

Written Report

CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

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

Telephone Number:	020 8998 3135
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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:	27-29 January 2016
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies: Outstanding

Outcomes for Pupils are: Outstanding

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Outstanding

Area of Excellent Practice: Communication

Overall Review Evaluation

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Castlebar School appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted following an inspection in 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

- The school has gradually changed its profile over a number of years and has admitted an increasing number of pupils who have complex learning needs. The majority of pupils have severe and complex learning difficulties; a small cohort of pupils has moderate learning difficulties. About half the children have a further diagnosis of autism and there are a few with an additional hearing impairment. All pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- An average proportion of pupils is entitled to additional pupil premium funding because they have free school meals or are looked after children. A very large proportion of pupils is from ethnic backgrounds other than British and this reflects the local borough. A majority of these pupils speak English as an additional language. Two-thirds of all the pupils are boys.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are sometimes taught in classes with Year 1 pupils.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- The school has an extensive School Self Evaluation report (SSE) and School Improvement Plan (SIP). These make it very clear that there is a great drive to improve pupil outcomes and that the school has a deep understanding of pupil needs. However, both documents focus predominantly on operational tasks.
- All members of staff contribute to the SSE and SIP writing processes.
- The quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated with regard to a wide range of evidence to ensure that conclusions are closely linked to pupil progress over time.
- The school has an extensive CPD programme that is closely linked to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. The programme provides extensive opportunities for all members of staff to improve their knowledge and skills as well as develop their career. The overarching school view is that all staff must be supported to enable them to succeed and thrive.
- The school is the lead school in the Ealing Primary School Alliance and is heavily involved in the initial training of teachers.
- Senior leaders have been extremely effective in developing a consistent approach to the curriculum, lesson planning, teaching and assessment. As a result classroom practice is often exemplary and this is reflected in pupil outcomes. The school now has a very well trained, committed and enthusiastic staff team that is bound together by excellent relationships. This is mirrored in the extremely positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- The school has an extensive range of effective partnerships with other providers.

Even Better If...

... the SSE and SIP contents focused on the impact upon pupil progress rather than operational tasks. The use of sharp success criteria would enable the school to identify WWWs and EBIs within the SSE and then transfer the EBIs to the SIP so that there is a clear measure of the expected impact. Short summaries of the SSE and SIP would enable a wider audience to appreciate the measure of the school's success and the measure of the intended further improvements.

...work continued to evaluate other forms of assessment such as MAPP in order to decide whether other yardsticks would be more informative than PIVATS and/or Progression Guidance.

...work continued to refine the tracking of intervention outcomes so that progress could be identified and progress evaluated.

...work continued to define what "across the curriculum" might mean at Castlebar School and how the school might account for progress across "all subjects". This would give the school the opportunity to make clear what areas of learning besides literacy, numeracy and PSD are of particular importance to Castlebar pupils.

...work continued to monitor and evaluate new approaches, for example for VB (Verbal Behaviour) pupils.

Outcomes for Pupils

- During the 2015 Autumn Term, 86% of pupils made expected or better than expected progress in literacy and numeracy. 53% of pupils in literacy and 52% of pupils in numeracy made exceptional progress. 91% of pupils made expected or better than expected progress in PSD.
- It is notable that 88% of ASD pupils are currently making expected or better progress in PSD.
- Progress in other subjects across the curriculum is tracked and evaluated annually. The most recent analysis shows that the great majority of pupils are making expected progress or better than expected progress in all subjects.
- Gaps in performance between different groups of pupils have decreased over years and there are now no gaps.
- The school has identified that younger and more able pupils tend to make more rapid progress but information shows that over time in the school there is substantial value added for all pupils.
- The historical picture shows that over the three most recent years the proportion of pupils making less than expected progress has decreased substantially. It also shows that there are no longer any significant gaps between different groups of pupils.

