
CHALLENGE PARTNERS: Quality Assurance Review Written Report

Name of School:	Swiss Cottage School, DRC
School Address:	80 Avenue Road. NW8 6HX
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub

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Unique Reference Number:	100096
Local Authority:	Camden
Type of School:	Special Needs School
School Category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2-19
Number on roll:	239
Principal:	Vijita Patel

Date of last Ofsted inspection:	January 2014
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Outstanding

Date of Quality Assurance Review:	1 March 2017
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QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – SUMMARY OF ESTIMATES¹

School Improvement Strategies:	Outstanding
Outcomes for Pupils:	Outstanding
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	Outstanding
Area of Excellence: Complex Needs Curricula	Confirmed and valid for 3 years

Overall Review Evaluation

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

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

- 2012 was a significant year. In April, the school was designated as a Teaching School. In October, the Development and Research Centre was opened. The sixth form opened in November.
- All students have Education, Health and Care Plans or statements of special educational needs. Approximately half of all primary needs relate to ASD, with a quarter 'severe learning difficulty'. The other primary needs are moderate and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The school reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of both Camden and London.
- As a National Support School, Swiss Cottage works with schools who require improvement. This academic year, three schools have now been judged as 'good', with one outstanding.

School Improvement Strategies

What Went Well

- Leaders place the learner at the centre, creating a curriculum which best serves need ensuring learning is relevant and meaningful for all. Vision is based on what staff and parents want the students to be when they leave Swiss Cottage.
- The whole school vision has been informed by class visions, written by staff and students. Every student follows a bespoke curriculum which enables a smooth transition through year groups and into the wider community. Aspirational outcomes are aligned to curricular pathways.
- Swiss Cottage school, the Teaching School and the Development and Research Centre do not work in isolation. Their work is fluid with each gaining from others' work. This relationship ensures that teaching at Swiss Cottage continues to develop and that effective inclusive provision is considered and shared across the country.
- All staff are leaders. Teachers lead the provision for their students and teaching assistants. Teachers are expected to reflect on advice from external professionals, such as NHS therapists. This links with the code of practice, where every teacher is a leader of SEND provision. Also, trainee teachers have the same expectations.
- The Teaching School focuses on inclusion, as opposed to purely special school provision. Current internal research is focused on what enquiry led learning actually looks like. Many teachers at Swiss Cottage have been trained via the Teaching School. Induction is therefore enhanced as teachers come into this school well aware of ethos and expectations.

- Leaders encourage teachers to explore aspects of teaching that they are interested in and passionate about. Practitioners' expertise is shared internally and more widely through various partnerships locally, nationally and internationally.
- A professional learning community exists. The school is a reflective place, where research is considered and used to inform development across the organisation. This reinforces the enquiry led approach. One example is the lesson/learning study strategy. Swiss Cottage facilitated sessions on behalf of UK Lesson Study and Camden local authority.
- Leaders have reflected on the changing intake, with a greater proportion of students with more complex needs attending the school. This has led to curriculum development as well as a continued commitment to support parental engagement. Training has been offered to support parents in their understanding and use of assistive technology. For example, parents are able to comment via an app which can help bridge knowledge about learning between home and school.
- NESTs (groups of teachers and teaching teams) have been formed to enable and encourage staff to discuss the effectiveness of provision. This model supports staff in addressing particular behavioural and medical needs of students. As a result, leadership capacity is developed.
- Such work enhances the professional learning community. During one of the weekly NEST meetings, teaching assistants identified an interest in exploring intensive interaction. To support, teachers brought in video evidence of what they do in such situations. Teams collaborated by reflecting on this and external expertise bought in. Teams are now more confident and competent.

Even Better If...

... Nests were used to help address the EBIs identified in teaching.

... the SEF was refined so that it better demonstrates the breadth of comprehensive evaluation that exists in the school.

Pupil Outcomes

- Leaders recognise that students achieve desired, holistic outcomes in a variety of ways. Consequently, they want to capture evidence of different routes to inform their curriculum development. Staff are prepared to put two curricula frameworks together in order to realise a holistic picture of each student's development.
- Leaders and teachers use multiple criteria, identified by a range of cognitive indicators to make judgements about students' progress. They use a variety of systems and strategies to build in additional progress measures. This helps to ensure that students make sufficient and meaningful progress related to their individual needs. Staff build individual student success criteria which suit the needs of students well.

