



AUTISM ACCREDITATION PEER REVIEW

SERVICE REVIEWED: Queensmill School

DATES OF REVIEW: 28 – 29 November 2017

TEAM MEMBERS: Team Coordinator: Jackie Macey Team Members: Doreen Mercieca, Melanie Finley

OVERVIEW OF PROVISION

Queensmill is a large, well-established school which meets the needs of young people, aged 3 – 19 years, with autism and an associated learning difficulty mainly from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham but also some neighbouring boroughs, as would be expected many of the young people have quite complex needs. Linked to the main school are three units for students who have made sufficient progress to benefit from a mainstream setting. There is a primary facility at Fulham Primary school, a secondary boys provision at Fulham College boys and a small secondary girls provision at Fulham Cross Girl's school. The school supports approximately 70 pupils through its outreach service.

Queensmill College which is a recent linked development, offers education to students from age 19, whilst it doesn't form part of the current review it is an example of the proactive work of the school, which now includes outreach practice and some respite provision which is soon to be in operation.

The school is also involved in some research projects and has links with the Institute of Education and University College London.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Observations

Observations were carried out across the full age range and curriculum areas. In addition further observations took place during lunch, breaks and transition times.

Interviews and Discussions

A high number of meetings were held with the Head Teacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team, Middle Leaders, Therapists, Safeguarding Team, School Chef, Outreach Leader, Registered Manager for the care facility and Parental Support worker.

Some brief more informal discussions were held with individual teachers and members of class teams.

Documentation

Policies

Planning

Social Stories

Home-School Books

Assessment Folder

Family Support Documentation

Occupational Therapy Individual Programmes

Individual Education Plans

Pupil Pen Portraits

Behaviour Support Plans

School Council documentation

Details of Awards achieved by the school, one relating to Lunchtimes and another for the use of Pupil Premium Funding

Documentation relating to research programmes

Self Audit

Respite Service documentation

Ofsted Report

Website

Questionnaires

KEY FINDINGS

Actions for development	Reasoning
<p>Understanding of Self P20, P21</p> <p>The review team suggest the school investigates ways in which it can support students to gain some understanding of what autism means for them.</p>	<p>Queensmill School has very well established and regularly monitored core practice and this supports young people with autism to make good progress. Helping young people to understand and gain some understanding of themselves and to express their emotions effectively has been carefully considered and features within the curriculum and across their school experience. Within the associated mainstream facilities some work on understanding autism has taken place, often within individual mentoring sessions and it is felt that the school is now in a strong position to extend this work further. It is accepted that this will take different forms for different learners, for the very young or very early developers it will be about beginning to understand individual differences through to more able students being able to discuss the impact of their autism in positive ways as well as developing strategies to help them overcome the inevitable challenges. The school may wish to work with adults from the autism community who are able to make a contribution to this work.</p>
<p>Visual Communication E4, E13</p> <p>The review team suggest the school audits how visual supports are used across the school to ensure that they are always purposeful and appropriate for the group they are intended for. In addition a consideration of where labelling is used throughout the school environment could be of benefit.</p>	<p>The school has an understanding of the impact the visual environment has on many autistic young people. As a consequence a low arousal approach is evident throughout the school. In one or two classrooms quite a high number of visual supports were seen, such as group and individual timetables, mood boards, choice boards, prompt cards. The review team suggest that in these situations the amount of information being presented should be considered and key information presented to sure that it is attended to more easily.</p> <p>A further aspect could be to check the consistency and relevance of any text accompanying visuals and for very young children, a larger font size should be considered.</p> <p>Whilst corridors are very calming with grey walls and very little labelling the review team feel that there is some scope to increase this in order to communicate the structure of the school to students, e.g. Primary Department, Secondary Department and clear labelling on doors to show the function of each room.</p>

The following areas were also identified as examples of what the service does well.

