



## Queensmill School – SEF July 2017

### **School context:**

Queensmill School admits pupils with a diagnosis of autism, the significant majority of whom have either a statement, or an education health and care plan (EHC). A very small number are admitted on assessment place pending an EHC plan. Students attainment on entry is well below age-related expectations, owing principally to the significant cognitive, communication, sensory and social impairment resulting from their autism. The school is maintained by the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, with the majority of children and young people (CYP) residing in this borough; Kensington and Chelsea; or Westminster.

Queensmill School meets the needs of children and young people CYP from 3-25, and is an all-through school, with early years, post 16 and post 19 integrated seamlessly. The school is over-subscribed and it is envisaged that this will remain the case for the next two years owing to the school's reputation and ongoing effectiveness.

There are 214 CYP on roll broken down into the following areas: Key Stage 1 21%; KS2 34%; KS3 22%; KS4 8%; post 16 11% and post 19 3%. Reflective of the conventional statistics for the condition of autism, boys outnumber girls at 83% compared with 17%, in the school population. Children receiving free school meals is 47% and there are 3 looked after children on roll. Queensmill is a highly multicultural school with representations from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which being Black African 25%, followed by White British at 17%.

The main site, located at Askham Road, Shepherds Bush accommodates up to 150 CYP whose autism presentation can be considered moderate to severe. In addition, Queensmill fully manages three autism resource bases housed within mainstream secondary schools. These are: Fulham Primary School (30 places) Fulham College Boys (28); Fulham Cross Girls (9). The resource base units were developed and established to provide an appropriate, challenging learning environment for a small number of children new to the school whose autism might be considered 'higher functioning'. In the main however, places are taken up by children who have made especially rapid academic and social progress from early years, KS1 and KS2, such that consistent, mainstream inclusion is the natural and necessary progression.

The post-19 provision, supporting young adults with an EHC plan, is co-located within a nearby adult day centre. Each of the resource bases are led and staffed by Queensmill employees and the students remain on the Queensmill roll.

The majority of students make excellent progress shortly after admission to the school. This can be attributed to a range of factors but most notably highly experienced, motivated and well-informed staff; a learning environment that is autism specific, with state-of-the-art facilities targeted to meet the needs of children on the autistic spectrum; a bespoke curriculum and assessment system

designed to address the specific deficits or strengths of individual children such that they make sustained progress.



**Evidence:**

Students make excellent, sustained progress from their starting points. (**See 'Detailed Assessment Report' for breakdown**). This includes all groups and students based in the three mainstream units. For the academic year 2015-16, students across the school made 7% above the predicted rate of progress in the core subjects of Maths, English, Science and Computing.

For the academic year 2016-17, expectations were raised for the rate of progress (from 75% across the whole school in core areas to 82%) in line with what CYP achieved previously. Although this target was not exceeded, expectations for the year were met. This was pleasing given the higher benchmark for expected progress.

Formal lesson observations by the head resulted in over 70% of teaching judged as 'Outstanding' in both the Autumn and Summer terms of 2016 - 17. This exceeded by 20%, the number of 'Outstanding judgements in the Autumn term of 2015.

Behaviour is very well managed and considered to be outstanding. While it might be expected that many CYP might exhibit challenging behaviours that impact on learning and well-being, these instances are few. Our assessment system records progress in the students acquisition of skills that reduce the detrimental impact of autism and raise their awareness of effective coping strategies. Under the title of 'My Autism', students achieved on average, 7% above the predicted rate of progress for the academic year 2016 – 17. Data for the previous year 2015 – 16 was not available as this facet of the assessment system was only completed in time for the 2016 – 17 academic year.

