing himself more frequently throughout the day, and their confidence has grown*". Or a young person has opened up in a counselling session, obtaining a better insight on how autism affects them. Another young person had indicated they didn't want to go to their work placement because they were tired. Since then, they learned to ask for breaks and is much happier.

Key outcomes identified from observation/review of key activities:

Students appeared happy and calm or were supported empathetically with their anxieties, using proactive and preventive support strategies to help student regulate.

Lessons were consistently calm, with well-being and self-regulation being supported using breaks, routines, visuals, sensory regulation, distraction and humour.

In all observations the transactional support of students who became temporarily disengaged from a task was undertaken calmly with minimal language and the use of visuals.

During all lesson observations, proactive and preventative strategies were used to avoid anxiety, confusion or distress from occurring or escalating, where young people were offered breaks, or given time out and choices to help their recovery.

Only one use of physical intervention was observed when a child became distressed after hurting himself in the playground. Minimal restraint was employed and was in order that the child's injury could be examined and dealt with.

During observations of the primary playground, other young people appeared unsettled and not actively engaged in an activity. One child was causing another child to be upset.

The school should consider introducing more play equipment providing more structured or free play opportunities, assisted by Zones of regulation and communication systems, creating communication and socialisation opportunities, and reducing waiting times for popular equipment such as the swings. Staff should also take a more active role in ensuring that playtime is a positive and constructive opportunity for the pupils.

Autistic people are supported to understand and regulate their emotions, where staff were labelling and offering transactional supports. For example, "*I can see you are in the yellow zone. Would you like me you give you a squeeze?*". Students were supported to take breaks without disrupting the smooth running of the lessons.

The relationships between adults and students are very strong, with respect seen on both sides. Young people are provided with meaningful positive feedback to boost confidence and self-esteem and reward systems and deals to keep them motivated.

All lessons were planned well, making learning relevant and fun, so that young people were engaged in meaningful activities which they find fun or interesting. Where best practice was observed, students were motivated by the topic and evidently were enjoying the project.

Many lessons incorporated engaging sensory activities, which encouraged young people to enjoy the challenge of trying out or learning a new activity or skill, such as Clonker Board, water play, or exploring foods.

The use of positivity and praise in all lessons motivated the students and gave them confidence to contribute with their own ideas.

The school has developed the Pen portraits to be accessible for students to read, these are currently on display on the walls. However, the school may want to consider putting them in a folder or a more discreet way to understand private and public information.

Consultation with Autistic young people

The school reports that student-voice is integral to all practice at the school.

- During learning activities, staff follow the students lead and use their motivators and special interests.
- Students are invited to contribute to their annual and person-centred reviews, either through attending in person, via video link or PowerPoint.
- There is a school council where students are involved in decisions such as the logo for the new school, how to spend particular budgets or to choose school trips.
- Students have been on interview panels asking questions they feel are important when appointing senior leaders, for example, on what changes they would want to make.
- The 'I am special' programme is delivered to help students understand how autism affects them.
- Students are offered 'talk time', which is one-to-one time with a teacher to talk through issues. Using the Zones of Regulations or using the Social Thinking model.
- The school listens and learns from the wider Autism community to inform practice and has recently joined Twitter #actuallyautistic.
- Ten students completed the survey and indicated they thought the school was good.

Consultation with families of Autistic young people

- The school has a Family Support Practitioner who offers an extensive range of support to families.
- The school offers various workshops to parents such as Cygnet and topics, such as routines, sleep, sensory, well-being, and safety: online and in the community.
- The school runs coffee mornings, which are currently online. Parents reported they missed the face-to-face mornings and the community that Queensmill provides.
- The response to Covid lockdowns was effective and received well. The school risk assessed and provided full-time placements for the most vulnerable students whilst offering blended learning of a minimum of 2 days a week in-school learning to all other students.
- During the lockdown, the school made weekly contact with families and carers to track engagement with remote and home learning. In addition, the school shared home learning resources via the 'FireFly' App and offered printed out resources and support to families.
- The Family Support Officer facilitates a buddy system where a new parent is matched with an established Queensmill parent.

- Families are invited to parents' evenings, annual reviews and meetings to discuss targets and progress.

The six parents interviewed were all very positive, giving many examples of support the school offered at different times before and throughout lockdown, for example the training offer and the support from teachers. Parents reported they were happy with the information and resources they received from school during the lockdown, and they were pleased with the progress their children were making. 85% of the families spoke highly of the expertise and knowledge of the school team. They reported feeling listened to and appreciated the proactive, collaborative teamwork they offer around the child. One parent said, "God made the perfect school in Queensmill". However, one parent reported that the enterprise activities during lockdown could be a bit more challenging.

- 118 (46%) family members provided feedback to the assessment team by returning completed questionnaires. The full results are shown as an appendix to this report. Around 85% of the families spoke highly of the expertise and knowledge of the school team. They reported feeling listened to and appreciated the proactive, collaborative teamwork they offer around the child.
- 15% of the family rated the support their child received as less than good. This is a concern which the school will wish to explore and address.
- In total, 34 family members chose to leave a comment on the completed questionnaire, which are found in the appendix to this report.

"Queensmill are outstanding in every single area of supporting my son and my family. They, without fail, go above and beyond to provide individualised care and support. "So happy with Queensmill. I trust them completely and all the staff couldn't be nicer. They all know all the children and teach and treat them like individuals, helping them to become their very best self"

Involvement with the wider community

In addition to the information provided in the advanced status application form, the assessors wish to highlight activities the school undertakes within the wider community:

- Queensmill has a long-term commitment and is actively involved in a wide range of autism-related research projects, informing practice and driving the schools' progressive thinking. The school launched its first publication, "School-Based Interventions and Autism: Case Studies of staff Research at Queensmill School", in 2019. In addition, the school works in partnership with universities and teacher training organisations.
- The school has an outreach team of 10 LSAs offering training, advice, interventions and support in 18 schools across Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea. The team supports autistic children in mainstream

schools. This prevents placements from breaking down or assists with transitions into Queensmill provisions.