Specific areas of strength	Reasoning
<p>Leadership and Vision C1 – C16, C23, C24, C27</p> <p>The review team assesses the strong vision of the Senior Leadership Team, that drives the school's development and its maintenance of high quality practice to be exceptional. This is evidenced through the identification of effective interventions and approaches, thorough training, assessment of the impact of approaches and the recognition of the commitment shown by a very strong staff team.</p>	<p>The Leadership Team at Queensmill School, skilfully guided by the Head Teacher, demonstrates a clear understanding of how the school needs to operate and develop for the maximum benefit of its young people. The very strong emphasis on training and the focus on having a knowledgeable and skilled staff team ensures that high quality practice is the norm. The leadership team are fully involved in the work of the school, clearly having an in-depth understanding of individual student's needs and the challenges they present. The development of a comprehensive service for students of all abilities and one that supports their needs, i.e. respite provision, Post 19 provision, mainstream facilities and an Outreach Service is a real achievement and will have involved gaining the support and confidence of many professionals.</p> <p>The school has worked well to develop a range of strong work experience settings and is looking at how these can be extended further, especially within the local hospitals where placements have been successful. The school takes the time to share its practice with other autism organisations, e.g. through representation at conferences, articles written and through links with research projects. The review team were impressed that whilst this extensive development is taking place a strong focus on practice within the school is prioritised, this happens within an ethos of effective staff support, partly illustrated by the 'Staff Appreciation Board' where staff are able to add a comment of thanks for the support another member of staff has given them.</p>
<p>Training C5, C6, C12, E16, E23, E30</p> <p>The extent and quality of training offered to all staff at Queensmill School is outstanding.</p>	<p>The extent of training and an understanding of how this impacts on students at Queensmill School is outstanding. The budget set aside for training staff is proportionally very high. Training programmes are carefully selected but once selected are implemented in a very thorough manner, so that approaches become fully embedded within the school. This is done by ensuring that all key staff attend the training programme, often externally and having a practice of regularly monitoring how the approach is being used within classrooms. Class group are staffed at a ratio that allows a staff member to be released for training without the quality of practice within the class to fall. This means that many more training days are possible over the</p>

	<p>year than would be usual.</p> <p>Staff who work across the whole school receive the training they need, e.g. transport staff, office staff.</p> <p>The school supports staff to develop their role within school through the training that is offered, for example a number of teachers begin their journey in school as support assistants and then, often through the Schools Direct programme become effective teachers. The school comments that this approach ensures that teachers are experienced in how the school works, the needs of students and a range of strategies before they begin to lead a class group and in general show a greater depth of knowledge and skill than staff who are appointed from outside the school.</p> <p>In discussions during the review it became clear that staff appreciate the level of training that is offered at Queensmill School.</p>
<p>Sensory Experiences U8, U9, U10, E10 – E15, P11 – P15</p> <p>Sensory practice at Queensmill School is very well established, this is evidenced through the environment, the level of high quality resources, training and intervention. It is recognised as a fundamental need for students which supports their well-being and subsequently ability to access learning.</p>	<p>Staff at Queensmill School display a strong understanding of the impact that sensory issues can have on a student’s well-being and ability to access learning. The school is well designed and resourced to support students’ sensory differences. The extensive and thorough nature of this work is seen by the review team to be a strength of the school. Please see evidence of this practice in further detail later in this report.</p>
<p>Behaviour Support U17, U19, E32, P32</p> <p>Strong behaviour support. The review team recognise the high quality of behaviour support that is consistently practiced at Queensmill School.</p>	<p>The school follows the guidelines of Team Teach which has a strong emphasis on understanding the purpose of behaviours and de-escalation, the school reports that physical intervention is rarely needed. The use of strong sensory practice also supports students to regulate themselves and to be effectively supported when becoming unsettled.</p> <p>The approach of staff is to keep students well-being at the centre of practice and this is achieved through extensive training and effective and supportive working relationships being established between staff themselves and staff and students. Please see further details of behaviour</p>

