
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Castlebar School
School Address:	Hathaway Gardens, Ealing, London, W13 0DH
Hub School:	London Special and Alternative Provision

Telephone Number:	020 8998 3135
Email address:	admin@castlebar.ealing.sch.uk

Unique Reference Number:	101966
Local Authority:	Ealing
Type of School:	Special
School Category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Number on roll:	152
Head teacher:	Paul Adair

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	18-19 June 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	18-20 January 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies Outstanding

Pupil Outcomes Outstanding

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Outstanding

Area of Excellent Practice: Confirmed

The integration of therapies into classroom practice.

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Castlebar School appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report of June 2014.

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

- Castlebar is a maintained special school in the London Borough of Ealing for primary age pupils Year R to Year 6. It was judged outstanding by Ofsted in June 2014.
- It is a leading school in the Ealing Primary Teaching School Alliance, designated in February 2015, which consists of 18 primary schools. The school is a national support school and the Headteacher is a National Lead in Education (NLE). Six members of staff are, or soon will be, Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs).
- All students have a statement of special educational need or an education and health care plan (EHCP) with a range of needs from moderate learning difficulties to severe learning difficulties. A significant proportion (52%) have a diagnosis of autism; 33% have medical conditions.
- 65 pupils (43%) receive the pupil premium funding and 72% of pupils at the school are boys. Two thirds have English as an additional language. A very large majority of pupils are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British, reflecting the make-up of the borough.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The school was judged an outstanding school in 2006, 2009 and 2014. It relentlessly pursues further improvement. The empowerment of people, both staff and pupils, is at the heart of what the school does well.
- The self-evaluation and school improvement documents are honest and ambitious. The school pursues improvement through rigorous internal and external scrutiny, drawing on its work as a teaching school and the leading role it plays in a number of professional networks in and beyond the borough.
- The school makes very good use of links with higher education institutions such as the Institute of Education (IoE), where the Deputy Headteacher is a link tutor, and St Mary's University. The school is a strategic partner at St Mary's. A lesson study model is helping to improve the quality of teaching. This involves three teachers co-planning, then co-delivering a cycle of three research lessons which are then evaluated by the IoE.
- Senior leaders make perceptive and evidence based judgments about the quality of learning. The system to monitor and improve the quality of teaching is innovative and thorough. The school is refining a detailed framework for judging the quality of teaching, tightly linked to the teachers' standards. It draws on evidence from learning walks, book scrutiny, more formal observations, pupil progress information and a regular evaluation of the learning environment.

- Senior leaders model how to provide feedback to teachers. They also jointly observe with newer members of staff to model expectations.
- Middle leaders are particularly highly skilled. The school's investment in their training is exemplary. They know the strengths and developments needed in their areas of responsibility. They gather information about learning from observations, their own teaching and learning walks. They team teach to help develop the skills of their teams. They are passionate and driven to be the best they can be. They problem solve at their level rather than passing 'up' the hierarchy seeking and getting advice and support as needed. This frees up senior leaders to balance their operational responsibilities with wider strategic roles.
- Pupil progress meetings are very well managed by senior leaders. The identification of those who require support to achieve ambitious targets is swift. Teachers are skilled in assessing and reflecting on pupil progress through high quality book scrutiny and moderation.
- The professional development for all staff delivered by the multi disciplinary team is comprehensive and directly impacts on learning.
- Class teachers, who are all leaders of learning in their teams, appraise the performance of teaching assistants. They have been well trained in this. The outcomes shape the continuing professional development plans for the teaching assistants which contributes to their sense of being valued and belonging.
- The impact of the comprehensive teaching school offer is highly rated by learners and alliance members.
- The school is exceptionally calm and purposeful. Lunchtime arrangements are exemplary. Staff model calmness and confidence which contributes well to the consistently skilled behaviour management across the school. Staff enjoy working at Castlebar where staff turnover is low.
- The school council hold a strong understanding of what their role is and how this role helps them develop their independence.
- The school has an impressive extended school provision involving, for example, sessions on Makaton, holiday programmes and how to teach literacy and numeracy for parents.
- The school has a very detailed analysis of the key areas of pupil performance. Like other special schools, its system for collecting and analysing progress information is in a period of transition, as national progression guidance measures will be replaced by primary progress measures. The school has made an excellent start, in collaboration with other schools, on the development of a wider range of sources of information about pupils.

Even Better If...

... the school developed creative ways for support staff to receive developmental feedback from teachers to further improve their practice.

... the school developed teachers' skills to enable teaching assistants to promote learning consistently rather than task completion.