- The school has continued their international outreach offer with Sierra Leone and China and has received Erasmus funding to be involved in projects across Europe.
- The school introduced the Q-inclusive awards. As part of Autism Awareness week, certificates are given to local businesses and services to raise awareness and acceptance in the local community. "Queensmill wanted to celebrate such relationships by awarding businesses/services with a 'Q' certification (framed, signed certificate and window stickers) as well as making the community aware that these places support autistic individuals and are inclusive locations that they can access in the community."
- Q Sibs is a monthly Saturday play session for siblings attend, this is valued by the siblings and families as it gives them a morning to be with friends, who share similar experiences where the focus is on the siblings. One sibling wrote "it means the world to me".
- The school is responsive and creative in their ever-developing service provision offer. Q house was initially set up as a respite provision but has become a home to 3 students for whom suitable housing was unavailable.
- A video submitted "WHAT IS ART?" has won a spot on the Royal Academy's Online Gallery and secured a place to be exhibited at the Royal Academy.
- In September 2018 Queensmill started a one year transition to work Project SEARCH internship program for young people aged 18-24 with autism and learning difficulties. This is in partnership with Chelsea & Westminster Hospital Trust and based at West Middlesex University Hospital in Isleworth, London. The school offers support and training to the hospital and works closely with their HR departments.

Section 3: Summary of assessment

What the provision does particularly well

What stood out as particular strengths:

Queensmill has a long-term commitment and is actively involved in a wide range of autism-related research projects, informing practice and driving the schools' progressive thinking. The school launched its first publication, "School-Based Interventions and Autism: Case Studies of staff Research at Queensmill School" in 2019.

Queensmill school is sharing its expertise in many ways, locally, nationally and internationally, from partaking in research, collaborative work through the Erasmus schemes, internships projects, supporting older students into work, including a local hospital, outreach, support in China and Sierra Leone.

Most recently, the Q-inclusive awards given to local businesses and services as part of Autism Awareness Week to raise awareness and acceptance in the local community.

Q Sibs is a monthly Saturday play session for siblings to attend. The siblings and families value this as it gives them a morning to be with friends who share similar experiences where the focus is on the siblings. One sibling wrote, "it means the world to me".

The school is responsive and creative in their ever-developing service provision offer. For example, Q house was initially set up as a respite provision but has become a home to 3 students for whom suitable housing was unavailable.

The assessment team observed highly creative, engaging, and personalised support within lessons, ranging from low demand sensory-based learning to structured teaching. Many lessons demonstrated outstanding, or exemplary features. The school has robust systems in place to identify and support the few areas where practice could be developed further.

- Communication support was differentiated and graded to the level the students were on. The communication systems were well prepared and organised and seemed to be a genuine aid to the students.
- In all observations, students were supported to make choices using their preferred communication supports. Students appeared confident in expressing themselves.
- Staff referenced and used language in line with the Zones of Regulation to develop students understanding. Lessons were consistently calm, with well-being and self-regulation being supported using breaks, routines, visuals, sensory regulation, distraction and humour.
- All lessons demonstrated consistent transition support, marking when activities ended using count downs, now and next and bespoke visual tools to support what was happening next. Students appeared confident and engaged with the sequencing of the lessons. In a couple of classes, teachers playfully sabotaged the choices, and students were enjoying correcting the teachers.

The environment is well planned with an autism focus. The classrooms were all low arousal, with plenty of outside space and separate rooms to allow sensory regulation. The main school is exceptionally well-resourced, with various sensory

rooms, soft play, and a wet room. The environment at Fulham Cross Girls is an outstanding example of low arousal, calm ASD environment.

The school has a comprehensive training package: The induction and CPD programme are detailed and high-quality. In addition, the school demonstrated that staff used SCERTS systems to support and improve practice.

Staff reported they felt supported and appreciated the learning and career opportunities provided by the school. Many teachers started as TAs and have been supported to gain teaching qualifications. In addition, 22 staff have completed postgraduate degrees in autism, contributing to the impressive bank of case studies and research projects, which inform practice.

Collaborative practice with therapy teams and MDT approaches and reflective practice drive pupil-centred practices. The school has systems ensuring pupils learning and support needs are addressed timely and regularly reviewed through meetings, forums, drop-ins and reflection.

The school produces compelling data to evidence pupils' academic and autism progress. This data demonstrates "the whole school average rate of progress for learning was 73% this is below the running school average of 80% (Queensmill secure) over the past five years." Research projects and case studies demonstrate impact and progress in for example social thinking, Zones of Regulation, Sleepwise, environmental barriers, to name but a few.

The response to Covid lockdowns was effective and received well. The school risk assessed and provided full-time placements for the most vulnerable students whilst offering blended learning of a minimum of 2 days a week in-school learning to all other students. The school provided tailored home learning packs on the Firefly App, and tracked engagement with families.

What else the provision does well:

Students appeared happy and calm or were supported empathetically with their anxieties, using proactive and preventive support strategies to help student regulate.

Most lessons incorporated a high level of sensory engaging and motivating activities, capturing pupils' attention and interests to support the curriculum.

85% of the families spoke highly of the expertise and knowledge of the school team. They reported feeling listened to and appreciate the proactive, collaborative teamwork they offer around the child.

Identified by the school

The school operates on total autism acceptance and embracing individuality whilst focusing on well-being. They are preparing students with the skills needed for

happy, successful futures. Across all Queensmill provisions, there is a focus on Functional Communication, self-regulation, well-being, play and interaction skills, personal understanding of what makes them happy, understand what Autism is for them, what is fun, work skills, leisure skills, independents and self-care skills.

