

Challenge Partners Area of Excellence – agreed during February 2018 Quality Audit Review

Area of Excellence

EXTENDING PROVISION TO DEVELOP ACTIVE INDEPENDENCE.

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

- The Ofsted inspection in November 2016 and the National Autistic Society accreditation visit in January 2018 both recognised the importance of these programmes in developing students' independence when travelling and other skills, such as cooking for themselves during regular school residential experiences.
The school offers a wide variety of experiences to enable students to develop a full range of independent living skills. The school has used a wide range of awarding bodies to assess and support the quality of student's learning in their specialist areas.
This includes the *NAS certificate of Quality Autism Provision*, the *Third Millennium Award*, (this recognises the school's outstanding use of technology to support learning), the *National Standard for Healthy Schools*, the *Outstanding Sustainable School*, *Excellence in Cycling Award*, the *Active Mark* and *Sports Mark* awards, and the *International Schools Award*.

What actions has the school taken to establish expertise in this area?

- The headteacher has led this area of development since the school opened in 2011. Staff who have new ideas to add to the programme are encouraged to develop these and, as a result, there are several on-going innovative programmes.
- Activities are run regularly by the school and external providers provide an extensive range of support for student's independence. They include: after school and holiday clubs, charities, cycling proficiency, drama, global awareness, independent travel, Makaton training, musical projects, recreational sport, residential journeys, support in the home, and weekly work experience for all Year 11 students.
- The school has made extensive permanent connections with a range of charities to support and strengthen the school's work and extend students' learning.

What evidence is there of the impact on students' outcomes?

Each of the above-mentioned links has positive impact on student outcomes. Particularly notable examples include:

- The school's cycling training programme has enabled many students to learn how to cycle safely over time, and some now cycle to school.
- Drama teaching, putting on productions, and the school's ambitious extended work has enabled students to develop resilience, self-esteem and confidence through role-play and working with visiting professionals.
- Students and staff make reciprocal annual visits to our link schools in Slovenia, and staff organise regular exchanges with a special school consortium in Aarhus in Denmark, and Accra in Ghana. Students have exchanged emails and diaries with these institutions. Those interviewed had gained significant understanding of other languages and cultures, as well as experience of international travel
- An accredited trainer leads the schools independent travel training programme, this enables approximately 25% of students to travel to school on their own.
- All students in year 11 have weekly off-site work experience placements throughout the year to help them prepare for post-16 education, the world of work, and independent living. Students with high levels of independence can join the local '*Urban Futures*' programme. School staff are using an accredited scheme to track and record progress in work experience, and it is clear from annual review meetings, and other feedback that students' independence and resilience are raised.

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