Directly employed occupational therapists make significant contribution to behavior and regulation targets that ensure children's sensory and other autism-specific behavioral needs are effectively and positively managed so that these targets are achieved and student well-being is carefully safeguarded.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The head and senior leaders scrutinise practice regularly to ensure that the effective and very well-established school methodology is maintained and of a consistent high standard. Recent peer moderators from Spring Hollow School, Ealing (autism specific) commented in a recent observation (June '17) that:

*'All staff had exceptional knowledge of the children they were working with...'* and

*'Behaviour was exceptionally well managed; especially transition...'*

**(See full peer observation reports for Venus and Saturn classes)**

The leadership team have successfully embedded a new assessment system after overhauling the previous B-Squared, P-Level based approach. Now two years in operation, the new system is able to accurately track progress against targets derived from EHC plans, in accordance with the SEND reforms, and measure how children progress in managing their autism. A colleague from University College London as part of the **e-mentors research project**, working closely with junior teachers, commented that they feel: *'valued, respected and are given autonomy and freedom to explore in their teaching.'*

The school was awarded the **Princess Royal Training Award** and **Flagship Status** for the **Inclusion Quality Mark in 2015 and 2016** respectively, as demonstration of the commitment of senior leaders to staff development, progression and inclusion.

Spiritual Moral and Cultural education is Outstanding. CYP have access to a rich and diverse curriculum (in July 2017 they will participate in their second whole school Shakespeare Schools Festival Production of 'The Tempest', December 2015 saw a production of 'Macbeth'). British values have been embedded meaningfully so that it is enjoyable, accessible and stimulating, relative to CYP cognitive abilities and starting points. Equally, other religious and cultural events are embedded throughout the school but most typically via assemblies and focused cultural weeks.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Integrated target setting for students accessing mainstream inclusion
- Embedding 'Preparation for adulthood' target-setting and curriculum throughout the school
- Integrating Computing for the less able utilising available resources more fully and with more direct and tangible links to wider curriculum
- Establish greater links with post 16 colleges to provide clear, direct pathways for students to continue education beyond Queensmill, this applies specifically to the more moderate post-16 cohort.

#### **Effectiveness of leadership and management: 1**

##### **Evidence:**

Senior leaders seized on the opportunities afforded by the DFE's removal of the stipulation to record progress and attainment in 'Life without Levels'. Taking great encouragement prior to, and later becoming more fully acquainted with the 'Rochford Review,' the school has implemented a new assessment system via the 'Onwards and Upwards' platform. **(See doc called Queensmill response to the Rochford Review)**

Key decisions were made to more fully incorporate EHC plans, in line with recent SEND reforms, to inform target setting and create a highly personalized, motivating and fully differentiated curriculum. Using the achievement of 'I Can' statements to shape learning in core subjects, students have made continued progress above predicted expectations. Senior leaders have worked closely with all staff to implement and refine the new system. This has applied to governors and parents and carers too so that they are fully informed of the way progress and attainment is measured. **(See Headteachers Reports, Autumn 2016 and Spring 2017)**. The new assessment system allows the school to fully adopt the SCERTS model (social communication, emotional regulation, transactional supports) so that student progress in the key domains of communication, social interaction and self-management are assessed and monitored. All teachers have been fully trained in the SCERTS methodology, such is the commitment of leaders to CYP making progress in their learning and reducing the potential barriers from the condition of autism.

Children and young people who have been identified as not making expected progress have been identified and targeted for additional intervention – **(See 'Diminishing the Difference' report)** and as a result have made measurable gains. Senior leaders actively oversee and steer this work, ensuring teachers are appropriately trained to address the complex needs of the most profoundly affected cohort (TACPAC, sensory integration approaches, intensive interaction). They ensure set achievable and progressive targets and deliver effective practice **(In Spring 2015, Queensmill was the National winner in its category for use of Pupil Premium Funding)**

Senior leaders have introduced the 'SoSafe' programme, a social communication programme to 'promote social safety for people with moderate to severe intellectual disability or autism Spectrum Disorder.' The programme greatly enhances the safeguarding and child protection procedures of the school by enabling CYP with a voice and awareness of social propriety so that they can communicate abuse or inappropriate interaction with any person. All staff have undergone the necessary training and senior teachers have conducted 'learning walks' to monitor practice and ensure the required resources for the system to be fully embedded and effective are in place. (***See SoSafe implementation folder***).