What the provision could develop further

Priorities for the provision:

The school should build on the good practice and structures available in the secondary lunch hall. The primary lunch hall would benefit from a similar structure and counter-style set-up and a clearing station to enable pupils to learn to navigate lunch-time more independently.

The school should consider introducing more play equipment and for staff to take a more active role to provide more opportunities for structured or free play. This would create opportunities for communication, socialisation and reducing waiting times for popular equipment such as the swings.

Around half of the families completed the survey, 15% of the family rated their child's support as less than good, a concern that the school will wish to explore and address.

Areas to consider:

Embed and further develop the communication systems which are available to pupils during unstructured times. Consider incorporating more communication boards into the outside spaces to enable pupils to develop their expressive language during outdoor play.

The recently redesigned Pen Portraits are informative, designed around the Zones of Regulation, with clear headings and detailed information. These might be developed further to indicate what SCERTs communication stage a child is at, specify the PECS level the child is currently using and perhaps elevating essential sensory self-regulation equipment.

The school has developed Pen portraits to be accessible for students to read. These are currently on display. However, the school may want to consider putting them in a folder or a more discreet way to understand private and public information.

Next steps identified by the school:

Create more opportunities for staff and young people to meet, engage with, and learn from autistic people.

Develop more community links to create more work experience and employment opportunities for young adults leaving our provision.

Alumni group—parents and students.

Q-Inclusive to develop into an annual event for staff, students, and community.
Supporting students to have access to build relationships within the wider autistic community.
Development, establishment, and full implementation of interoception and social well-being framework.

APPENDIX 1: ADVANCED APPLICATION FORM

AUTISM ACCREDITATION: APPLICATION FORM FOR ADVANCED STATUS

In order to achieve an Advanced Award you must show that you are an outstanding and innovative provision that goes well beyond similar provisions. Please complete this form to give examples of initiatives that make you stand out and most important of all the impact they have had for autistic people. Copy and paste where you may have more than one example. However the entire application including case-studies should not exceed 1000 words.

Please note you are also required to include case-studies (please refer to additional guidance) as part of your application. It is also important to recognise that the application form and case-studies are only part of a bigger picture, with considerable emphasis being given within the award process to observation of practice, personal centred support plans and surveys.

Part 1: Professional Development
Initiatives or innovations that impact on staff insight into the personal experience of being autistic e.g. regular involvement of autistic people in professional development activities or review of practice.
<p>Expert Speakers</p> <p>Queensmill School provides high-quality CPD sessions and training for staff (see training list) that puts the personal experience of being autistic at its heart. We have had a number of guest speakers including a parent governor and an adult autistic speaker, both reflecting on their school experiences. In addition, all staff have attended two virtual twilight CPD sessions with Peter Vermeulen on his latest research into autism, well-being and happiness. A number of school staff have also undertaken a Postgraduate Certificate in Autism with CRAE, where they have been able to meet, and learn from, a number of autistic adults and researchers. We also have a growing library for staff with a number of books written by autistic adults about their experiences.</p>
<p>Impact</p> <p>Staff at Queensmill are extremely well trained and increasingly well-informed on the latest research and discussions within the autistic community. Staff have a reflective approach to their practice and are willing to adapt where necessary. For instance, we have recently adapted our Social Thinking initiative to reflect the concerns and reservations from the autistic community.</p>

Launch of Queensmill Twitter (@queensmillscho1)

A recent innovation has been the launch of our Queensmill Twitter account (see Q Inclusive Case Study). This is enabling us to share the successes of our students, learn from others (for example, by following #actuallyautistic) and advocate for autistic voices through following and sharing accounts. We are aiming to create a 'Twitter Board' in school where staff can reflect on the latest views from the autistic community and their own practice.

Impact

Using Twitter has increased staff awareness and appreciation of autistic voices and perspectives. It has led to a range of further initiatives, including a review of Social Thinking and a small group of staff taking on the role of 'Twitter Advocates'.

Initiatives or innovations that ensure that specialist approaches or techniques are fully understood, consistently implemented and regularly reviewed.

High-quality programme of CPD

We invest significantly in staff training to ensure all staff feel confident and have the specialist skills to support our students. All teachers have attended SCERTS, PECS and Team Teach training (see training list). In addition, we have specific members of staff who have attended So Safe, Zones of Regulation, TEACCH, Social Thinking and Signalong (see Social Thinking Case Study). They take responsibility for disseminating the knowledge and skills amongst the rest of the staff body. Phase leaders also meet their teams regularly to share ideas, review initiatives and moderate student work. Subject leaders also meet in their teams once per term to review schemes of work, spending, enrichment opportunities and the embedding of key initiatives in their subject area. Knowledge, understanding and implementation is assessed through focused observations of staff each term, regular meetings, moderation of student work in small groups, regular reviews of the Pupil Assessment folders and assessment data and yearly subject review presentations.

Impact

Staff have robust specialist knowledge and embed a range of autism specific strategies and approaches into their daily practice. Queensmill are also keen to invest and learn about new methods and approaches and how they can be implemented to support our students. We are currently undertaking a review of how new interventions and initiatives are introduced to Queensmill. We are trialling a new model with Zones of Regulation to encourage more collaboration, creativity and in-depth understanding. Alongside this, we have introduced Emotional Regulation Support Plans, to replace Behaviour Support Plans (see Person Centred Support Plans sample). We plan for these to relate

to Zones of Regulation, focus on more on strategies to support students' emotional regulation and reduce the negative discourse around 'behaviours'.

