



AUTISM ACCREDITATION PEER REVIEW

SERVICE REVIEWED: Green Lane Community Special School

DATES OF REVIEW: 11 – 12 October 2016

TEAM MEMBERS: Team Coordinator: Jackie Macey Team Members: Sarah Latham and Claire Moore

OVERVIEW OF PROVISION

Green Lane Community School is a special school for pupils aged 4-16yrs. The school meets the needs of young people with a varied range of difficulties. Around half of the school population have a diagnosis of autism. Those autistic pupils who present with more complex or severe needs are provided for in discrete classes, whilst others are successful in generic classes. The school has supported a number of pupils to successfully move between these options according to the outcome of ongoing assessment processes. The school moved to its current purpose built premises two years ago; this facility has been well designed to meet the needs of ASD pupils and has been further developed by the school to become an excellent learning environment for all its pupils and staff.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Observations

The review team observed 20 sessions which included whole class lessons, the Primary School during their choir session, break and lunch time. Observation of transition times also took place.

Interviews and Discussions

During the review meetings were held with the Head Teacher, ASD Lead Teacher, Parents and Pupils. Further informal discussions took place with pupils, teachers and support staff.

Documentation

Policies
Training records
Planning
Individual Education Plans
Communication Profiles
Behaviour Plans
Risk Assessments
Pathway to Success Documents
Social Stories
Self Audit
Ofsted Report
Website

KEY FINDINGS

As a result of this process, the following actions were identified for the service to work on:

Actions for development	Reasoning
<p>Core Standard 9: Flexibility of Thought</p> <p>The review team saw some examples where staff seized opportunities to teach pupils problem solving, e.g. pretending something was lost and supporting the pupil to look for the item. In one or two situations it was felt that this type of learning could be further developed and that this would support learners to become more independent, e.g. deciding on the equipment they might need for a task or allowing pupils to make errors before supporting them to make more successful choices. The team suggest that the school audits the opportunities that are presented to pupils for the development of problem solving and investigates where these could be enhanced within the curriculum on offer. Alongside this the ways in which this deficit is sometimes presented in autistic pupils and how this can lead to difficulties in their development could be revisited for staff as a training and strategy sharing exercise.</p>	<p>The school has an emphasis on addressing the broad needs of the pupils it works with, seeing the development of social skills, independence and flexibility as important for supporting all learning and future success as citizens. As such it has a good understanding of the difficulties many pupils experience in the area of problem solving and some staff incorporate opportunities to develop problem solving into their lessons as routine practice. The review team felt that there was scope for this work to be extended in some curriculum areas and for staff to revisit training in this area and share the approaches they use with each other.</p>
<p>Specialist Standard 4: Teaching and Learning - Methods</p> <p>The school has introduced the teaching of early imaginative play skills to pupils in the younger classes with a good level of success. The school intends to further develop this work,</p>	<p>The ASD Lead Teacher has included a programme which has been developed in line with the skills addressed through the SCERTS programme to develop play skills with young pupils. The results of this have been encouraging, through careful selection of materials, modelling and positive feedback</p>

for instance in by researching approaches which support the development of improved attention and ways of extending practice with older pupils. The review team see this as a potential area of development.	the young people have begun to be able to play with these materials in a more imaginative way. Initially they would imitate the actions and sometimes language of the adult but over time they have been able to initiate and extend the play themselves and in some cases use their new skills in further contexts. It is felt that this extension in thinking and language is fundamental to some forms of learning and the school wish to build on this work with the younger children and also find ways of developing it for older pupils. This is an example of the proactive approach that was witnessed by the review team in many areas.
--	---