Adhering once more to key principles in the Rochford Review, senior leaders have participated in peer moderation with senior teachers from similar schools. Collaborations are ongoing with Spring Hallow School in Ealing and due to begin in Autumn 2017 with Drumbeat School, Lewisham. Another 'special school's collaborative,' exists with neighboring special schools in Hammersmith and Queensmill has worked especially closely with nearby Cambridge school, to establish and develop their practice and expertise with children of a more complex autism presentation than they have previously admitted.

Internal peer observations (***See peer moderation folder***) have also been recently established to encourage teachers to observe and critically review each other's practice. This has served as an effective method of professional development for developing teachers as well as a rich source of shared resources and approaches.

Formal lesson observations by the head and deputies are frequent. The head observes all teachers, including deputies, providing feedback using Ofsted criterion. The head and deputies also observe and feedback using the SCERTS coaching and evaluation methodology. (***See SCERTS observation and Headteachers observation folders***). Sustained and rigorous scrutiny of practice ensures that teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, differentiate well, maintain proven and effective interventions, and manage behavior positively.

Core Queensmill practice, under the banner of 'The Queensmill Way' enables the development of newly qualified and trainee teachers. The school has for many years been well served with motivated, well-trained and highly committed teachers, a large number of whom begun with the school as teaching assistants and have progressed through the ranks. There has been great success with the School's Direct programme in particular, with the Institute of Education and more recently, St Mary's University. (***See School's Direct testimonials from newly graduated teachers***). Senior leaders invest significantly as mentors and reviewers as well as committing a sizeable proportion of the annual budget, £80k in the last financial year, to continued professional development.

Senior managers have promoted the active participation of Queensmill staff in research. The research development board meet regularly to evaluate research proposals from PHD students and other researchers seeking to conduct studies with the student population, staff or parent/carers. Over the past eighteen months, two significant studies have garnered not only wide recognition for the school in the field of autism, but have benefitted CYP and their subsequent progress in school. The first of these being the Sleepwise project that enabled a group of parents to participate in a programme to evaluate and improve their management of their child's sleeping patterns, a commonly reported problem for children on the spectrum. (***See Current Projects under the Research and Development page of the Website***).

Similarly, The De-Enigma project enabled Queensmill students to contribute in a European wide study into the efficacy of robots to assist children on the spectrum understand human emotion. Great interest has been generated by the study with the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 all visiting the school to investigate further the possibilities of artificial intelligence and its application to autism.

(See <http://www.itv.com/news/2017-02-16/the-robot-teaching-autistic-children-how-to-communicate/#>). The school maintains its commitment to advancing knowledge in the field of autism and by consequence, its ability to better meet the specific needs of CYP attending.

Governors play an active part in challenging and supporting the school. All aspects of the school's recent developments: development of the post-19 provision; development of the children's home; new assessment system; fundraising initiatives; have received significant input from governors. **(See full governor and sub-committee minutes and headteacher reports).**

Senior leaders have developed a new service level agreement (SLA) model to formalise the scope and effectiveness of the school's Outreach support function. Queensmill has historically supported over 40 primary and secondary schools in the tri-borough to manage their autism cohort and practice, and the new SLA model more clearly articulates how support can be accessed and funded. **(See new Outreach SLA doc)**

#### Areas for improvement:

- Further develop peer collaborations with fellow autism specific special schools
- Expand post-19 provision with a view to this becoming registered with the DFE as a fully-fledged college by Sept 2019
- Develop secure pathways for employment and further education for post 16 and 19 students
- Develop middle leader self-review, so that these evaluations are more formal and widely shared.

#### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: 1

##### Evidence

Teaching is consistently Outstanding with over 70% in the most recent round of formal inspections obtaining this specific judgement. Teaching is outstanding because staff are motivated; well-trained; and given scope and freedom to prepare and deliver, motivating, bespoke and creative lessons resulting in children that enjoy learning and engage enthusiastically. More informal learning walks and SCERTS observations take place in addition, meaning that a range of foci can be evaluated and monitored. **(See SCERTS observation and Headteachers observation folders)**

The headteacher leads the performance management process, meeting with all teachers and senior therapists to measure performance and set targets. These include learning targets for specific children identified to be at risk of, or not making, expected progress. Teachers and senior leaders lead performance management for teaching assistants with key outcomes in this process being target-setting for continued CPD. **(See performance management documentation – specific examples from teacher/TA files)**

Children and young people access learning that consistently meets high standards and thus make excellent progress **(See detailed assessment reports 2015-16 and Autumn 2016-17, diminishing the difference reports, see IQM Flagship Report)**. They benefit from resources that are specifically designed with their needs and special interests in mind and delivered by staff who have received first and refresher training in 'The Queensmill Way' core interventions of TEACCH, PECS, SIA

approaches, SCERTS, Signalong, SoSafe, Team Teach and generic autism. **(See Training Record folder)**

Given the specific, often complex needs of the students, bespoke, personalised resources and effective target-setting are required for students to make progress. As such, regular observation is accepted by all staff as a feature of the school and for the vast majority, this is an opportunity to affirm and celebrate what children are learning and the practice that enables this.

Target-setting for student 'I Can' statements, so crucial to shaping teaching and learning, is informed by a range of factors. Teachers make decisions based on their formative assessments, and evaluations of attainment and CYP's engagement within lessons on a daily basis. EHC plan outcomes contribute, as do subject-specific schemes of work, which are informed by the national curriculum. In addition, to further refine the process and ensure that the appropriate challenge and logical progression with learning is systematic, progress review meetings with senior leaders are held to monitor and assess past and future learning. **(See 'Target Setting at Queensmill' document)**

Senior leaders identified a cohort of children in the primary and secondary phases who, despite making some progress, could make further gains with specific targeted intervention in core subjects. Responding to input from some parents whose children were tutored at home on applied behavioural analysis (ABA) programmes after school, this group were considered to be held back by their inability to maximize the social aspects of learning. Senior leaders developed, with a small group of core teachers, a 'Booster' programme. In essence, this is a set of sessions working on a specific deficit area of learning, typically social. Sessions focus on core subjects of Maths/English/Science/Computing but with an emphasis on social interaction, so that individuals increase their 'learning to learn' skills. **(See Booster group target-setting pro-forma and evaluation reports in class folders)**. 'Booster' programmes operate three terms rather than six per year, with detailed evaluation of impact; and procurement and preparation of resources taking place in the interim terms. Participants in groups will vary too, based on feedback from teachers.

Since it was established in 2013, the Queensmill unit at Fulham Primary School has received students from the early years at the Queensmill main school, who have made especially rapid progress. The opportunities for mainstream inclusion have enhanced their learning opportunities and enabled these children to successfully transition between autism-specific and mainstream settings on a regularly basis. **(See Fulham Primary External moderation report from Justina Ilochi)**

This applies equally to our respective units at Fulham College Boys and Fulham Cross Girls, where there is an even greater emphasis on mainstream inclusion. Reviewing progress data for students in these settings, they make sustained and very good progress. Senior leaders are keen to refine the relationship between targets that are set in the unit by teachers and those that are set by mainstream, subject-specific teachers. **(See Q4-Q5 external Moderation report from Denis Goldthorpe)**

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Ensure that academic work set for students within the Queensmill units is consistently rigorous and challenging
- Establish greater integration between mainstream and autism unit target setting, more collaboration between respective teachers
- Embed age-appropriate learning materials ('Books Beyond Words') fully across the curriculum using IT resources in particular.