Pupil Outcomes

- From low starting points, pupils develop skills very quickly. A large percentage of pupils make good and outstanding progress in English, mathematics and personal and social development.
- There are no significant gaps between the progress of key groups, such as boys and girls and disadvantaged and non disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's analysis is done by further groups such as those who are summer born, the correlation between attendance and pupil progress, those who attend after school clubs, those with English as an additional language, ethnicity and the progress of older and younger pupils. The analysis indicates there are no significant gaps in the progress of these different groups.
- The school has a rich vein of specialist programmes in movement, communication skills, speech and language and phonics such as Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress (MAPP), Makaton and Rebound Therapy. Each of these programmes is thoroughly evaluated.
- Each area of learning is carefully assessed and drawn together with a clear summary of the key messages that the data provides.
- The progress of the most able and the youngest pupils is particularly strong.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Lesson planning is excellent. Learning objectives are both clear and carefully followed, based on the rich assessment information available in the school.
- Lessons are well structured but teachers also think on their feet and respond well to the changing needs of the pupils.
- Transitions between, for example, arriving in school and being ready for learning, and between the end of break and the start of the next lesson are stunningly well managed.
- The learning environment supports pupils' learning. The design, layout and maintenance of the buildings have all been carefully thought through and staff and pupils treat them well. There is a commendable attention to detail throughout.

- When interventions are well planned and executed, as they very usually are, pupils make very good progress. Formative assessment is used well and helps staff ensure pupils are well challenged.
- There is a broad range of engaging activities in classes. Pupils enjoy their learning.
- There are typically very high quality relationships between pupils and staff which help pupils feel confident and keen to learn. Staff support children's communication very well. Most staff help develop children's skills of independence consistently well. Praise is used well and is effective in motivating pupils.
- All areas of learning are impressively calm and purposeful.
- There is some excellent and ambitious practice of peer and self review.
- The school's Makaton team works well across the school to contribute to the school's impressive total communication approach.
- Learning continues in the playground with supervising staff largely knowledgeable about pupils' individual needs.
- Subject leaders rigorously evaluate progress through the IEP process.
- In partnership with other agencies, the school delivers a rich PSED curriculum which prepares pupils to be confident and independent learners.

Even Better If...

... the school changed how it described interventions so that they become an integral part of the curriculum rather than a separate or additional piece of learning.

... the school provided additional support and training for support staff when they move to a new role.

... leaders quality assured the school's good practice in identifying next steps in learning to ensure that the practice is consistent across the school.

... in the light of the national assessment reforms, the school evaluated the appropriateness of all its current assessment systems.

... the school continued to develop further the relentless promotion of pupil independence across all areas of the pupils' life.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice

The integration of therapies into classroom practice.

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

The school provided a thorough evaluation of its area of excellent practice - the integration of therapies into classroom practice. This is exemplified by a strong collaboration with school and the multi-disciplinary team (MDT). There are regular professional meetings with

staff to discuss targets and progress, half termly meetings with the senior leadership team (SLT) and the MDT team.

They follow a facilitative approach, resulting in the effective delivery of interventions in the classroom. Strategies and approaches learnt from SLT and OT are being used by staff to enable all pupils to access learning across the curriculum and during extra-curricular activities. Interventions are tracked by a bespoke provision map, thus enabling the analysis of progress and the targeting of appropriate intervention for each individual child.

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

The MDT works closely with the teaching team to address the speech and language needs of pupils and their occupational therapy needs. Training is also offered to parents. The school also has a music therapist who works within the team too. An educational psychologist further supports children's needs.

Enhanced collaborative working with the MDT team is achieved via half termly meetings. Through annual reviews, structured conversations and parents' meetings, the school has raised awareness of the facilitative approach used.

The provision map created by the school tracks, monitors and assesses the different interventions that children are receiving. This is supplemented by a 'provision map guide', a tool for staff to use when recording data for each intervention.

Outreach training has been organised across the Teaching School Alliance and expertise was shared at a recent conference. Plans are in place to provide induction training for all new staff. Training is also in place for kitchen staff and midday supervisors on PECs.

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

The use and analysis of the provision map indicate a highly positive impact on pupils' overall attainment, as measured via a battery of thorough assessment tools such as MAPP, Skills tracker, VB, PIVATs and 'I Can' statements. There is significant evidence of impact of interventions in action triangulated across the school's observation and quality assurance mechanisms.

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 to reflect further about what support they might like. The headteacher would like to visit some other schools where there is outstanding practice.