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

Specific areas of strength	Reasoning
Core Standard 3: Professional Training and Development The review team congratulate the school on the effective team work of the staff within the school.	Staff are fully supported in their understanding of autism from their induction and in their continuing professional development. They attend both internal and external training which embeds their understanding of autism and the strategies and resources used to support pupils on the spectrum. This results in all of the staff around school appearing confident and seeming to work closely together within class groups to ensure that there is consistency of approach for all pupils. Staff in class groups communicate well with each other to ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met and progress is maximised. The ASD co-ordinator is a strong lead in ensuring that practice is effective, she has a proactive approach to developing the quality of the provision and to supporting both pupils and staff. The outcome of this strong practice is a very positive culture where pupils are seen to thrive.
Core Standard 7: Individual Plans The review team view the documentation which has been developed for individual pupils to be very clear and succinct. These formats have been well thought out and are written in accessible language with an emphasis on function and practical strategies.	Since the last review, Green Lane School have worked on streamlining their information around pupils. The 'Pathways to Success' documents are highly useful tools for all staff and visiting professionals in indicating consistent approaches that are personalised for individual pupils. While these documents contain a lot of information, it is all relevant and is presented in a succinct and meaningful way. They are accessible for a range of audiences, including parents and in some cases the pupils themselves. Throughout the documents there is an emphasis on strategies to best support individuals based on knowledge of autism and the pupils, in order for pupils to achieve their best.
Specialist Standard 4: Teaching and Learning - Methods The review team were impressed by the consistent high quality of practice seen across the school. All lessons observed were clearly structured and differentiated for the pupils concerned.	During the review the team found all of the lessons observed to be well structured and this was clearly set out in the planning. Micro transitions within lessons were managed very smoothly and it was clear that pupils are very used to the systems of moving between whole class, group and individual activities. Staff understood their tasks very well and there was no need to discuss staff movement within the lesson, this enabled a good pace of learning to be maintained. Within the varied activities planned in lessons sensory activities and breaks were included.

	<p>Classes observed included learners with a wide range of needs and these were accommodated appropriately. The school has sufficient staffing to support a significant level of differentiation and was clear that it is their policy that staffing levels are important to ensure that younger learners are very well supported to become calm and settled for learning in the school, most classes had a teacher and three support staff.</p> <p>It was of particular note that a calm working atmosphere with engaging tasks set for pupils was consistently seen across the school.</p>
<p>Core Standard 1: Environment</p> <p>The review team view the high quality of the calm and well-ordered and carefully differentiated environment that has been established at the school to be a potential area of strength.</p>	<p>Green Lane Community School has enjoyed its new buildings for the past two years. The building has been very well maintained and is still being developed, e.g. through new equipment being installed in the outside areas. All classes can access their own outside area which means that a continuous provision in possible and sensory needs can be more easily met. These areas are of a very good size for their purpose and appear to have been well developed and used effectively.</p> <p>Whilst there are distraction free parts of many classrooms and workstations are used as the need is identified there are also parts of the school that are attractive and show the work the school does very well. There are high quality well presented photographs of pupils enjoying their activities along the corridors and display boards such as the one to show which pupils have been awarded a merit. Both 2D and 3D art work is on view and this is of a high standard and enhances the environment.</p> <p>Classrooms have been clearly differentiated for the group of pupils who work in them. Some rooms have more workstations, some have more clear space, some a larger social area and some more resources made available for pupils. Staff have paid careful attention to the needs of the pupils in the class and arranged their classrooms accordingly. In all cases classrooms were extremely well ordered as were all areas across the school. The result is a calm, attractive and inviting area in which to learn. Parents who visited the school during the review mentioned how much they appreciated the excellent school environment.</p>
<p>Core Standard 13: Family and Support Links</p> <p>Green Lane Community School works with families in some very effective and innovative ways. This work supports parents understanding of their children and how to support them as well as offering opportunities for parents to join their children in school and to enjoy some social events with them. The review team feel that this work is extremely valuable for families, exceptional in its nature and of a very</p>	<p>Staff at the school have a good understanding of the need for young people to experience some consistency of approach between home and school, for instance PECS training is offered to parents and home visits are often carried out where parents welcome them. The school has very well established practice in the use of the SCERTS programme and shares this with parents. Training is offered to parents, targets are shared with specific areas being set for practice/development at home. Parents are then able to attend a SCERTS clinic with their child's class teacher so that they can be sure of their child's stage of development and how they can support their progress. There is an innovative programme where parents are invited into school to</p>