- Expand and refine resource bank of 'I Can' targets
- Complete baseline assessments of all students within new 'Onwards and Upwards' system to further inform existing and forthcoming progress data

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare: 1

### Evidence:

The well-being and mental health of students diagnosed with autism is of utmost importance at Queensmill. In order for CYP to engage with learning, make progress, develop social interaction and enhance life-skills, we believe they must be able to recognise those aspects of their autism which might impede this. To this end, 50% of the new assessment system is devoted to recording the progress of CYP against targets that will enable them to reduce the often debilitating effects of autism. Under the banner of 'My Autism', students are set targets (phrased in 'I Can' statements). Informed by the SCERTS model, communication and self/mutual regulation targets are set and monitored. As stated earlier, in the last round of data, students overall achieved 7% above predicted whole school targets in this key area **(See detailed assessment report)**.

Personal learning plans, closely informed by EHC plans, are prepared and monitored by class teachers, in-house occupational therapists, speech therapists and senior managers. Annual reviews report very positive feedback from parents and carers describing the progress their children have made at home with language, interaction with others, self-management: particularly coping with stress. Sensory integration approaches are an integral feature of the school and significantly affect the ability of staff to manage children's emotional regulation and thus allow them to reach the optimal 'calm-alert' state ready for learning. **(See 'What is Occupational Therapy?' on school website)**

It is unquestioned that the vast majority of CYP look forward to coming to school. Visitors frequently observe that children are happy, staff are warm, friendly and patient, often arriving at these conclusions from a few minutes sitting in reception.

Queensmill's approach to the development of communication of severely impaired students is the adoption of a 'total communication approach'. **(See Speech and Language therapy page of the website)** By this, low-arousal principles such as simple language, lowered voices, clutter-free surfaces and clear visual supports, create an environment free of distraction. This is supported by staff continuing to carry out the strategies recommended by therapists in addition to 1:1 and small-group activities lead directly by specialized therapists. Colourful Semantics, Sign-a-long and I pads (equipped with either PECS or Proloquo2go), are all key resources managed by staff and used by CYP under the supervision of therapists. With this range of resources, highly integrated and consistent approach, students make significant progress with their communication.

The 'SoSafe' programme has greatly enhanced the school's ability to teach children the nuances of social interaction, acceptable behavior and report abuse. Parents and carers have been invited to attend workshops too, so that they can support this essential learning at home. Since the last inspection, we have employed a full-time family support worker to assist families with complex behaviours and other challenges outside of school. One example of this is the sibling group - Q-Sibs- that has been hosted at the school on Saturdays for the brothers and sisters of autistic children to share and explore experiences. **(See Q-Sibs doc on website)**

The curriculum at Queensmill is varied, imaginative and highly differentiated. Staff are perpetually seeking new ways to incorporate special interests and connect learning in the classroom with its real world application. This occurs with frequent visits into the local community as part of learning, work experiences (**see work experience schedule**); and annual residential trips.

A range of after school clubs including a 3-7 club, on three evenings per week, extend the opportunities for CYP to develop social, recreational as well as life skills. Queensmill is in the final stages of registering a four-bedroomed, overnight short break service with Ofsted (**see Q House section of the website**) to formalise this essential facet of the school. As demonstration of its commitment to this, the head and governors have appointed a full time registered manager as part of the staff team since July 2016. She has accessed the full extent of 'The Queensmill Way' core training.

Since the last inspection, a post-19 provision, Q6, has been established as a pathway for the most complex post-19 students with an EHC plan. The curriculum offer adopts 'preparation for adulthood' key principles and offers formal OCR accreditations in Life and Living Skills and the Arts Award. (**See post-19 prospectus**). A key resource in directing the curriculum offer, so that it has real world application, is the newly established 'Q@ the Lyric' stall, selling cakes, brownies, biscuits and more, every Thursday, in a prominent location in Hammersmith (**See "Baking a success of it article from H&F news on the website**)

#### Areas for improvement:

- The quality and extent of direct speech and language therapy across the provision.