Home Learning- Firefly

The pandemic has been an incredibly challenging time for everyone. During periods of school closure, self-isolation and shadow school, we have had to train staff to use our home learning platform (Firefly) and work hard to create content our students and parents are able to access. We began with whole staff training via Microsoft Teams, followed by small working groups and voluntary support sessions. For parents, we provided video instructions on how to use the platform. Once staff were confident using the platform, we monitored the content being uploaded and who was logging on. Further training was offered and regular contact was made with students not engaging regularly. Some staff offered live lessons to their students, and these were supported by the senior management and the therapy teams.

Impact

Many students appreciated the opportunity to connect with school and familiar activities whilst at home. Pre-recorded video sessions were particularly popular (big book, circle time, art, PE and yoga). Students we support through our Outreach service were also able to access these- and feedback from these schools and their families was very positive (see Remote learning Report).

Part 2: Outcomes for individuals

Initiatives or innovations that have had a considerable impact on the quality of life and inclusion of autistic people e.g. programmes; projects; therapeutic interventions social enterprises etc.

Creative Arts

The Creative arts team comprises of specialist art, music and drama practitioners who teach across the school. This year the creative arts team have created a number of interactive installations for students to enjoy and learn from. These have based around popular topics such as transport and dinosaurs. In addition, the team have also produced a video for the Royal Academy of Arts, one of the first ever entries from a special school. We are eagerly awaiting the results.

Impact

Creative arts is a much valued part of the Queensmill curriculum and offers students the opportunity to showcase their individuality and creativity. All students access a range of different creative art activities during the week and enjoy special one off events. The creative arts team has led to some create collaborations with other groups, charities and organisations such as Flute Theatre, Kelly Hunter, Royal Academy of Arts, Lyric Theatre, Stomp, Open Minds and A New Direction (see student case studies)

Outdoor Learning

This year the PE department have worked to develop the outdoor learning opportunities for students. The PE department run a weekly Forest School for early years, Athletics for secondary students and individualised outdoor activities for 1:1 sessions. Each year we conduct a range of residential trips in order to develop student independence, offer respite to our families and engage students in out of school learning opportunities. Residential trips over the past few years have included Jamie’s Farm, skiing in Spain and sailing on the south coast. This year we have also enrolled fifty students in the Duke of Edinburgh award and aim to undertaken the camping expeditions in the summer.

Impact

Outdoor learning is a popular activity at Queensmill. Students thrive outdoors and develop functional skills alongside the mental and physical benefits of outdoor exercise. In addition, residential trips have proved invaluable in creating positive memories, developing confidence and learning new skills. Students also gain nationally recognised qualifications such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. It also enables parents, carers and siblings to enjoy a period of respite.

Work experience opportunities

We offer students a range of work experience opportunities in school, and in the local community. Our students volunteer at Chiswick House and Gardens, run a weekly cake staff in Lyric Square and have supported the creation of Westfield Nature Reserve. In school we have a weekly Q-Café and Q-Gym, both of which are supported by student volunteers. In addition, Project Search, our supported internship programme, is currently in its third year of running at West Middlesex hospital (see supported internship case study). This year the project is operating with six students, a Queensmill teacher and a number of work coaches. Finally, we are working on a new social enterprise project as a pathway to employment. We are hoping this will begin in the next academic year.

Impact

Work experience enables our students to grow in self-confidence and develop work skills that will allow them to gain employment in the future. We have a number of students who have moved on to part time jobs, apprenticeships and voluntary work.

Initiatives or innovations that empower autistic people as experts in their own lives e.g. examples of co-production; working in partnership; developing effective consultation tools and processes to ensure that autistic people have a voice etc

School Council

We have an active school council who meet once per term to discuss a range of issues. Each class and resource base votes for a student representative to attend meetings. Meetings are carefully structured with visuals and other transactional supports to enable everyone to engage and have a voice. Topics up for discussion at the next meeting include well-being and activities students would like to see resume once Coronavirus restrictions have lifted.

Impact

The school council is an important way of empowering students to work in partnership with school and feel their views and ideas are being considered. Some students were also involved in the interview process for the position of Head Teacher at the new school, Kensington Queensmill. Students really enjoyed taking part in the interviews and asking a range of questions.

Q-Inclusive

This is a new initiative for this year to coincide with Autism Awareness/Acceptance week. We presented a range of local businesses and charities' Q-Inclusive' framed certificates to recognise their role in supporting our students and their community inclusivity. This year's awards went to the Bush Theatre, Better Gym and Swimming, Tesco Acton Vale and Askew Café. The awards were presented by student representatives and celebrated on Twitter (see Q-Inclusive case study and Q-Inclusive magazine).

Impact

The 'Q-Inclusive' awards have been extremely well-received by the local community and there are plans to expand the initiative next year and create more opportunities for students to engage with the awards and support the decision making process on who should win. We also hope to host a community award event in the future.

I am Special

Over the past year and a half, we have run a number of small workshop style discussion groups following the 'I am Special' curriculum. We have delivered these sessions to small groups of students in our secondary resource bases, in collaboration with teachers, parents, speech and language and OTs. We identify students we think would understand, and benefit, from learning more about their autism. Following this, we meet with parents and explain the curriculum. We adapt the resource where appropriate and conclude with a presentation event (see I am Special book).

Impact

We have found that many of the students at the resource bases are aware of their autism diagnosis but have a very superficial understanding of what this means. We found that, through I am Special, students' understanding has developed and matured. This has enabled them to communicate better with others and advocate for themselves when out in the community and

developing their independence. We have also found that, after the topic, many students feel much more positive about themselves.

Part 3: Sharing of Expertise and development of knowledge and understanding

Initiatives or innovations that have had a significant impact on how families, other professionals or members of the public understand and respond to autistic people
e.g. outreach support; training for other professionals, families; sharing best practice at events etc.

