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## **CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report**

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<b>Name of School:</b>	Castlebar
<b>School Address:</b>	Hathaway Gardens, Ealing W13 ODH

<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0208 998 3135
<b>Email address:</b>	admin@castlebar.ealing.sch.uk
<b>Hub:</b>	Woodfield

<b>Unique Reference Number:</b>	101966
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Ealing
<b>Type of School:</b>	Community Special School
<b>School Category:</b>	Outstanding
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	4-11
<b>Number on roll:</b>	104
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Paul Adair
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mary Delger

<b>Date of last OfSTED inspection:</b>	June 2009
<b>Grade at last OfSTED inspection:</b>	Outstanding

<b>Date of Quality Assurance Review:</b>	22-23rd November 2012
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## **QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS**

<b>Achievement:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Quality of Teaching</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Area of Excellent Practice:</b>	<b>None yet identified</b>
<b>Impact on Challenge Partnership</b>	<b>Not yet evidenced</b>

### **Overall Review Evaluation**

The Quality Assurance Review found indicators that Castlebar appears to be firmly within the Outstanding grade as judged by Ofsted in the school's previous Ofsted report of June 2009.

## Information about the school

Castlebar caters for pupils aged 4-11 with learning difficulties ranging from low moderate to severe and complex needs, including pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Hearing/Visual Impairments and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties. Most children join in Reception, with a few joining in later years. Children are from a wide range of ethnic groups with Somali children currently being the largest group and a large proportion coming from Asian backgrounds. Nearly half of all children are eligible for free school meals. There are significantly more boys than girls.

## Achievement

From the SIP, SEF, pupil progress booklet and conversations with senior staff it is clear that there is a rigorous and systematic approach to data collection and analysis. Across the teaching team, significant time and effort is spent on collecting data to initially baseline the children and then to assess their progress. This data is then used effectively to match the learning needs of children with a wide range of strategies and interventions offered by the school.

The progress tracking booklet provides a thorough and a simple analysis comparing the data of a range of cohorts. Children make at least good but in many cases exceptional progress as most of the children make 2 PIVAT levels of progress but a significant number make more than 10 PIVATS progress.

There is a clear structure to the assessment and recording process. This ranges from teachers being prompted through notes on their progress data sheets, moderation through discussion across the teaching team and termly meetings with assistant heads. In these meetings the class teacher and assistant head discuss the expected progress for each child and a traffic light system is used to highlight the likelihood of them achieving their target. These meetings ensure that there are high expectations for all children, however where children are not expected to reach their targets, these meetings provide a forum for considering alternative approaches to support learning. The school has made a significant investment in their multi-disciplinary team approach to ensure that the children's needs are met in a robust and holistic way. This multi-disciplinary team includes experts in educational psychology, SLT, OT, behaviour support and social work.

A baseline is recorded for each child approximately six weeks after they arrive in school and at these times IEP targets are also set. IEPs may be taken from the PIVATS targets but additionally can be developmental, so that they are related to the most pressing development need for each child.

There is recognition that there is an increased complexity of needs of the children entering Castlebar, with the majority being benchmarked at P2-P3. The assistant head is exploring the value of using 'Development Matters' for children in the Early Years. The PIVATS data shows that the most value is added in the Early Years.

Children are assessed termly using the PIVATS assessment in core subject areas. Other subject areas are assessed once a year on a rolling programme of two per term and are recorded within a P level rather than refining to specific PIVATS levels.

Each senior teacher with responsibility for an area of learning maintains a moderation folder which is used in meeting with teachers to ensuring that children are working upwards within a P level and there is consistency across the school in terms of what these P level descriptions mean.

The P level descriptors are discussed in staff meetings which enables and encourages debate around agreement trialling, and ensures consistency in levelling. School staff have conferred with their local special schools assessment cluster to moderate. Additional validity is given to the teachers' assessment through assessments completed by the Educational Psychologist. Photos and statements providing evidence of children's achievements related to P levels and above, are recorded using the e-portfolio.

It would now be even better if.....

.....pupil progress data was linked to the SIP to show the impact of actions taken on children's achievement

.....comparison was made with a national data set for children with learning difficulties which could help to recognise appropriate and challenging targets and highlight questions where children who aren't following their expected trajectory

.....soft data, such as case studies and comments made by children and parents, is used to provide additional impact evidence.

## Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is outstanding and this is driving the outstanding progress that children make at Castlebar. During the review, all judgements on lessons were agreed fully with school leaders who are, therefore, making accurate judgements. Where teaching in lessons is good or better, there are many strengths evident, including:

- Excellent relationships throughout the school. This is ensuring a calm, purposeful atmosphere.
- Staff are very welcoming to all visitors. They are kind to the children and each other and this is providing excellent role models for children. There is a real warmth in the school which makes it a wonderful place in which to work and learn.
- Systems within the school are sharp and clear. This is also evident in teachers' planning of lessons. Activities are carefully chosen, resources are very well prepared and staff are sensibly deployed. This ensures that lessons run smoothly and no time is lost. This was evidenced, for example, in an outstanding CLL lesson where children were enjoying *'The Owl Babies'*. The exceptionally well structured lesson resulted in all children making small incremental steps in their learning.
- Staff have excellent knowledge about how children with complex needs learn and thrive and use this knowledge well. This is evidenced in the very careful balance of multi-sensory approaches, ensuring a correct balance of arousal levels. A very successful lesson in Yellow included the use of 'rain' to arouse the senses of the younger children.
- Good links are made across the areas of learning – for example, linking 'breeding' in a story with the KUW learning.
- Behaviour is exceptionally well managed with staff anticipating children's needs and moods. Behaviour management is subtle and is adapted throughout lessons, to take account of children's reactions, often before they occur.
- Staff use 'movement breaks' well.
- It is very clear that staff know the children very well. They have high expectations of themselves and the children and are highly ambitious for all. Learning is taken very seriously. Any advice that staff receive from experts is taken on board and acted upon.
- This good understanding of the children is partly derived from adults' good questioning skills – checking understanding throughout the lesson. Praise is used well to motivate.

- Teaching assistants contribute enormously to children's success. There were many examples of this – one example was where a TA led the learning for a small group of children to develop their number bond understanding. Although the behaviour of these children is obviously very challenging, the calm, firm approach of the adults ensured this session was very successful. Another example was where a TA used the IWB to enable Yellow children to match pictures.
- Signing is consistently very well used across the school, as is the use of symbols.
- Staff show enormous reservoirs of patience and perseverance – and although learning is taken seriously, there is also a clear sense of fun. Staff enjoy what they do.

Where teaching is not consistently strong, it would be even better if.....

.....all lessons were structured to the highest level

.....the focus of the lesson was clear, right from the start, with a sharp learning intention

.....through focussed CPD, all teaching and support staff used every opportunity to meet the learning needs of the children, throughout the lesson.

One question that the school might also consider is:

'Are there sufficient opportunities for children to work in pairs?'

## **School Improvement Strategies**

The SIP is a very impressive document, showing a wide spread of effective work by the school team. There is a very clear sense of ownership of the document across the school, with leaders at all levels contributing to it. There are clear time frames, responsibilities and the actions are specific. The SIP priorities are linked closely to school self- evaluation and are therefore appropriate. CPD is very well planned with weekly training sessions to disseminate knowledge, skills and understanding to all colleagues. CPD is personalized for particular staff and linked to the SIP targets as well as to PM targets. The multi-disciplinary team works highly effectively with pupils but also with staff who benefit from working with specialists, empowering them to develop their own strategies.

It would now be even better if ....

.....the SIP made it clear how the actions taken will impact on children's achievement

.....the impact of CPD on the quality of teaching was made clear

.....teachers accessed the Outstanding Teacher Programme/Improving Teacher Programme where appropriate.

The school might also consider using an ICT package to manage CPD and PM (for example, 'Bluewave Swift').

## **Quality of Area of Excellent Practice**

The school has not yet identified an area. It is clear, however, that the school has a great deal to offer. It was suggested during the review that the promotion of CLL may be an area to share.

## **Quality of Impact on Challenge Partnership**



## CHALLENGE PARTNERS QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW



Castlebar is new to the Challenge Partnership. However, it is embracing the opportunities that this brings and is keen to work closely with other members of the hub to improve outcomes for all children.

**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.**

*OLEVI  
June 2011*