<p>high quality and see this as a potential area of strength for the school.</p>	<p>work with their child under the guidance of school staff. During the review four pupils were joined by their mothers for a Food Technology session. Initially the parents were shown the activity that would take place: making sandwiches: one for the pupil and one for their parent along with a drink of squash. Parents were shown the visual resources that had been produced. These were created to support the pupils to choose their own filling and their mother's, schedules for making the sandwich and clearing away were provided. Parents were able to take away the visual supports so that the activity could be repeated at home. This functional activity was chosen as a part of a life skills programme for these young people. Parents have been consulted about the skills they feel their children would benefit from developing and previous activities have included taking a shower, hair washing and visiting a supermarket. Parents observe how staff support and teach young people to develop these skills and are able to then, over time, transfer these achievements to home. This work is not part of a short project but a routine opportunity for all parents within the ASD classes and happens once a month while their child is in school. Close working in such a practical way with parents has enormous benefits for pupils and builds very supportive and trusting relationships between the school and its families. The review team feel this work is exceptional and recognise the investment the school is making in this innovative work.</p> <p>Of particular note in this area of excellent practice is the school's flexibility and creativity to provide positive experiences in response to the challenges families describe. The school has also set up social events for these groups of young people and their families, e.g. sharing lunch at a local restaurant.</p>
<p>Core Standard 15: Sensory Issues Sensory experiences are very well supported across the school; the team consider this area to be a potential area of strength across Green Lanes School.</p>	<p>The Policies, procedures in place to support sensory experiences and understanding of this area of need are clearly embedded into staffs practice. Opportunities for pupils to engage in SI approaches are weaved throughout the school day. Throughout the review, the team observed staffs' good practice and attention to addressing the pupils' sensory needs as effective, further promoting pupils to remain calm and alert during their school day. Sensory diets and strategies are shared and with parents and carers to support consistency for the individual in their home life. The school is well resourced to meet sensory differences.</p>

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Action taken to address recommendation
<p>Core Standard 10 Communication</p> <p>The team considered that displaying pupil's IEP targets in a way that is accessible to individual pupils within the classroom would promote better understanding of what they are working towards.</p>	<p>The school have considered various ways of sharing information with pupils in order to improve their understanding of their targets, their progress towards these and why they have been set for them. An individual response has been chosen and targets are now written in pupils workbooks for most pupils and can be referred to at an appropriate moment with the individual pupil. Targets are also displayed on the classroom wall, carefully chosen so that this is not distracting for pupils, so that staff can regularly refer to these.</p> <p>In addition the school are continuing to discuss ways in which targets for very early developers can be shared with them in a meaningful way.</p>
<p>Core standard 10 Communication</p> <p>The review team were impressed with the range and quality of displays seen throughout the school – notable displays included some of the GCSE Art work, and the use of very high quality photos of pupils undertaking various activities such as Food Technology and 'Big Sing'. However the team consider that the 'Merit System display board' would benefit from celebrating pupil's work in a more differentiated and child friendly way to enable all pupils to recognise their achievements.</p>	<p>The Merit System Display Board has been relocated to a wall that all pupils pass on a daily basis. Each week two pupils from each class are chosen for specific achievements, the pupil's photograph and a description of their achievement are displayed together on the board. This is a positive feature and one of the many excellent displays which were noted around the school.</p>
<p>Core standard 4 Operational Policies and Records</p> <p>The team consider that the streamlining of information held within Speech & Language assessments, communication profiles O.T Assessments, Positive behaviour plans and Pen Portraits would create more comprehensive and consistent information for all staff and best meet the needs of all pupils.</p>	<p>The school has considered the way in which information specific to each pupil is presented in order that it is easily accessible for all staff. Several documents are now collected together in a 'Pathway to Success' format.</p> <p>This document has a number of valuable headings such as: My favourite things, The best way to keep my attention... To help me learn... Behaviour, Triggers that lead to stress, If I do get stressed... amongst others. Under each heading is succinct information which conveys a clear picture of the pupil and as such these documents were viewed to be very useful especially as an initial introduction to the pupil.</p>

FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE SCORES

SCORES					
Number of Questionnaires sent out (information provided by the service):					58
Number of Questionnaires returned:					26
Number of sections not scored (figures only reflect sections scored):					0
	VERY UNHAPPY	UNHAPPY	SATISFIED	HAPPY	VERY HAPPY
Contact	1	0	2	9	14
Support	1	0	1	5	19
Advice	0	1	2	10	13
Involvement	1	0	2	11	12
TOTALS	3	1	7	35	58
PERCENTAGES	3%	1%	7%	33%	56%

A selection of comments are given below:

Communication:

- Always kept informed of events and sent reminders.
- Every day through the home-school book.
- Any worries or concerns are talked about on the telephone. Very helpful and understanding staff at all times.

Support:

- The school has been the turn around in my child's life
- Teachers and staff are great
- Give us advice on what to do with him at home.
- My child has come on a lot since starting, very happy.
- My child is very well supported in the classroom and enjoys school immensely.

- School cannot do enough to help Xxxx get on in life.
- The teaching staff really understand him and his needs.
- The school does not adequately support him.

Advice:

- I have recently had a SCERTS meeting with my child's class teacher where the targets were fully explained.
- School have always been very supportive.
- Always there to give support and guidance when I don't know where to turn.
- Sensory Diet Day was very good as it explained so much about certain behaviours and how to manage them positively.
- We are waiting for him to sit GCSE English but there is no teacher available to do this?!

Involvement:

- Teacher suggests strategies and has sent home a visual timetable after discussion.
- Very well, really pleased with everything.

OBSERVATION SCORES

Topic	Not Met	Partially Met	Majority Met	Fully Met
Differences in social communication	0	0	12	8
Self-reliance and problem solving	0	0	14	6
Sensory Experiences	0	0	13	7
Emotional well-being	0	0	10	10
TOTAL	0	0	49	31
PERCENTAGE	0	0	61%	39%

FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATIONS

Topic	Comments
Social understanding and Communication	<p>There is clear policy surrounding this area; Total Communication Policy, Language Policy and Social Understanding and Interaction Policy. The practice reflects what is written within the policies. It is clear that there is an individual and personalised approach to communication and social understanding and the 'Pathways to Success' documents aid in this. The communication profiles form a part of this document for each pupil on the autistic spectrum and clearly show that staff understand the behaviour of the pupils and how best to aid the pupil with each of their behaviours. All documents in the 'Pathways to Success' are succinct but informative. Each child has at least one target on their Individual Education Plan focussed on the area of social interaction and where necessary, Behaviour Support Plans are written in order to support social understanding. All of these plans are shared with parents. Specific social understanding issues are discussed under pupil issues at the weekly staff meeting.</p> <p>Consistent use of augmentative and alternative communication methods was observed; most commonly PECS is used throughout the school, but there was also a range of methods used, including speech generated devices where appropriate. It was clear that the use of these methods was embedded. In each class PECS books were accessible. The use of PECS was observed during a snack session and during lunch. This could be further improved by ensuring the roles of the adults during PECS is clearly defined, e.g. physical prompter not interacting with pupil, the communicative partner not prompting from the front, error correction techniques, allowing the child to be spontaneous in their communications. The staff training record shows that one member of staff attended training on PECS, it could be advantageous for more staff to attend training from Pyramid Education or for staff to have refresher training in this area, in order to ensure that PECS is being used to its full advantage.</p> <p>The environment in all classrooms and communal spaces is structured in a consistent way that enables pupils to understand it more easily. The structure is both physical and visual within classrooms and the use of symbols enables understanding for pupils. In addition to this, class timetables and individual timetables enable pupils to understand the structure of their day and reduce anxieties. Choose boards are also used to enable pupils to be supported in their decision making. Policies state that photographs, objects of reference are also used, as appropriate.</p> <p>In lessons the use of language was differentiated according to the needs of the pupils. Some reduced language was observed, as well as individual instructions, visual cues to support languages and some signing was also observed. This was differentiated according to</p>