Collaborating with host settings

We have a number of Resource Bases and specialist provisions at a range of local primary and secondary schools. These enable some of our students to access a specialist provision whilst also benefiting from access to mainstream school lessons and activities. We also have our supported internship at West Middlesex Hospital. We work in collaboration with the schools and other settings- delivering autism training, introducing new interventions and running assemblies to educate and raise awareness of their students.

Impact

Our partner schools and organisations have reported their knowledge, skills and experience of autism has been enhanced through our work.

Outreach Service

Our Outreach provision currently provides specialist input in over 25 schools across Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea. This ranges from organising evening CPD sessions to working 1:1 with a young person to implement a range of strategies to support them in accessing a mainstream school environment.

Impact

The schools we work with have been very clear that they could not meet the needs of their young people without our support. Our service has supported schools to adapt their setting and teaching and create a more inclusive environment.

Support for Families

We offer a number of parent workshops throughout the year, mainly led by our family support worker and therapies teams. Topics range from toilet training, selective eating and mental health and well-being. In addition, we offer some activities for parents to support their mental well-being- including coffee mornings, yoga and art workshops. Furthermore, Q-Sibs is a group that meets once per month to offer support to siblings of our students. This gives them an opportunity to discuss things that are difficult about having an autistic sibling, have some respite from the family home and make friends.

Impact

We aim to offer parents and families support to understand autism better and allow them time for their own mental and physical well-being. The groups and sessions are well attended and valued by our school community.

University Partnerships

We have developed a number of links with universities and teacher training organisations to support their learning and understanding of autism. We work with the West London Teaching Alliance, delivering training and creating opportunities for their student teachers to see our practice. We are also involved with supporting Roehampton and St Marys university to develop the special educational needs aspects of their teacher training. Finally, we work in collaboration with CRAE and host an annual visit from their students undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Autism.

Impact

Working with universities on their teacher training has led to their trainee teachers having a better appreciation for children with autism in mainstream and special settings and has use to share our practice with others and develop new links with other institutions.

Initiatives or innovations that have significantly increased knowledge and understanding of best practice in supporting autistic people e.g. involvement in action research; development of resources; partnership work; publications etc.

Research Board

Our Research and Development Board meet regularly to lead and monitor relevant R&D projects in school. The board also publish regular newsletters and magazines, detailing research taking place in school (see Research Board magazine).

Impact

We are constantly being asked to participate in research projects and the Research Board have been able to look at the research opportunities and select those that they feel are of benefit to students, families and school staff.

International Partnerships

We have developed a number of links with international organisations and schools that specialise in ASD. We are partnered with a specialist provision in Sierra Leone and organised a number of staff exchanges. In addition, we have been working with specialists in China to develop their provisions and practice. We are also participating in the Erasmus+ programme - we are currently involved in two different projects across Europe. These projects include a mixed of structured courses and job shadow exchanges.

Impact

Our links with international schools and organisations has enabled us to send a number of staff on exchange programmes around the world. This has led to them bringing back new ideas and ways of working. Following a trip to Malta last year, staff returned with a range of new ideas for better using ICT in school, for utilising volunteers effectively, for fundraising and for developing our outreach provision.

Part 4: Validation

Validation from other bodies or professionals s e.g. awards; summative evaluation data; inspections etc.

OFSTED

Queensmill School has been rated as 'outstanding' in four successive inspections, the most recent being May 2018.

Previous National Autistic Society moderations

Queensmill School has achieved advanced status awards in previous moderations and has previously described Queensmill's practice as 'cutting-edge'.

Other Awards

Princess Royal Training Award (2016)
Inclusion Quality Mark (Flagship Status) (2017)
National Training Award (2008)
National Pupil Premium Award (2015)

Criteria for Autism Accreditation Advanced Award

CRITERIA	NOTES
Statutory Inspectors consider service to have outstanding features. Nothing is scored as less than good.	The Committee will consider ratings from the last statutory report and quality of life outcomes for the autistic individuals attending the provision.
There are many considerable areas of strength with no or minor actions for development. Highlighted areas of development are likely to address issues that the service is already working on or fine-tuning practice which is already of a very good standard.	The Committee will consider evidence of what the provision does well and what it needs to work on from the latest Autism Accreditation assessment.
A high-quality programme of continuous Professional Development is in place. It	The Committee will consider evidence from the latest Autism

<p>ensures that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. Overall support is clearly based on methods and approaches that produce positive outcomes for autistic people.</p>	<p>Accreditation report of what training and professional development staff receive and how this is evident in observed practice. It will also refer to Section 1 of the Application form.</p>
<p>Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how each autistic person communicates and socially interacts</p>	<p>The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.</p>
<p>Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people to become more independent,</p>	<p>The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.</p>
<p>Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their sensory regulation</p>	<p>The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.</p>
<p>Although there may be a few minor areas for improvement, the overwhelming majority of practice is informed by an excellent understanding of how to support autistic people in their emotional well-being</p>	<p>The Committee will consider evidence from the relevant section of the latest Autism Accreditation report, Section 2 of the Application form and relevant case-studies.</p>
<p>Feedback from families and/or autistic people shows that an overwhelming majority are happy with the service e.g. over half very happy and the rest happy/ Only a tiny minority are unhappy e.g. one or two respondents.</p>	<p>The Committee will consider surveys carried out by Autism Accreditation. An overwhelming majority would normally be defined as 75 % or more respondents.</p>
<p>The service shares expertise through quality consultation and training as well as actively contributing to research into autism and innovations in practice.</p>	<p>The Committee will consider part 3 of the Application form and relevant case studies.</p>