### Outcomes for children and learners: 1

#### Evidence

The starting point of the overwhelming majority of students on entry to Queensmill School is significantly below age-related expectations. Given this, national milestones of attainment and achievement for the most part do not apply. (**See published school KS1, KS2 and Secondary tables on the website**). Nevertheless, outcomes for CYP are outstanding for the progress they are able to make during their time within the school.

Senior leaders have made the commitment to overhaul the previous assessment system in order to demonstrate more clearly the appreciable gains CYP make. The Rochford Review articulates the school's ethos to achievement and outcomes very clearly below:

*'Pupils working below the standard of the tests will not be participating in the tests, so it is important that it is possible to demonstrate attainment at the standards they are working at. It is also important that we are able to measure the progress they make in a way which takes into account the nature of progress for these pupils. Those with SEND can often make progress in different ways to the majority of pupils.'*

The detailed assessment and 'diminishing the difference' reports indicate the progress individuals and groups make despite not being able to achieve what their typically developing peers can. That said, students in the secondary phase are entered and achieve nationally accredited outcomes via Asdan (*Personal Progress*) programmes; *Arts Award*; and *OCR Life and Living Skills accreditations* (***See Asdan Whole School Units data table***).

The new 'Onwards and Upwards' assessment system enables granular data which relate to 'My Learning' (academic achievement) and 'My Autism' (self-awareness and management) however, in addition to these positive markers of progress, individual case studies, more anecdotal in nature, describe the more personal but equally, and in some cases more significant, achievements and outcomes of CYP.

The most immediate example of traditionally viewed successful outcomes for early years and primary children is those who have progressed, to the extent that they are able to access our less restricted and mainstream inclusion unit at Fulham Primary School. This totals 14 in the past two academic years. For the secondary phase, this applies too, in the number of children able to transition to places in our secondary units at Fulham College Boys (Q4) and Fulham Cross Girls (Q5). Two students from Q4 have been entered for a small number of GCSE's this year as testament to their successful integration and sustained academic progress while attending mainstream sessions.

More telling however, is the significant number of young people who are able to access the host of work experience placements that the school has developed. These include Chelsea and Westminster and West Middlesex Hospitals, Novotel, Chiswick House and Gardens, Hyde Park Gardens, Hammersmith Mencap, Lyric Square and Westfields Premises and Facilities management. (***See Work Experience timetable***)

Two particular case studies best evidence this approach. The first is that of a post-19 student who in August of 2016, following admission to hospital for tonsillitis, was then admitted to an in-patient psychiatric unit under section two of the mental health act. He remained within this facility until January of 2017, owing to a number of significant challenges, some resulting from an unfamiliar environment unable to stimulate him cognitively or manage his anxious behaviours. Queensmill staff provided significant support over the period and he was discharged in January 2017. He immediately accessed the post-19 provision where he settled in rapidly and made positive progress, to the extent that he is able to serve the public in our weekly stall at the Lyric Square, Hammersmith. (***See E D Case Study***). This outcome is immeasurable in terms of this young man's long term, mental health and life chances.

Another case study is that of a student in year 8. This was a boy unable to communicate verbally and with huge sensory processing difficulties with sound and smell. These significant challenges not only manifested in a very limited attention span and intolerance of many aspects of his classroom environment, but also at home in his interactions with his sister and occupying himself calmly within the home. The 'TACPAC' sensory stimuli and communication programme was put in place with exceptional results. (***See YB Case Study***). While we as a school saw marked improvement, reports on the transformed relationship with his sister at home and the calmer, more positive interactions, were even more powerful evidence of the kind of important and far-reaching outcomes students make at Queensmill.

**Areas for improvement:**

- Greater number of students at Secondary units being entered for GCSEs
- Establish pathways into formal employment (part time), via Project Search or other supported employment programmes; from work experience placements
- Raise the number of students accessing Level 1 and or mainstream further education college courses with formal nationally accredited outcomes as a result.
- Establish partners to transition students into supported living arrangements