	<p>the needs of the class and was all age appropriate. Other strategies used to aid the social understanding and receptive communication of pupils, were countdowns to the end of activities and visual timers.</p> <p>In younger classes, staff were observed facilitating play and this was also observed on the playground, where pupils were actively encouraged to interact with other pupils and not staff. Staff initiated simple turn taking games with groups of pupils with a range of equipment. There was an opportunity for classes to mix during this time.</p> <p>In older classes, teachers dialogue and the content of the lesson was well supported by visuals, mainly PowerPoints.</p> <p>In some lessons, social interaction opportunities were well planned, including using turn taking skills, to practice a range of social skills, there were opportunities for pupils to work in pairs as well as individually. This could be further developed by all teachers planning these opportunities into their lessons. It could also be highlighted on the planning proforma, to highlight the thinking behind planning these opportunities and to really highlight the work done in this area.</p> <p>The school are dedicated to providing the appropriate level of support in the form of speech and language therapy. In addition to their allocated speech and language therapists, they have teaching assistants who are trained in delivering speech and language programmes within classes as appropriate. In addition social skills are taught in classes as the need arises and the school uses social stories to aid this.</p> <p>All of the above results in pupils who have reduced anxiety and appear calm, with the ability to communicate at a developmentally appropriate level. This also shows that the pupils have a good level of social understanding in this context.</p>
<p>Self Reliance and Problem Solving</p>	<p>There are clear documents which focus on self-reliance and problem solving. The 'Pathway for Success' document includes a section called 'to help me learn' (flexibility of thought) lists strategies of how best to support the pupil in developing their self-reliance and problem solving skills. The document is displayed on classroom walls and is well written using clear statements which are helpful for staff working with the pupil.</p> <p>In the majority of observations, the team saw examples of how self-reliance and problem solving is planned for in lessons. In one observation of a PSHE lesson, which focused on choices, pupils explored the consequences of making good versus bad choices. The pupils appeared confident and familiar with the concepts and language introduced during the lesson. Other examples of developing self-reliance included systems where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning. The pupil is encouraged to reflect on achievement by placing a photo of themselves on a large rocket based on the traffic light system where by their photo placed on the green section translates that their learning was good. In all observations visual timetables, individual work stations /office space allowed pupils carry out some independent learning tasks whilst in other observations the pupils were well supported by an adult to complete the activity. Lessons were calm and organised support staff worked sensitively with individuals or supported small groups for their learning. Pupils are supported to generalise the skills they learn in school. During one community visit pupil used PECS to make choices of snack and problem solve for example 'how many cups do we need' the child constructed a sentence of 'I want 4 cups' took it to the counter to independently ask for the cups. However, the team noted some examples of when opportunities to develop self-reliance and problem solving were missed. An example was in a Food Technology lesson where most instructions were given to pupils verbally, some pupils may have worked with increased independence with the support of visual strategies (a jig) or by the supporting adults modelling each step of the food preparation alongside the pupils.</p> <p>The SCERTS framework and targets are embedded across the school; choice boards for pupils to ask for a sensory break develop self-reliance by encouraging the pupils to recognise how to regulate their emotional state.</p>