CASE studies

Social thinking

The initiative developed from **4 staff members receiving the full training** to disseminating the information and knowledge across the school to enable everyone to teach Social Thinking and use the vocabulary in the classroom and around school. Following the training, it was quite a daunting challenge to ensure all staff in school understood the concepts and felt confident in its delivery. We also wanted to empower staff to teach Social Thinking in a way that works for their students and to be able to create, and share, their own ideas. Another challenge was considering how it could be adapted for social partners and younger children. We came to the conclusion that aspects of Social Thinking, including core vocabulary, could be introduced at an early stage through games and songs, and the more complex concepts were best implemented in small group, targeted teaching. **Lesson observations** in 2019 and 2020 showed that staff were using Social Thinking creatively in a variety of lessons and activities throughout the school day. Students involved were able to use the vocabulary to reflect on their own, and others, behaviour and interactions with others. Although the pandemic has reduced the opportunity for small group teaching across classes, we hope to reintroduce this when safe. We will also look to consolidate the use of vocabulary and supporting visuals so that it can be implemented around school rather than just in lessons.

Update (w/b. 22.02.21)- Following reading of <https://dorseyslp.com/blog/michelle-garcia-winner-good-intentions-are-not-good-enough> **written by a young autistic woman** (Rachel Dorsey), where she raises concerns regarding Social Thinking as a methodology, we met as a team to discuss. We decided to **begin the process of creating a bespoke 'social well-being curriculum' for Queensmill**. We decided to combine the best aspects of Social Thinking, Open Minds and our own ideas. Twilight staff training with Peter Vermuelen on autism and well-being fitted in well with our new agenda and we are in the planning stages now

What support was introduced? What approaches, strategies and methods were used?

SM moved from Fulham Primary Queensmill Unit to Q5 at Fulham Cross Girls School in 2017. A range of approaches, strategies and methods were used to support SM including:

Specific teaching in **Zones of Regulation and Social Thinking** to support self-regulation and social skills

Frequent activities and trips out in the community to motivate and support SM

Significant work with a range of supporting adults including speech and language therapist, CAMHS, art therapist and social services

Opportunities for social engagement and supported peer interaction around things that are motivating for SM e.g. Q5 Club, residential trips etc

Providing positive peer role models, a consistent staff and rewards system

Mental health support through participation in Open Minds project

Attending inclusion lessons with peer group from Fulham Cross Girls

Pen picture of individual before support was introduced including challenges, difficulties etc

SM has difficulties regulating emotions, understanding the intentions of others, responding appropriately to peers and adults, communicating when anxious and accepting help from adults. SM's life at home is challenging and supported by a social worker. Changes at home are frequent and unsettling. Appropriate behaviour and communication is not always modelled effectively at home. Prior to specific strategies and support being introduced challenges included:

- Regularly refusing to join in class activities
- Biting, scratching and hitting adults and peers
- Screaming and dropping to the floor
- Biting and threatening to kill herself
- Swearing at others

OUTCOMES

Communication skills ; social skills ; relationships

SM's **communication skills have developed dramatically** over the period. She presents as a confident young lady and is able to hold a conversation with an unfamiliar adult or peer with some support. When

talking to familiar adults and peers, SM is very independent and enjoys social interaction. Through constant reassurance and role play activities, SM is now more confident in social situations and is no longer so anxious that she will not be understood. She is able to tolerate being asked to repeat herself and, with support, is able to repair breakdowns in understanding. SM now has a good understanding of expected and unexpected behaviours from Social Thinking and is able to recognise these in herself and others. When calm, SM can adapt, change and correct her own behaviour when necessary. SM can also use Social Behaviour Mapping to talk through issues with a familiar adult and understand the consequences.

SM has excellent relationships with her peers and a number of close friendships. She is no longer physically aggressive towards her peers and is able to share her interests with them and listen to them in a conversation.

Confidence ; self-reliance ; independent problem solving

SM's **confidence has grown enormously**. She is able to talk to unfamiliar adults and peers, she is more confident to try new or unfamiliar activities and she is able to ask for help and support when necessary. She is far more self-reliant and, in the familiar environment of school, is able to organise herself, follow her schedule and use a range of self-help skills. SM can still become very anxious when presented with a problem but she has become much more resilient when faced with problems or changes. She is able to recognise when she needs to ask for help and can increasingly solve problems without much support. Academically she has made significant progress- especially in reading (something she finds very anxiety-inducing) but has been supported to improve (through use of special interest-ornithology- and TEACCH structured tasks)

Ability to cope with sensory input

SM still finds it difficult to cope in noisy and unpredictable environments. She can be easily distracted and struggle to stay on task. **SM understands, and can use, a range of strategies to support herself** to manage sensory overload.

Emotional self-regulation and well-being

SM's episodes of dysregulation have reduced from 2-3 times a day in 2017 to just a couple of incidents in a term in 2020. The period of time dysregulation lasts has decreased from hours to just a few minutes. SM

uses Zones of Regulation to express her feelings and choose appropriate strategies to self-regulate. SM also has a better understanding of her own well-being and mental health after work completed with the class teacher, social worker and as part of the Open Minds project.