	support in other parts of this report.
<p>Self Awareness and Safeguarding E24, E24. E27</p> <p>The school has implemented a programme called 'SoSafe' which teaches young people to remain safe in their community and to understand what to do if there is a problem. The review team recognise this as important work for all young people which is not easy to address. The thorough approach that is now embedded in the school is seen to be a strength.</p>	<p>The school implements SoSafe which is a system designed to help young people with autism (from 10 years upwards) understand and communicate social relationships. The programme covers changes through puberty, sexual relationships and appropriate behavior in general. The aim is to provide the students with a visual resource that tells them not only who the various people in their life are but also to teach the level of verbal and physical intimacy that is appropriate for that relationship. Each student is provided with a 'My People and Relationship' book. The book has photos of people that are in the student's life, including those at home, school and in the community including strangers. The book helps to categorise these groups of people in a way the student understands the appropriate level of physical or verbal intimacy. To further support and ensure consistency in the implementation of SoSafe, all staff have handy visual aids on them plus each classroom has a SoSafe chart that provides the student with quick visual access that supports their understanding in this area.</p> <p>The team were impressed to see how this area of learning was being used in lessons with students of different abilities. In the girls secondary facility a discussion around a drawing of a young woman reacting to physical contact from a stranger was taking place, skillfully guided by the teacher, drawing out key language to interpret what was happening. In another lesson some lower ability boys were naming (some through electronic communication aids) pictures: kitchen, bathroom, park, and then deciding whether these were public or private places, for non-verbal students this was made clear through a visual of a door which was placed over the picture that was a private place. The programme is helping young people to develop an understanding of some quite complex issues and to be more able to look after themselves and have a vocabulary to express problems should they arise.</p>
<p>Communication with Families C26</p> <p>The review team judge the quality and purpose of the Home-School book used at Queensmill School to be exceptional.</p>	<p>Queensmill School's approach is to consider quality in all aspects of the school, in practice, resources and environment. An example of this is the exceptional Home-School Book which supports communication and understanding between the home and the school.</p> <p>The books are very professionally and commercially produced and similar to those often used by mainstream secondary schools. These books are individual, each one is produced with a photograph of the young person on the cover, inside is their individual profile and important</p>

	<p>information: lunch menus, school calendar dates, contact numbers for the school and transport services, school uniform details with photographs. The book is dated as a diary and on each day there is space for comments to be written as well as some 'tick box' spaces for families and the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well did I sleep? • Have there been any changes in routine • How well did I eat at school • What did I enjoy • I will phone you • Letter received? <p>The review team feel that not only is this book very effective for its purpose and encourages easy communication with families but it also communicates the message 'Your child is valued by the school and its staff'.</p>
<p>Family Support C26</p> <p>The support the school offers to families through workshops, sibling support, signposting to outside agencies, help with individual issues and a listening ear goes beyond education but is a key factor in supporting young people to become more effective learners.</p>	<p>The support offered to families at Queensmill School is extensive. This takes the form of training, individual support such as attending medical appointments or understanding how to access support and information about the benefit system. Training in autism approaches is also available, such as PECS, iPad use for communication and the use of schedules. Please see further details about this work in the 'Emotional Well-Being' section of this report.</p>

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action taken to address recommendation
<p>Specialist Standard 9 – Well-being – Promoting Independence</p> <p>The school should consider reviewing and reflecting on resources and activities to ensure that they are age appropriate.</p>	<p>During the review the team did not see any resources being used that were not age appropriate. The school are aware that some young people may have a special interest that endures beyond the time when it may be judged as being age appropriate, e.g. an interest in Thomas the Tank Engine, staff at the school strive to ensure that all materials used are age appropriate but also recognise that these favoured items can be very reassuring and calming, if it is felt necessary to use one of these items then its motivational value is used to engage a student in a staff chosen activity prior to allowing access.</p> <p>The school now uses 'Books Beyond Words' which are excellent resources that deal with complex topics such as bereavement, illness, sexual relationships, safe behaviour etc., These books have no text but clear drawings showing situations which can then be discussed or responded to according to the group's ability and understanding. One such book, which is also available for sharing through an Interactive White Board, was seen being used very effectively with a group of girls in the mainstream provision (Q5).</p> <p>As a further resource the school are developing a set of similar resources to be used to address work related learning.</p> <p>Since the previous review the school has extended its work experience programme and is able to offer a range of activities which help to prepare students for adulthood.</p> <p>The review team feels that this recommendations has been fully met.</p>

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES					
Number of Questionnaires sent out (please request from service if not available prior to review):				150	
Number of Questionnaires returned:				98	
	Unscored	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am able to contact the school about my child/family member on a regular basis	0	2	0	20	76
I am given information about my child's/family member's progress on a regular basis	0	2	3	29	64
The school listens to my views about my child/family member and their support and takes them into account.	1	2	1	30	64
I am aware of how to raise concerns about any aspect of my child's/family members support and am confident that they will be considered and addressed.	0	2	4	33	59
The school has a good understanding of my child/family member and works well to meet their needs.	0	2	1	26	69
The school respects the complexities of caring for a family member on the Autistic Spectrum	0	2	1	30	65
The school provides opportunities for me to find out more about autism and my child's/family member's specific needs	1	2	4	28	63
The school has had a positive impact on my family member's life and learning	2	2	0	29	65
TOTALS	4	16	14	225	525
PERCENTAGES	0.5%	2%	1.8%	29%	66.7%

Comments:

The responses received were highly positive, 96% were in the 'Agree, Strongly Agree' judgements.