- The school attaches a great deal of importance to areas of learning that are of significant importance to many pupils at the school but that are not easily measured on conventional scales. A range of interventions is in place to meet these exceptional needs.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

What Went Well

- Lesson planning is of a very high order. Plans included:-
 - Highly individualised differentiated targets.
 - Clear outlines of targeted support to be provided by other adults in the classroom.
 - Details of group activities to promote individual learning.
 - Relevant vocabulary to develop speaking and listening.
- The best teaching provides good opportunities for independent learning, helpful use of the IAW, an excellent range of well adapted resources and a calm, sensitive and well structured approach to the management of behaviour. As a result pupils are deeply engaged and enjoyed their learning.
- Behaviour for learning is very well promoted because routines are well established, praise is used to re-enforce specific aspects of good behaviour and lessons are managed calmly within a clear structure. The calm, structured approach particularly supports ASD pupils and there is strong evidence of the degree of previously challenging behaviour having been substantially reduced.
- More challenging behaviour is carefully assessed by a behaviour team so that appropriate interventions can be planned and implemented. There is ample evidence of this approach being very successful
- Physical warm-up activities and mid-lesson physical exercises bring an extra sense of fun to learning as well as helping pupils to focus more effectively.
- A significant aspect of many lessons is the quality of targeted support provided by teaching assistants. They clearly understand the targets set for individual pupils and ask questions that are well pitched, appropriately challenging and promote speaking and listening. They also take care to ensure that pupils progress to increasingly independent learning.
- Very effective use is made of signing, symbols and individualised timetables that all give an initial prompt to engagement.
- Target setting and planning are often carried out with the support of other disciplines, particularly therapists.
- Learning is well supported by a range of highly targeted interventions that support very specific pupil needs. In addition to good classroom resources, there are also resources in other specialist areas such as a sensory room and a rebound therapy area. All these resources are used to promote engagement with great effect.

- There has clearly been an improvement in the leadership of numeracy since this was identified as an area for improvement during the last Ofsted inspection.
- Pupils are very positive about the school and many of them are able to talk with pride about what they are learning. They talk about the contributions that they are able to make through the school council and they have a particular interest in the 'Wilderness Garden' and the use of IT.
- Assessment, tracking and the identification of 'next steps' are consistent strengths throughout the school. They are evident within well annotated pupil work-folders, termly collections of assessed work samples and home-school books that focus on learning as well as creating good relationships with parents.
- Members of staff promote socialisation and collaborative play during break-times by creating a fun environment.

Even Better If...

...opportunities were always created to promote independent learning, risk-taking and learning by making mistakes.

...even more challenge was given to pupils of all levels of ability in order to extend the skills that they have learned, for example in independent writing.

...praise for good work referred specifically to the new learning achieved.

Quality of Area of Excellent Practice Communication

The school recognises that the ability to communicate is the key to all learning and because of the learning difficulties of the pupils attaches even more importance to developing total communication as the core of the curriculum.

Actions Taken:

- Embedded a culture of total communication within all aspects of daily life within the school.
- Provided a comprehensive range of CPD opportunities for all staff to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills.
- Monitored and supported practice to ensure that a consistently high standard is maintained across the school.
- Monitored and evaluated pupil outcomes to ensure that classroom practice is effective.
- Collected and analysed information about the progress of pupils to ensure that they move rapidly towards meeting their personal targets.
- Worked collaboratively with stakeholders, particularly parents, to ensure that pupil progress is supported in other settings and has practical applications in everyday life.

Impact:

- All members of staff use signing, symbols and a wide range of augmentative strategies in all daily activities and enable pupils to communicate more easily throughout the day.
- Speaking and listening objectives are built into every lesson.
- Most pupils exceed their personal learning targets and the overall outcomes in speaking and listening are clearly exceptional.

Partnerships

How have you used Challenge Partners schools to address your previous 'Even Better Ifs'?

The school has successfully addressed the EBIs from the previous review, partly by working with Mayfield Primary school in respect of the leadership of numeracy. In respect of the other EBIs, given the limited CP options available at that time, the school used other resources in order to do so.

How have you worked with, or supported, other schools in Challenge Partners?

Collaborated with Woodfield special school when interviewing SLE candidates.
 Collaborated with Marjorie Kinnon School in order to move the school from Ofsted grade 3 to grade 2.
 Collaborated with the local hub to develop the Special Schools Assessment Project that is now a CP resource.

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.

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.