Achievements, successes and quality of life outcomes

- Gold badge awarded by Fulham Cross head teacher for services to the school (2018)
- Performed on stage at the Lyric Theatre in a play devised by the class group with support of the drama teacher (2018)
- Attended week long residential (2017)
- Performed at Poetry by Heart competition (2019)
- Adapted and coped well with changes and anxieties of the coronavirus pandemic (2020)
- Able to understand the needs of others enough to maintain a positive relationship with her mother despite not living together (2019-20)

Sapphire's Views

"I think since coming to Q5 Fulham Cross School, I have grown up a lot I have made a lot of friends since coming here. I also feel a lot more confident doing my work especially reading and writing. I also felt really proud of myself when during my swimming lessons with Q5, I worked hard and moved from the small pool to the big pool. When I was in year 8 I also was awarded an empower badge from the school's head teacher for choosing to keep the playground tidy, because all the girls in the school put the litter on the floor, instead of in the bin So I used a litter picker to clean it up. I was really surprised but felt happy. I felt grown up when I moved upstairs with year 11 as I was in year 10. I feel since moving upstairs I am managing to handle tricky situations, or problems much better and more calmly"

Next steps ; transition

The next steps for SM will be around developing independence and increased opportunities for social engagement outside of a supported school environment. This includes support SM and her family to allow her more **opportunities for independent travel and social opportunities** at the weekend. This would include some work on internet safety and appropriate mobile phone use to give SM a chance to develop her friendships. Next Year, SM will be in year 11 and work

will begin on **transition to college**. SM has the skills to be very successful in a supported college placement with a chance to develop her independent living skills.

APPENDIX 4: Queensmill school follow up assessment visit 15.3.2022

The purpose of this visit was to discuss and present further evidence to the committee to consider the advanced application dating back to the assessment in June 2021.

Since then one the school structure has changed:

- Main school,
- Fulham primary,
- Fulham Cross Academy (now boys and girls)

The 3 areas considered were:

1/ An updated plan of action addressing areas of development related to lunchtime and playtime arrangements and activities and access to tools and resources to promote communication and social interaction outside the classroom.

2/ An updated plan of action showing how the school has sought to identify why a minority of parents have a negative perception of the support their child receives and steps taken to restore their trust. It is suggested that there may be a need to break this down for each setting to identify if these are the parents of a particular cohort.

3/ A second survey. Whilst it is acknowledged that it can take time to shift parental perspectives and perhaps longer than six months, it would be hoped that the second survey shows a trend in the right direction.

Action plans and schedules

Parent engagement: [Queensmill school- Master Development Plan](#)

Lunch and Play time:

[Queensmill Teaching and learning monitoring schedule](#)

[queensmill Spring 1 2022 Final Training Calendar](#)

[queensmill Spring 2 2022 Final Training Calendar](#)

Parent engagement:

The school carried out their own survey. Around 30% of the parents completed the schools survey [queensmill Parents survey results autumn 2021](#). The school invited parents to attend a virtual feedback session, where the school shared their analysis of

areas to develop, things parents were pleased about and what further actions the school could take. For example resuming in person training and coffee mornings, introducing meet and greet the class in September, teachers to find ways to share pupils achievements and increase parent workshops.

Lunch time support

The school has reorganised the lunch time set up with a catering trolley in the primary lunch hall, staggered lunches and use of other lunch areas to reduce crowds, as well as increased and bespoke visuals for students to express them selves, make choices and facilitate independence.

[Queensmill: Actions from EYs & Primary department Lunchtime meeting](#)

[Queensmill: next steps following kitchen staff training](#)

Play time support

The school showed SCERTS play and Leisure observations, focusing on what supports are working, and what the next steps are.

The therapy team delivered play and break time training to staff. This focussed on what play is, how staff can facilitate play and playground games. The training also covered what visual resources the teams should use for playtimes, the school deemed PECS not practical and introduced simple and more complex core boards, in addition to sentence strips and symbols on staffs' lanyards. Core boards were introduced near entrée and exit points, but these get removed by particular students. Class teams were encouraged to develop play activities, meeting students interests, communication and sensory regulation needs.

Observations in the lunch hall and playground

Bespoke communication tools were clearly present and accessed by both staff and students to facilitate receptive and expressive communication during lunch and play times. These visuals supported play and lunch choices, independence and provide structure on what was happening next.

Next steps are to introduce a progression for some students to make lunch requests at the lunch counter, rather than at their table.

During lunch time, sensory support was considered, such as were the students were sitting, through sensory resources such as chewies or ear defenders and with their lunch choices, some students were supported in motivating activities within the lunch environment as part of their programme. The Occupational therapist is spending time with students, to help with sensory regulation and introducing students to new foods. The school uses the SOS feeding approach.

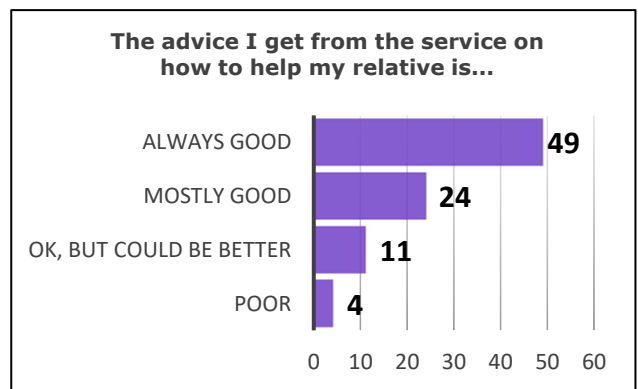
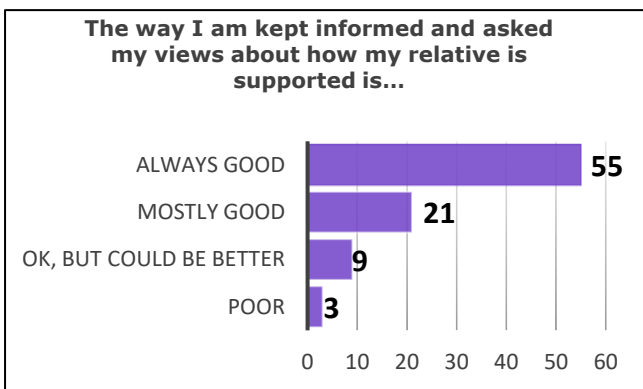
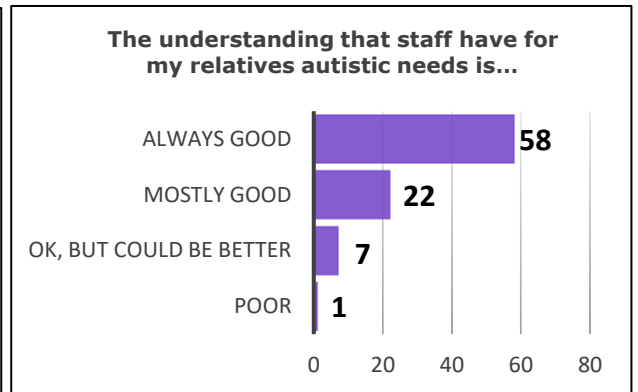
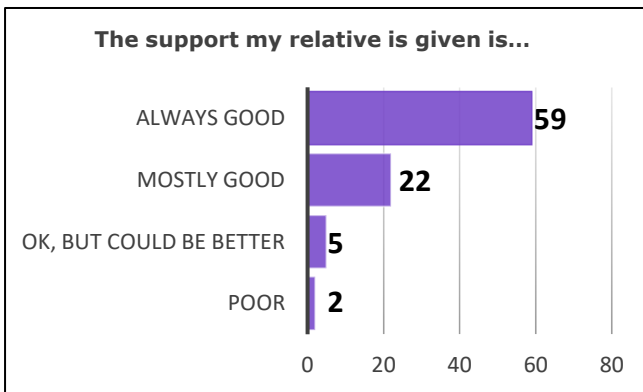
During play time the students could access a range of sensory or interactive play activities or were given space to have some free play. Staff were engaged and on hand to