- This school has completely changed my child's life, she is now more confident, more capable and much more happy.
- I am very happy with my child's progression since he's been to this school. Thank you so much for all your help.
- Queensmill has consistently looked after my son's needs from the very beginning. They continue to strive for ways to make their lives easier and for them to be able to blend into society. I am hugely indebted to this school for everything they have done for my son.
- The school makes its own decisions, not good at listening to parents.
- The school are able to manage my son's autism needs extremely well.
- We feel very happy and fortunate that our child attends Queensmill School.
- So thankful for the support the school has given to my son and I. He went from very withdrawn and vulnerable having to get the school bus, to an independent traveller who has confidence.
- I think the unit is segregated and should be encouraged to mix with the mainstream instead of being singled out.
- Queensmill School is simply the best.
- The school has made a massive impact on my family member's lives. As a mother I am more relaxed knowing my child is in good hands.

OBSERVATION SCORES

Topic	Not Met	Partially Met	Majority Met	Fully Met
Differences in social communication	0	0	7	9
Self-reliance and problem solving	0	0	6	10
Sensory Experiences	0	0	5	11
Emotional well-being	0	0	5	11
TOTAL	0	0	23	41
PERCENTAGE	0%	0%	36%	64%

FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS

Topic	Comments
Differences in social communication	<p>Staff at the school demonstrated a range of communication methods and were able to select these according to the student's level of need and preferred means of communication. School staff are supported by a Speech and Language Therapist who works jointly with staff to agree targets for communication.</p> <p>The school has invested heavily in the SCERTS programme and is strongly committed to this. The programme focuses in a high level of detail on understanding and managing the challenges and deficits seen in autism. It is now implemented in all classes and the use of this is regularly monitored through learning walks and observations, in addition the school has employed a SCERTS consultant to visit and help to establish strong practice. All teaching staff and some therapists have</p>

attended the three day training and this ensures that understanding across the school is strong.

Some SCERTS style visual communication, using colour coding for Name/verb/subject, was seen to be used effectively when requesting.

All staff were heavily equipped with visuals and also used short songs to indicate the beginning and end of sessions or instructions such as 'it's time to get the glue, glue, glue'.

Visual communication was seen to be used for sequencing an activity in symbols and photographs in the workstations and Start/fold here/finish labels on work stations (left to right) were seen. Staff use symbols on their lanyards to communicate clearly with students and always have these during transitions and when working away from the classroom. In some classes staff have aprons with cards on a ring; these can be instructions by the adult or requests by the pupils.

During a snack session in an Early Years class, the children were presented with choices and were well supported with visual aids, such as a photo to identify their seating place, PECS communication book including sentence strips, visual schedules and a visual timer.

Pupils were seen to be able to ask for a break and/or help with a card or verbally. Wait cards were used quite widely. Now/Next cards were seen as were 'I am working for...'

During an outdoor play observation, a child was supported with a visual sequence of 4 different activities in order to assist him in moving on from his favourite outdoor activity, the swing, to another. This was very effective and the child successfully left his preferred activity and complied without hesitation.

Staff are trained in 'Intensive Interaction' and this was seen to be being used effectively during a session with a young boy.

The school has two trained Signalong Tutors and signing was observed to be used by staff in several classes, e.g. by the teacher after the pupils had been watching a relaxation video on the whiteboard, pupils then consulted their individual schedules to move on to the activity carousel/round robin. During the review pupils were not observed to be using signing but were observed to show understanding of the signing used in some observations, the school is currently working towards extending its use.

Staff were regularly observed to be using quiet, simple language, and showed an understanding of how this should be

modified to ensure pupils' understanding.

The PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) approach is used with many pupils. It was observed being used independently at snack time in an Early Years class, the snack items were broken in to small pieces to encourage maximum exchanges. It is clear that staff have had full training in the approach and a high number attend full courses. PECS book appeared to be well used, the approach is shared with families who are able to access training. PECS books were examined and seen to contain symbols beyond food items and pupils in some classes were able to create short sentences appropriately. Some pupils were observed to be using their PECS books during lunch time, also a set of symbols for the meal choice and a sentence strip were available in the lunch hall for any pupil who didn't have their own book with them.

