



Queensmill School

Research & Development Newsletter

Welcome & Update from the R&D Board

Introduction

Welcome to the 2016 Spring edition of the Queensmill R&D newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep staff and parents up to date with R&D activities in school and with Autism research in general.



Sleep Project: Last term the board started a research project looking at how we can support families of students who have sleep difficulties. In January participating parents completed the first stage of this project, which consisted of two workshops. We are now in the

process of formulating individualised sleep plans, which parents will implement with support from our Occupational Therapists and Family Support Worker.

WLSTA: Queensmill School are members of an alliance of around 30 different schools in West London (West London Teaching Schools Alliance or WLTA). Queensmill has been leading the alliance in the area of Research and Development. As an alliance we are currently looking into new areas of research, with the focus of our next project being on mental health and well-being.

Current issue: This issue looks at a new parent training programme that we introduced this academic year, a summary of an article focused on how the police understand and manage individuals with Autism and a summary of an article about our Queensmill units which recently featured in the magazine 'Special'.

Enjoy the newsletter! Caroline Bulmer, Research & Development Coordinator

Experiences of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Policing in England and Wales: Surveying Police and the Autism Community (Crane et al. 2016)

An online survey found :

- 42% of police officers were satisfied with the way they had worked with individuals with ASD
- 63% of police officers said they had received no training in ASD whatsoever.
- 69% of adults with autism were unhappy with the way they are treated by the police
- 74% of parents of children with autism were critical of the way their children were being dealt with by the police.
- It is clear that police perceptions of their professional experiences differ from those of the autism community.



At Queensmill we endeavour to provide a link between parents and the police as well as raising awareness of Autism amongst the



police. We have recently invited police officers to join parent training sessions, provided Autism awareness training for members of the police, invited them to one of our school fun days (where they brought along police

horses) and currently have a police officer as a Governor.

Cygnets Parent Training

Cygnets is a parent training programme developed by Barnardo's. This programme is designed for parents and carers of children and young people with Autism and aims:

- To increase parents understanding of Autism
- To guide parents through practical strategies they can use with children
- To give parents the opportunity to meet with other parents who have had similar experiences and to gain support and learn from each other.

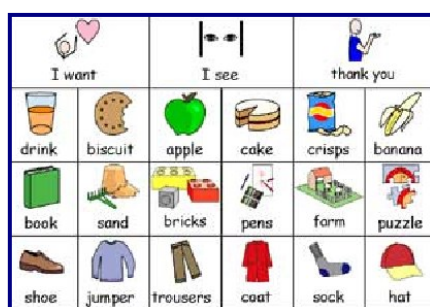


The programme covers:

Diagnosis



Communication



Sensory issues and behaviour.



This programme was run at Queensmill with a small group of 6 parents for the first time in November/December and was led by myself and Charlotte Spencer, the school's Family Support Worker. I thoroughly enjoyed delivering the Cygnets programme and particularly felt positive about how quickly a strong degree of trust was established amongst all of us in the group. This sense of closeness facilitated everyone to more readily share their own experiences about living or working with a child with Autism. We will be running the training course for parents again in the future.

Caroline Bulmer, Occupational Therapist

Queensmill Cygnets Parent Evaluations

The impact of cygnets was measured by parents completing standardised questionnaires of child behaviour and parenting sense of competence, before and after training. Parents found all 6 sessions to be very helpful and recorded improvements in a sense of confidence in responding to and managing more challenging behaviours.

An evaluation of the Cygnets parenting support programme for parents of children with autism spectrum conditions (Stuttard et al. (2016)

Although Cygnets is widely used in the United Kingdom (UK), there have been few evaluations to date. The researchers in this study conducted a small-scale evaluation of Cygnets as it was routinely delivered in two English cities. A group of 35 parents of children with autism received the training and another 32 parents were recruited as a comparison group who did not receive the training until after the study was completed. The impact of Cygnets was measured by parents completing standardised questionnaires of child behaviour and parenting sense of competence, before and after training. Attending Cygnets was associated with significant improvements in parenting satisfaction and in some specific child behaviour goals. The improvements were maintained six months after the training. The authors conclude that Cygnets is a promising intervention for parents of children with autism but requires further evaluation.

Queensmill in 'Special' magazine

The work of Queensmill's resource bases in mainstream schools was recently featured in 'Special' magazine published by the National Association of Special Educational Needs. Below is a summary of what was included in the article.



Background

Queensmill has a long commitment to outreach work and collaboration with mainstream partners. In 2010, in association with Fulham Primary School (FPS), Queensmill set up its first autism base and in September 2015, a 5th base opened in Fulham Cross Girls' School. Two distinctive features of the model are that although the pupils remain on the roll of Queensmill they attend the mainstream school full time and the base is led by a Queensmill teacher.

What happens in the resource bases?

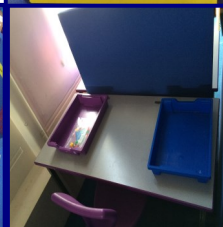
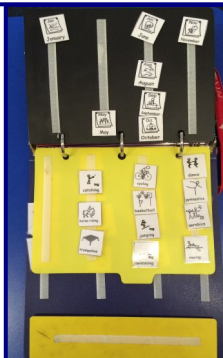
Fulham Primary

Classrooms include:

- TEACCH stations for each pupil
- PECS materials
- visual schedules
- space for sensory integration activities.

Students join mainstream peers for:

- School assemblies
- Science Lessons
- Music
- P.E.
- Playtimes
- School trips



Fulham College Boys

- This unit consists of 3 classrooms and an office
- Student's have the opportunity to: attend a range of inclusion subjects
- Integrate with mainstream peers at break times
- Get support with homework
- Take on a job e.g. school librarian



Comments from pupils and parents:

Pupil: 'I really enjoy being in the inclusion classes because I get to do lots of different things I haven't done before like science experiments that explode.'

Pupil: 'I do a lot of lessons and work very hard. Sometimes this is tiring but I am learning a lot of useful information.'

Parent: 'I'm thrilled with the level of care and education that John (not real name) receives... the level of academic work that he completes has significantly increased since he joined and he now thoroughly enjoys his learning ... it is great that he gets to mix and interact with a wider range of peers in a safe setting'.

Pupil: 'I have made lots of new friends.'