- Leaders embed principles of the SEND code of practice to identify desired outcomes for students. This enriches student centred provision. In turn, this informs a more personalised curriculum.
- Teachers use the 'Evidence for Learning' app to collate an electronic learning journal for each student. This tracks and documents progress over time and informs teachers' formative as well as summative assessment.
- Staff facilitate and engage in a variety of moderation networks, which includes all key stages and mainstream settings. This builds upon robust internal moderation. SEND networks identify themes for each session, with schools providing evidence aligned to the theme which enables a more rigorous debate about standards. This helps ensure that reliable evidence is being collated about students' development. Networks have evolved from a variety of starting points, including middle leadership work. Such collaboratives contribute to the strong partnerships which Swiss Cottage enjoys.
- School leaders track student leavers to ensure that placements are successful. They do this by talking with parents and working with health professionals, the careers adviser and Multi Agency Support Team. These professionals provide a bridge for students as they transfer into the work place or training.
- Taster sessions are used to test out the suitability of placements for students. Young adults come back to school to present to parents, professionals and staff their views on their placements. Leaders use the Camden dedicated transition team which provides effective support for certain students from Y9 upwards. Strong links exist with social care.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding to support learning in different ways. Examples include, sports coaches employed to enhance physical education and ipads purchased for students to enable a 2 year project focused on developing parental engagement. The school's work with external research has enabled a comprehensive evaluation of how additional adults can best support individual students. For example, specific short term projects or to enhance staffing for sessions, such as hydro therapy.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What Went Well

- Following the previous inspection report, a working group was established to explore feedback. This led to the establishment of core principles. Feedback looks different in the various pathways. The focus is to ensure that feedback is meaningful for each student, with direct links to each student's communication profiles. Feedback is communicated in various ways. For example, peer feedback, blowing bubbles, singing songs and signing.

- Personal Learning Intention Maps (PLIMs) are directly linked to students' strengths and needs. They incorporate all key learning. Each PLIM reflects the curriculum pathway and EHCP aspirational outcomes for each student. During the review, adults' work with students reflected the current PLIM on display in the classroom. Learning was purposeful and meaningful for the students.
- The school establishes positive relationships with parents prior to the child starting at Swiss Cottage. The school recognises that families may require varied levels of support throughout their child's learning journey.
- A good example of teaching improvement is the impact of Engagement Profiles on informing teaching and learning. There is a consistent approach which enables teaching teams to use the Engagement Profile and scale as a reflective tool to identify and enhance their pedagogy.
- Teachers' knowledge of students' strengths and needs informs planning and provision. This ensures that learning is personalised and meaningful for each student at their individual developmental stage.
- Classrooms are designed to be responsive which enables students to communicate effectively in their own preferred ways. Opportunities are provided by adults for students to engage and develop skills in positive interaction.
- Students' independence is developed effectively. Adults scaffold strategies to enable students to take ownership of their own learning at an appropriate level. For example, collecting and returning resources for activities.
- Students are encouraged to self-regulate their behaviour, with support when needed. Consistent, progressive strategies are employed by staff across the school.
- Teachers take responsibility for the provision for learners. Relationships between adults are effective during lessons. This is because their knowledge of the students and fluid communication results in responsive changes to activities. This is enhanced through middle and senior leaders' support via their role as leadership mentors and enquiry work of NESTs.

Even Better If...

... adults' praise of students was consistent in articulating reasons for specific praise.

... during whole group introductory sessions which are teacher led, teaching assistants maximised their impact.

Quality of Area of Excellence

Complex Needs Curricula: Informal, Semi-formal and Formal curricula

Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Curricular pathways are anchored in relevant research. The 2014 Ofsted inspection report identified the curriculum as a key contributor to the outstanding overall judgement. It is

aligned to current legislation regarding education, health and social care for learners with complex needs.

Leaders have evolved the curriculum to better suit the changing needs of learners over recent years. Leaders have reflected on sound educational research, including that relating to early communication, to inform each curriculum. They host seminars, for example 'curriculum conundrum', and use this collaboration with other schools to inform change.

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

In 2011, leaders worked with Dr Penny Lacey and Peter Imray. As a result, the curricular pathways were designed. They were implemented in the school in 2012. Since then, a range of specialists, including NHS therapists and educational psychologists, have contributed to further improvement. In 2015, the school redesigned the curricular offers with teacher input. All stakeholders are engaged in determining the purpose of the curriculum. Parental engagement has been enhanced owing to staff making it clear what individual students are expected to achieve. Swiss Cottage has supported other schools in developing their own pedagogy and curriculum through school-to-school support and the expertise of SLEs and a NLE. In addition to this, there are opportunities for practitioners to engage in professional dialogue through a range of means such as the Curriculum Coaching Couch.

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

The 239 students each have a Learning Journal. These are a key source of evidence to demonstrate holistic progress. Such documents reflect the school's inextricable alignment to research about neuroscience of learning for complex needs. The curriculum is not restrictive. This means that teachers are encouraged to personalise learning for their students. The three pathways enable teachers to follow and develop students' interests.

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.

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.