In one observation pupils used a video to instruct them as to how to complete a task. The context was 'Independence',

Pupils scanned a bar code onto the iPad, they then watched it and moved on to the tasks set up in three different areas of the classroom, two of which were in work stations. The instructions showed how to hang up laundry and fold/pair socks and shirts.

iPads are used for many less verbal or non-verbal pupils to communicate with, staff ensure that the symbols that will be needed for an area of learning or topic are preloaded onto the iPad so that pupils can partake fully in sessions. iPads are popular as leisure items and so a colour system has been introduced, different coloured covers are used for different iPads (leisure, communication and learning) an iPad that is for communication is not able to be used for leisure activities.

Pupil success is clearly communicated to pupils, often verbally but hi fives and other positive responses were also seen to be used.

Social Stories are used as and when felt to be helpful and a folder of these was shown to the review team.

The school council is a relatively recent development, it has been well thought through and consequently is a successful venture; pupil reps are chosen from each class. Visual support is provided when making choices. A ballot box is used, which is a fantastic idea that fits in well with TEACCH methodology. There is an agenda and minutes are kept from each meeting. Choices have included Christmas party food, playground activities, clubs (Lego) and ideas for outings. The School council badge was designed by a pupil and a vote was taken on that. Each pupil has a name place with their photograph and these are put into place before the meeting. Staff report that pupils take their role seriously.

	<p>The school offers residential experiences to secondary aged pupils, breaks are selected according to the skills of the group and some more confident and able students spend five days on a boat near Southampton. Outdoor activity trips take place and one residential is offered to pupils who qualify for pupil premium funding. The school has received an award for the ways in which it supports these pupils.</p> <p>After school clubs offer a different social setting in which pupils can mix with others.</p> <p>Lunch times are organised so that most young people with their class group and staff in the main dining hall but others who require a calmer small setting may use the small dining hall. Lunch is a social time when students learn to queue and are encouraged to interact with their peers and staff. The environment was observed to be fairly calm with a pleasant atmosphere for staff and pupils.</p>
Self-reliance and problem solving	<p>The school's Flexibility of Thought to Cope with Change policy states: <i>it is important that our pupils become as independent as possible, are able to make choices, are able to problem solve.</i> The school works towards this development for pupils through a range of well recognised approaches with structure being central to this. This structure is seen in the organisation of the week, day, tasks and environments. Visual schedules, appropriately differentiated, communicate many aspects of this and help to reduce the commonly high levels of anxiety that many pupils experience.</p> <p>Schedules for groups and individuals were seen, some individual timetables were in a large symbol format where pupils could remove symbols when tasks were completed and use them for transitioning to activities within the environment. Older student's schedules were reduced in size and many used text. Differentiation of schedules was seen within class groups. When necessary staff prompted pupils to visit their schedule on occasions pupils were seen to use them more independently, which would be a useful target for all pupils to achieve over time. The policy describes the use of a 'surprise' or 'change' symbol which can be used to alert the group that something different will happen, this supporting of pupils to manage change within a familiar environment is a valuable experience and likely to help them to be more able to manage unforeseen changes which will inevitably arise.</p> <p>All pupils have a Pen Portrait which gives an overview of the child including their likes, how their anxiety is displayed and strategies or activities that might be calming for them. This ensures that all staff can quickly grasp the main points about a pupil's needs, preferences and communication style.</p>

The school offers a number of clubs both before and after school, some after school clubs run until 4:15pm but others until 7pm. The experience of attending one of the clubs helps to extend the pupil's leisure choices, allows them to mix with a different group of young people, relate to different members of staff and to generalise their skills in a different setting. Activities offered include: Arts and Crafts, Trampolining, Cooking, Board Games, reading and construction.

The school runs a 'Growing Up Club' which is a safe place where sex education and the changes that occur through puberty can be investigated and gradually understood/accepted by students. The programme is in line with the SoSafe practice that exists in the school, this makes clear that conversations about private matters are acceptable during the club but not outside of this e.g. during classroom time.