introduce or facilitate group games, help take turns on the swings or engage in intensive interaction.

The observation summary is attached separately.

Autism Accreditation Survey

Families of Autistic Persons - Questionnaire Responses (88)



Comments



We are very happy with the hard work of all staff members. What we wish for is to return to face-to-face communication after the pandemic.

Very happy with Queensmill. Feel so lucky that my son is able to go to such a caring and supportive school. The teachers are fantastic.

We love the staff at the queensmill unit at Fulham cross, they're the best

Our son has attended Queensmill school for 12 years. His education & pastoral provision is first class. The out of school educational & sensory materials we are provided with are bespoke to him, and excellent. The support we are given regarding his development & behaviours remains consistently high quality. Queensmill have acted as a conduit between us and the NHS, meaning our son has accessed excellent specialist dental care, which has undoubtedly saved his teeth. We are never less than grateful & relieved at the level of education and support our son receives. He dances in every day.

My daughter has attended Queensmill since her diagnosis, she has went from nor verbal / jargon to fully verbal and matured to the point where she is going to attend a college in September, More schools in England should be benchmarked against this wonderful school.

I don't really get advice on how to help my child. It's mostly me giving advice on how to help them.

"I am to work with that's school,my son he liked a lot

If he happy me to happy "

Good school with exceptional teachers. I commend their efforts.

Excellent school I am very happy

The school has gone very down hill including staff supporting the children.

My son is thriving , he is engaged in the learning, happy to go to school and is supported very well at school

My child has progressed so much since attending Queensmill and continuing to do his best staff are all amazing and understands my child's needs. Queensmill also helps support parents and family's as well as their pupils in helping understanding their needs and complex issues relating to autism.

Queensmill school and staff are Amat, supportive, caring and knowledgeable. They are probably the best school in The county.

Very happy with the day to day care/ plan for my son.

"Staff members are always thoughtful ,kind,loving and supportive of these children from my observation over the past 11 years.

My granddaughter is well looked after, regular feedback on a daily basis on her improvement or issues need working ,

future plans regarding her education for e.g. preparation for GCSE which will take place in 2 years time. Everything concerning her health if relevant. Her education, review on her education, health and social care plan yearly, and whether she is meeting goals set and agreed with me. What the next plan is in regards to her future goals for the following year.

Everything that she have done or any issues or concerns from her or the teacher and teacher assistant (s) is reported to me daily via her home communication book."

Thank you for everything you do it for my son

The school has changed my son for the better and can't thank them enough for the support and guidance - my son hated school but since being under Queensmill care he now loves it!

Simply put- they have seen my child as an individual with his unique needs and circumstances- always adapting to ensure they can provide a great experience.

"The Queensmill's school is a very good school

The staff this year in my son class have worked very hard with my son and this years class teachers are wonderful and I'm pleased with the way they work with me and my son and so supportive my son yousuf class teacher is Cristina

Any more feedback please contact me"

Excellent school

Our son receives excellent support and the staff are caring, responsive and very professional. Always willing to listen to the parents and always ready to help.

Every thing is good

The school is too overwhelmed and it has impacted their quality. Hence they make promises that they can't do

"They claim in their reports that they do great things which never happen.

All talk but no action."

My son started at Queensmill in September 2021, and I have to say I have seen him make very good progress since he arrived. He loves school, and asks to go, if he is unwell and cannot go in. I have had excellent support from the staff at there, I feel like they understand what parents and carers go through, having to care for and bring up



their children who are autistic. The school is very well resourced, and well staffed with people who seem to have had the correct training on teaching and supporting young people who are autistic. His class teacher is fantastic always willing to support us, with resources and advice. He has access to Lego therapy, which is making a huge difference to his language development. My son has access to SALT, and OT services which is amazing, recently at his AR, we (his parents) were very impressed that in such a short period of time the professionals knew our son so well. I am very happy he is at that school, and look forward to the future he can have with the right support and specialist care in place. Thanks Queensmill!

our experience at both Queensmill and the satellite unit at FPH has always been exceptional. Our son always received the attention and support to nurture him and encourage his learning and allowing him to gain confidence during these early informative years. We cannot speak more highly of the staff and culture at the school.

