

ORGANISATION PROFILE

- Country: United Kingdom
- Number of employees: 185
- Turnover: 5,800,000 Euro
- Sector: Education
- Track record in Awards: -

APPLICANT OVERVIEW

Bradstow is a unique and distinctive Residential Special School situated in fourteen acres of parkland, in Broadstairs, Kent. They provide living and learning opportunities for fifty-two students aged from 5 to 19 years, who experience Autistic Spectrum Disorders and/or Severe Learning Difficulties, and with a focus upon the most complex and behaviourally challenging needs. Some of our students have been excluded from other special schools, and some refused admission to the latter, on the basis of the severity of their disabilities. Often there is a breakdown in home conditions as parents struggle to cope with the difficulties demonstrated.

They are oriented to meeting the needs of a single customer group of students and families, although day-to-day work is with students. There are a significant number of stakeholders with an interest in our overall performance: in addition to Wandsworth Borough Council, the most important are the referring local authorities, relevant social services departments, the DCSF, OFSTED and elements of the National Health Service.



ROLE MODEL AREAS

Role Model Area – Customer Focus

Approach

The principal customer of Bradstow School is clearly defined as the Student. It is the needs of the student that are paramount, as articulated by the phrase “Bradstow is for the Students”. Whilst the local authority (Wandsworth) and parents are considered as secondary customers, there is often potential for conflict between the needs of the individual student, and needs of the parents and local authority. In such cases the professional staff of Bradstow School act as the advocate for the student, thus reinforcing the individual student as the primary customer. Bradstow School’s students have the most severe forms of learning difficulty but despite this, the School is committed to delivering the full UK National Curriculum. The considerable variation of student ability and behaviour makes it essential for the focus to be on individuals rather than groups of students.

Deployment

Customer focus is deployed through three principal mechanisms which are all-embracing and complimentary. These mechanisms are supported by an extensive evaluation and assessment of each student before first admission. The first of these mechanisms is the Individual Education Plan (IEP). This plan is developed for each student to give challenging but realistic educational targets based on their own abilities. These targets are reviewed for each student on a weekly basis, and new targets are set. The IEP for each student is visible to all members of staff, so every member of staff in contact with each student is fully aware of the educational development needs of that student and is able to support achievement of the target.



The second deployment mechanism is the Behaviour Management Database. This allows for the recording of specific behaviours displayed by individual students and incidents arising from these behaviours. This information is utilised to develop and communicate strategies to divert students from their behavioural problems using a range of techniques. For example, one student had considerable difficulties in making the transition from her 'home' life in the residential building to her 'school' life in class.

After much experimentation, it was found that she would happily make this transition if occupied in an enjoyable activity when doing so. Quite simply she was given a digital camera and allowed to photograph the gardens, staff and other students as she walked from her residence to class. At the end of each week she was able to choose her favourite picture and the staff would print this for inclusion in her personal album, in which she took great pride.



This simple strategy was deployed in her case to overcome the significant distress the transition from 'home' to 'school' caused to this individual. By recording and communicating this technique on the Behaviour Management Database, all staff knew how to help the student deal with this situation.

The third mechanism is the Complimentary Curriculum. This concept maintains the strong focus on the needs of each student for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It utilises both the IEP and Behaviour Management Database to allow specifically tailored educational and behavioural learning to be embedded in the classroom and in the residential environment. In this way all staff, whether teaching or care staff, are engaged with the individual education and behaviour management of the students.

Assessment and Review

These approaches are assessed and reviewed extensively, both at the level of the individual student and at the systemic level. One example of systemic review and improvement was the reinforcement of the Complimentary Curriculum by introducing the idea of care staff overlapping from the residential environment into the class room. Now some care staff operates split shifts, to spend the early part of

the day with students in their residence before taking them to class and staying with them until they settle in the classroom environment. They return later in the day to reverse the process.

Impact on performance

The success of Bradstow School in realising better than expected outcomes for their students is as a result of this highly individualised and focused approach to their students. This is one of the key factors that distinguish the school from other special schools that have previously been unsuccessful with Bradstow School's referred students. The approach and deployment reflects very favourably in the key performance outcomes (Educational and Behavioural).

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