The development of the provisions for students within mainstream secondary schools and the transition of some students from the main Queensmill school to these facilities reflects the effectiveness of staff in supporting students to develop their independence, self-confidence and ability to cope within a complex environment. Transition arrangements into these facilities and then gradual programmes to increase the students' level of inclusion within the school are well thought through and sensitively implemented and this results in good levels of success.

During the review students were observed to be engaged with their learning and comfortable in their surroundings. Observations included a break session where students shared the outside environment with their mainstream peers, some joining in with a basketball game.

Programmes to develop independence are in place within the school, these include dressing, care of clothing, accessing the community, shopping and cooking. Videos have been produced which help to teach simple skills such as how to wipe a table or fold laundry, these can of course be replayed by the student until their skills develop beyond the need for them. These activities are seen as valuable additions to the curriculum as are opportunities for independence within the classroom, finding your own resources, tidying away, taking a message. The review team believes the school understands how to support pupils to develop independence but observed one or two missed opportunities when independence skills could have been a higher focus, e.g. a staff member holding the hand of a young pupil on the stairs but not encouraging them to hold onto the handrail, on another occasion a support assistant giving out resources in a group of pupils who were sufficiently able to do this.

Work experience for students follows on from work preparation sessions; this happens in a range of settings, some in the school, and others in local hospitals, parks and hotels. The school runs a stall in Lyric Square once a week where they sell produce the students have baked. This work is supported by the school chef who has a genuine involvement with the

	<p>school beyond the provision of the lunchtime meal. Stall offers students a valuable 'real world' opportunity and also gives the school a community presence.</p> <p>The school offers residential experiences to its secondary pupils, these are very valuable opportunities for students to generalise their learning, to problem solve in a real context and to manage a completely different environment with new activities and challenges.</p> <p>Transitions were seen to occur calmly with pupils receiving support as they required this.</p> <p>At the end of an outdoor play session, the transition was observed to be handled skillfully by the staff who directed the children to proceed to the next lesson. Understanding may have been enhanced with the more consistent use of visual support.</p> <p>Many examples of the provision of choices were noted being used in the classrooms during a variety of lessons. These were presented in a visual manner, such as during snack time in an Early Years class at which time the children were presented with the real fruit along with a visual representation. This is just one of the many examples of providing choices that was observed.</p> <p>Differentiation in the presentation of lessons was noted to be implemented across the classes. In some cases, the students were divided into two groups to firstly, decrease the size of the group, therefore increasing individual attention, and secondly, to benefit from the teacher's lesson in a way that has been adapted to their level of understanding. During a 'custom made' board game regarding 'Mental and Physical Health', the board and the related cards were color coded and any written instructions were supported with symbolic representations. The independent work files in a secondary class were meticulously prepared by the class teacher: each file had the sequence of tasks – DICTIONARY, WORD SEARCH, FINISHED; a pocket with a pencil, ruler and rubber; and worksheets in 3 separate colour coded sections. Each student completed their work confidently and with ease due to the high level of structure and preparation.</p>
<p>Sensory Experiences</p>	<p>Clearly, the school has invested lots of thought into its environmental design and have created a wonderful calm ambience throughout. All areas are decorated in shades of grey: walls are very light grey, doors and flooring are darker shades of grey. The use of non-flicker lighting, window coverings such as roller blinds and wide opaque vertical blinds, carpeting to absorb sounds are all environmental considerations that create a low arousal environment.</p> <p>Several purposely designed rooms across the school have been dedicated to providing sensory experiences to the</p>

students such as the: Soft Play Room, Body Shop, Wet Play Room and the Multi Functional Sensory Room.

The classrooms within the Early Years area are structured and areas are divided by partitions. Each classroom has a semi enclosed sensory/chill out area along with other dedicated areas such as independent work station and a circle/group time area. The school may reconsider the use of partitions throughout the Early Years classrooms as these may in fact be hindering the open view of where the children may be, along with the restriction of their independent movement from one area to another. The overall look of the rooms is quite bare and does not give the identity as an 'Early Years' classroom which would typically include play/choice areas and boards displaying art or other work done.

There were many examples of the use of resources that address sensory issues such as the use of ear defenders, chewy aids, postural supports and the playing of soft music during transition time within the classroom. These were observed in both the Early Years and Secondary Years classrooms.

