

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Little Heath School
School Address:	Hainault Road, Little Heath, Romford, Essex, RM6 5RX
Hub:	London Special and AP

Telephone Number:	020 8599 4864
Email address:	school@lheath.net

Unique Reference Number:	102878
Local Authority:	Redbridge
Type of School:	Special
School Category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Number on roll:	161
Head teacher/Principal:	James Brownlie

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	11-12 February 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	7-9 December 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils are:	Good
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Good
Area of Excellence: Video conferencing	Developing
Previously accredited Areas of Excellence	SMSC Project-based learning

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Little Heath School appears to be at the top of the Good grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report 11-12 February 2014 and is working towards Outstanding.

¹ Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

Information about the school

- Little Heath is a small special school catering for pupils who have moderate to severe learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils who have complex needs has increased in recent years.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan.
- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with the greatest proportions being from White British or Asian heritages.
- Most pupils speak English as their main language.
- Around two thirds of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- School leaders have successfully dedicated time to developing the sixth form curriculum. Previously, there was a 'one size fits all' approach and some pupils were not able to make enough progress during their three-year placement. The new pathways provide greater personalisation. The school now offers one, two and three year programmes for pupils at different levels of readiness for moving on to college. The more relevant structure, with enhanced engagement with the local community, has helped to ensure that pupils make progress from the end of Key Stage 4 and develop greater levels of independence.
- Simultaneously, there has been a drive to promote and develop employability within sixth form provision. This has included refocusing the subjects offered as part of the weekly curriculum (for example, by changing cooking to catering) as well as integrating opportunities for enterprise through the year. This initiative has been underpinned by the Mental Health Foundation's When I Grow Up (WIGU) project.
- A workforce reorganisation has successfully enabled additional planning time to be built into the contracts of learning support assistants (LSAs) from January 2017. This was in response to an identified need for these staff to have greater involvement in the organisation of learning and improved access to training.
- School leaders have also established link LSAs to enhance liaison between therapists and classroom staff. These staff will share programmes developed by specialists with other staff, develop resources and work with parents and other professionals so that best use can be made of therapists' time.
- Web-based personal profiles (wikis) have been designed and implemented, on behalf of the borough, to improve person centred planning. The views of pupils were previously not being captured well. Used at the start of reviews, these now set the tone for pupils' hopes and aspirations.

Even Better If...

...school leaders further developed their basket of indicators for capturing pupils' progress over time, particularly in light of the school's changing intake. This might include quantitative measures of pupils' personal development (for example, self-esteem, social communication, attitudes to learning etc.) to give measureable information about the impact of interventions.

...links with employers were developed further to expand opportunities for work related learning outside the school. This might include exploiting links with the Redbridge disability employment network, the local college and the local authority to draw on existing expertise, for example, in making appropriate health and safety arrangements.

...communication with parents was further improved, so that greater account was taken of their needs in addition to meeting statutory requirements and good practice. The school has identified that they need to be clearer about the purpose of meetings and ensure that information about pupils' learning and progress is current and relevant.

Pupil Outcomes

- Attainment on entry is below average as a result of pupils special educational needs.
- Against the school's expectations set using CASPA, all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make at least expected progress in the core learning areas of language and literacy, mathematics and science.
- In Key Stage 3, around one-third of pupils make more than expected progress in language and literacy as well as mathematics. A slightly higher proportion of Key Stage 3 pupils progress more quickly than expected in science.
- The proportions making more than expected progress in mathematics, language and literacy is smaller in Key Stage 4 than it is in Key Stage 3. However, pupils progress in science through Key Stage 4 is faster than expected for nearly two-thirds of pupils.
- Around three-quarters of disadvantaged pupils in both Key Stages make accelerated progress in Language and Literacy. In mathematics, there is less consistency; almost all pupils in Key Stage 4 make rapid progress while in Key Stage 3 it is closer to just half the cohort. In science, the proportions of Key Stage 3 disadvantaged pupils making and exceeding expected progress is broadly similar to their peers. However, in Key Stage 4, few make more than expected progress.
- The small cohort of children who are looked after all make at least expected progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Girls tend to make more rapid progress than boys in core subjects. The school attributes this, in part, of the nature of their special educational needs.
- Pupils' progress in personal, social and health education is not always as strong as in the core academic subjects. For example, in Key Stage 4, one-quarter of pupils did

not make expected progress. In both key stages, the proportions making more than expected progress represent only a few pupils.