Sensory Experiences	<p>The Sensory policy is a well written document demonstrating that the school has a very good understanding of `Sensory Processing difficulties experienced by autistic individuals. The document clearly explains how processing difficulties may present which is helpful and supportive to staff's understanding of this area of need.</p> <p>During observations there was evidence that sensory experiences are supported through the SCERTS framework. SCERTS is very well embedded across the curriculum. Each pupil has SCERTS targets included in their IEP which were displayed on classroom walls. Staff demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the transactional support that each individual pupil requires to encourage emotional regulation during their school day. Good examples of how transactional support is used was observed in lessons and include: the use of non-verbal prompts, appropriately reduced language, ear defenders, weighted jackets, timer's and token system to demonstrate how long a pupil was expected to remain on task before having a break.</p> <p>In the same lesson a sensory activity had been prepared for one pupil. The pupil was observed to become calmer as he engaged in his activity. Parents are invited for a SCERTS parent workshop, targets are set for pupils `homework` and staff work with parents to enable positive outcomes for each pupil. The OT carries out sensory assessments from which each pupil has an individual sensory diet including recommendations to implement across the pupil's day. The calm, on task behaviour observed from pupils during their learning is a clear indication that pupil's sensory diets are in use and helpful. Equally the schools clearly structured and organised environment further support pupils' sensory processing needs.</p> <p>A high number of sensory resources were seen to be used within planned lesson activities.</p>
Emotional Well-Being	<p>Green Lane Community School has a calm and positive atmosphere where young people are clearly happy and enjoying their experiences. The ethos which is created comes from strong leadership in the school where staff and young people are supported to work well together and achieve their best. Laughter was regularly heard and effective and caring relationships have clearly been established between staff and pupils. A good knowledge of pupils' strengths, difficulties and learning styles underpins the working relationships that are developed as is evidenced in the individual Pathway to Success documents. Staff employ a broad range of skills and approaches to support young people to be successful, from meeting their sensory needs, highly structured lessons and meaningful activities and individualised communication approaches.</p> <p>The school ensures that pupils' emotional well-being is considered throughout the activities it plans. There is a clear understanding that pupils who are relaxed, happy and feel understood in their environment will gain the most from the learning opportunities presented to them. This approach is set at the beginning of the day when the Head Teacher warmly welcomes each pupil into school, A very successful 'Big Sing' session was observed, this involves all of the primary aged pupils and some older learners who are developmentally at a young age. The session was active, involved some pupils making choices, and finished with some dancing. The session appeared to leave everyone feeling happy and having enjoyed being part of a large group activity.</p> <p>Life skills are included in the curriculum especially as pupils get older as is work experience and work related learning opportunities, these activities help to ensure pupils well-being is maintained when they move on from the school.</p> <p>Visits into the community are frequent and these support pupils to become familiar with places out of school and begin to develop</p>

some of the skills they will need as developing citizens after they leave the school. Residential trips are seen as useful learning opportunities by the school; they begin with Key Stage 2 pupils experiencing one night away from home and build to longer trips and eventually a trip abroad for the oldest pupils. These experiences build confidence and a joy of sharing new activities together. Residential trips have the added advantage of allowing staff to assess pupils in a different context and to support them to generalise the skills they have learned.

The school works very well with its families and has developed some innovative ways of doing this which have great benefits for pupils. Details of this work are discussed further in earlier sections of this report. During the review a member of the team accompanied a young class on a trip to the supermarket, parents were invited to come along to see how the trip was managed and their children supported. This work with parents is an indicator of the schools confidence in their work and willingness to share this with families. Community visits often present challenges and demonstrating to parents the skills and approaches the staff use is a very effective training tool.

The school council meets regularly to discuss their ideas, they have been instrumental in creating a new uniform for the oldest pupils in school and acquiring new equipment for the outside play areas. The school council's work helps to make pupils feel valued as well as being an opportunity to develop confident pupils with well-developed listening and thinking skills.

In addition to the school's Behaviour Policy there is a 'Managing the Behaviour of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder' document. This sets out the emphasis on positive intervention. How this might be achieved is clearly detailed including notes on the following: Strategies of Good Practice, Verbal Praise, Body Language, Verbal Intervention, Visual Systems and Prompts, Planned Ignoring, Environment, Personnel, Groupings, Distraction Techniques amongst others. This document is quite detailed and would convey a wealth of tools to support positive behaviour to any member of staff.

Each class employs its own reward system for pupils. Pupils were observed to be motivated by these and proud of their achievements.

During the review a meeting was held with some parents, all felt their children were well supported by the school to develop into happy successful learners and commented on how willing the staff were to support them.

During the review staff at all levels demonstrated that the emotional well-being of pupils is a high priority and worked well to ensure progress in this area for all pupils.

CONCLUSION

The quality of practice at Green Lane Community School is consistently and exceptionally high and reflects the extensive understanding of autistic pupils that is commonplace amongst the staff group. In addition aspects of the effective practice seen were innovative and this reflects a proactive approach to further developing quality wherever possible. The success of this thorough and consistent practice was seen in the calm and constructive activity that pupils happily engaged in throughout the review period.