Staff are aware of possible sensory triggers and proactive strategies were observed such as when a child in a secondary class was brought to his classroom from outdoor play before his classmates, thereby avoiding the potential rush and noise that would be present should he had walked in with his other ten classmates. He was also provided with ear defenders and his iPad upon entering the classroom. During a group activity in another secondary class, attention was given to the proximity of the students during a group lesson – ample space was given to each student to be able to work comfortably.

During a snack time observed at Early Years, children were supported according to needs and led by a very softly spoken staff member who used limited spoken language supported with visuals when offering a choice of fruit to the pupils. This approach is to be applauded and can serve as a model to the other staff ensuring that voices are kept low and the excessive use of language is limited.

At the end of a session one boy was given a verbal choice of three fiddle activities while the others finished a lotto game.

All students have an OT sensory assessment upon entering school (SPM assessment) however, a range of other assessments are also used so as to ensure that adequate data regarding the child's sensory processing is collected. The manager of the therapy services has noted that the most valuable information is collected during observations however, also collects data from the parents/guardians. Each student has a sensory diet including any equipment or other supports needed to address identified issues. Documentation relevant to the above has been reviewed. Sensory integration aids, such as ear defenders, fidget toys and chewies, were observed being used by students across the school in Early Years and the older classes and within a variety of settings.

The students benefit from the sterling services of five Occupational Therapists who each have a post graduate qualification

in sensory integration. A number of staff have also been trained as swimming instructors. All staff are well informed and trained regarding issues in sensory processing. They initially receive a two hour training at induction, the second part being a practical component including the use of equipment and an understanding of sensory diets. Sensory training refreshers are offered on a regular basis in areas such as, but definitely not limited to: sensory circuits and the use of equipment for alerting and calming (in recognition of the pupil's needs). Whole school training is provided regarding the use of the multi-sensory space. Focus is on how to incorporate curriculum concepts in this area and how, for example, a Maths lesson could be delivered successfully in this area. Pupils are taught how to access the sensory areas in the classrooms. Some students follow a sensory curriculum and training is provided to the staff regarding the application of strategies such as, but not limited to:

- Sensory stories – used in sensory room

- Sensory projector - Richard Hurstwood provides training re iPads and sensory projections (pupils can produce visuals and project these onto the wall using personal projectors). These are usually used as a calming strategy after a busy/hectic time. Training was also delivered regarding how best to use the sensory rooms.

- Light panels are being used and these can be adapted to be used as an aid to curriculum such as Maths and English.

The school has also heavily invested in sensory apps for the further use of iPads and other IT equipment. The use of these apps have been observed during the Early Years assembly.

Sensory integration intervention blocks of therapy are offered to students according to their needs.

Another well received strategy implemented at Queensmill is TacPack which combines the sense of touch and music through social interaction. It is delivered via an interaction between two people – a giver and a receiver. The session is structured and takes place in an emotionally safe environment, clear of other sensory interferences. The pupil's body is tapped on with different everyday objects that are applied in a pre-set sequence. This is used at an identified time when the pupil may show signs of stress, anxiety or discomfort. Parents are trained to use this approach while at home. A TacPack session that was recorded at home was viewed. The pupil's sister was viewed to be successfully applying this method and the child appeared to be responding positively. The child in fact may request a TacPack session through the use of PECS. After the Tacpack intervention, responses/comments are noted on an assessment sheet. Staff have follow up training once or twice a year.

There are a number of other training initiatives that are ongoing that have not been included in the above summary. Without a doubt, the school provides a wealth of opportunities to the staff which increase their knowledge and skill base.