- All pupils completing Year 9 in 2016 achieved the ASDAN New Horizon Award.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 includes GCSE examinations in mathematics, science, art, history and home economics for some pupils. The number of entries is relatively small and has fluctuated over the past three years. Nevertheless, the school has successfully ensured that all pupils entered for these examinations in 2016 received a pass grade.
- Achievement in the sixth form centres around progression against English and mathematics targets as well as ASDAN accreditation. Proportions exceeding targets are high. Personal progress accreditation includes attainment at both diploma and certificate levels.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Around half of the teaching staff were observed during the review with a slight bias towards sixth form provision to help evaluate the progress made since the previous inspection.

What Went Well

- Pupils have an appetite for learning, are keen to engage and are trusting of staff. This is a result of positive relationships built up and improving over time. The school's recognition and celebration of small steps of achievement promotes pupils' positive attitudes and resilience. Pupils take measured risks, for example, by giving speeches in front of their peers, and overcome their reservations with mutual support.
- The learning environment around the school is calm. Transitions between lessons are smooth. Pupils' positive behaviour indicates that routines and boundaries are well established.
- Teachers have good modelling skills and make good use of visuals and manipulatives. This 'showing and sharing' approach allows pupils to develop their practical and conceptual understanding. It particularly promotes the independence of lower ability, non-verbal pupils.
- Teachers typically select learning activities appropriately to meet the needs of the class and provide challenge.
- Each class has an information folder available to help visitors understand key aspects of pupils' needs. This is helpful in promoting a culture of total communication which is one of the school's current development priorities.
- The school's marking policy appropriately places significant reliance on verbal feedback. While school leaders recognise that they remain on a journey of improvement in this area to move from recognising completion to guiding learning, teachers in the main follow the school's policy.

Even Better If...

...the quality of differentiation more consistently met pupils' individual learning and sensory needs. It may be helpful to encourage the use of a common format to emphasise the focus on needs rather than just providing support or different resources.

...the work of LSAs had greater impact on pupils' learning by ensuring that teachers use precision planning to deploy LSAs with specific objectives and that LSAs are guided and supported to assess and monitor pupils' learning in lessons.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

Video conferencing

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

The school regards the use of video conferencing as playing a significant part in developing pupils' enjoyment and participation in learning. Staff have been able to use the technology to make lessons more interesting in computing, humanities, English and science. It has given pupils the experience of linking with other young people and expert adults from around the country and around the world.

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

Having invested in video conferencing equipment and made links with the Redbridge video conferencing development group, the school has planned an extensive programme of video conferences with other schools and organisations linked to various parts of the curriculum.

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

Much of the impact on pupils' outcomes is currently recorded anecdotally. The school is clear, for example, that conferences with adult experts (such as from the National Space Centre) have benefited pupils' learning. There are also examples, including contact with the London Assembly, which has promoted pupil voice. However, the school is not yet able to quantifiably demonstrate substantial and sustained impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

Even Better If...

...the school quantified the substantial and sustained impact of the use of video conferencing on pupils' academic outcomes and personal development including, for example, their speaking and listening skills.

...the documentation clearly identified how the school is planning on continuing to build its own expertise in this area so that other schools can be clear they are receiving information from leaders in the field.

...this submission incorporated the school's wider use of information and communication technology.

What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

Following discussion with the headteacher, the school would like some additional support with accessing opportunities in observing best teaching learning and assessment practice in similar settings.

This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.