	<p>A member of the review team observed what was judged to be a brilliant drama session; it was a sensory drama experience, using music movement and touch. The teacher and support staff were encouraging joint attention, the enthusiasm was infectious; lots of body percussion supported by the excellent mood music played by the music teacher, as well as calming music playing in the background. They were actually rehearsing the Christmas Production of Snow White and the seven dwarves.</p> <p>In another observation a builder's tray was filled with weather symbols and big glitter flakes. A boy was quite agitated was supervised by an adult, to manipulate the flakes like snow and found this to be calming.</p> <p>In conclusion Sensory practice at Queensmill School is well understood and very effectively implemented, it is judged to have a very beneficial impact on the young people concerned, the calm atmosphere that results benefits all.</p>
<p>Emotional Well-being</p>	<p>Staff at Queensmill School demonstrated a good understanding of individual pupils and this is key to effective support in the area of emotional well-being. Training is strong and underpins all practice. All staff undergo Team Teach training and the school has its own instructors. However the need for physical support is quite rare especially since the development of effective sensory practice and the more detailed understanding of students' level of development which has been an outcome of the use of the SCERTS programme. All students have Behaviour Plans, these may address problem behaviours that can challenge staff or more passive behaviours which impact on students learning and development.</p> <p>The consistent use of Pen Portraits were noted on display boards and in classroom files. In addition, each student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) which includes: My Learning Targets, My Autism Targets, Behaviour Support Plan, PECS level checklist and a Critical Communication Checklist. Information is easily accessible to staff.</p> <p>A family support worker has been engaged who as a strong background in autism. She supports students with medical appointments, provides emotional support and signposts to other services as well as delivering and coordinating parent training workshops. The parent training course, Cygnet, is run for 7 weeks, 3 hours once weekly for new parents or those that require further training to understand and accept the diagnosis of autism.</p> <p>The Sleepwise Programme helps parents to address sleep issues. Parents found this very helpful. The course is presented through two workshops, during the period in between these, parents complete a sleep diary. Parental stress is evaluated at the beginning and end of the training programme. A focus group is also carried out to encourage group interaction and the sharing of experiences. The facilitators of this programme are to receive further training in sleep issues.</p>

Parental workshops re feeding, safety and toileting are carried out on a rolling basis. Police have also delivered training re absconding issues and how they should be addressed if it happens. Details of pupils who have a tendency to abscond or who are deemed likely to be kept by the police, e.g. photographs, likely venues etc. this practice means that if a child does go missing parents do not have to try to provide this information at a time when they are feeling very stressed. Following a training event, parents are also asked to identify one priority area that they will be addressing at home and this is followed up by the staff to ensure that it is working.

Parents are provided with support re: housing, transport, and how the autism has impacted their request for services. Parent support staff also attend tribunals with the parents to provide professional opinions regarding needs. The support the school offers parents and families is extensive and will have a valuable impact on the family's experience, this approach is seen in the development of after school clubs and respite provision (to be running from Spring 2018).

Sibling support groups have also been established as there are many issues that they experience such as loss of sleep, mental health issues, lack of attention. Some of the staff lead this group on a voluntarily basis however, with the evidence of the positive evaluations of the outcomes, the school will be applying for funding.

A wonderful 'Success assembly' was observed where all the students in Early Years celebrate the successes that students have achieved in the previous fortnight.

High levels of commitment and positive attitudes were demonstrated by staff that appear to genuinely love what they are doing. This is seen in the intense amount of preparation that is invested in the documentation, development of resources, target planning and lessons that have been seen. The Home/school communication book is an excellent tool that ensures consistency and fluid communication with parents

The school implements SoSafe which is a system that is designed to help young people with autism (from 10 years upwards) understand and communicate social relationships. The aim is to provide the students with a visual resource that tells them not only who the various people in their life are but also to teach the level of verbal and physical intimacy that is appropriate for that relationship. Each student is provided with a 'My People and Relationship' book. The book has photos of people that are in the students' life, including those from at home, school and the community. The book helps to categorise these groups of people in way so that the student understands the appropriate level of physical or verbal intimacy. To further support and ensure consistency in the implementation of SoSafe, all staff have handy visual aids on them plus each classroom has a SoSafe chart that provides the student with quick visual access to relevant information.

The School Chef has made a very positive impact on the school lunch experience. He has ensured that the menu is much more varied and has been successful in encouraging some very rigid eaters to become more flexible around food. Meals

	provided by the school kitchen were seen to be of a high quality and are all cooked on the premises. The chef is also involved in the success of the Lyric Square Stall.
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CONCLUSION

Queensmill School is an exceptional school that demonstrates cutting edge practice. It has an outward looking and resourceful approach that ensures that is confident that the approaches it employs are based on sound evidence. The level of training it accesses also means that approaches are implemented in their best possible form by staff that have a strong knowledge base and excellent tools on which to draw. Working relationships within the school are noticeably strong and there is clearly a high level of respect for each other's skills and contributions amongst the staff group.

Although very proactive in its development the Senior Leadership Team has remained much focused on ensuring that practice is effective for individual students, that this is regularly monitored and adapted as necessary. A strong therapy team has an input into a very eclectic approach that exists in the school and works well in conjunction with teaching teams.