

REVIEW REPORT FOR  
SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL,  
DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH  
CENTRE

<b>Name of School:</b>	SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL, DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH CENTRE
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	VIJITA PATEL
<b>Hub:</b>	LONDON SPECIAL AND AP HUB
<b>School type:</b>	SPECIAL
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	N/A

<b>Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	21-23 FEBRUARY 2018
<b>Estimate at last QA Review</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	MARCH 2017
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	MAY 2017

## Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Outcomes for Pupils</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>	OUTSTANDING
<b>Area of Excellence</b> Continuing Professional Development	ACCREDITED
<b>Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence</b>	Complex Needs Curricula March 2017
<b>Overall Estimate</b>	OUTSTANDING

*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.*

## 1. Information about the school

- In 2012, the school was designated a Teaching School and the Development and Research Centre was opened. The new purpose built premises were opened in November 2012 using Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding.
- There are now 245 students on roll and all have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or statements of special educational needs. Approximately half of all primary needs relate to autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), with a quarter of students having severe learning difficulties. The other primary needs are moderate and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students 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 which require improvement. Five schools have now been judged as 'good', with one outstanding from requires improvement.
- Swiss Cottage School has achieved a wide range of accreditations and awards.

### 2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Follow up from previous review

- The classroom teams (NESTs) work together to plan learning, meet the therapy teams and reflect on teaching every week. This has addressed the EBIs from the previous review.
- The school has produced an executive version of the self-evaluation document to give an overview of the breadth of evaluation taking place in the school.

### 2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- The school has remained committed to a set of core values and culture throughout the various changes and expansion which have taken place over recent years. This is evident in the culture of high trust, high expectation, challenge and accountability which gives leaders autonomy to create and innovate according to their expertise. Reflection and evaluation play a significant role in leadership and have ensured that the school is an accepting and inclusive community where all are warmly welcomed.
- The Principal operates a professional 'open door' approach which reaps benefits in every area of the school's work. For example, every special Teaching School

across the country meets at Swiss Cottage termly to share good practice.

- Despite its record of outstanding success, there is no element of 'resting on laurels' or complacency. Senior leaders, who are knowledgeable, highly skilled and articulate, are passionately committed to driving progress forward in order to improve the life chances of their pupils.
- Work on curriculum pathways has led to enhanced personalisation of learning, with pupils receiving a bespoke blended curriculum experience which is unique to them.
- The quality of teaching is extensively and supportively monitored through mentoring, regular meetings and weekly learning walks. The performance management systems, which are in place for all staff, are exemplary. They are detailed and often focused on the progress of individual pupils, as well as on individual professional development.
- The school nurtures its staff and places great emphasis on staff well-being. Many staff started at the school as teaching assistants and have been supported and trained by leaders to become teachers or therapists. As a result of these aspects, recruitment is made easier and staff are retained over time. This leads to a sense of permanence and stability.
- The school is engaged in a wealth of local, national and international research and partnerships projects. These are used to benefit pupils at the school directly and to influence the national agenda for special education.

### **2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...**

...the extensive work of the school was more succinctly presented in its documentation.

...a senior leader was trained as an Ofsted inspector to widen the school's influence even further.

### **3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Follow up from previous review**

- Evidence was seen in learning observations of specific praise being used effectively. For example, in a Key Stage 2 outdoor session, a teaching assistant said to a pupil, "thank you for waiting for us". Structured reward systems are

tailored to different classes and good use is made of different techniques, such as WOW boards to highlight particular achievements.

- Lessons start promptly with pupils quickly involved in practical tasks, supported by teaching assistants who play a full role in the lesson and often lead learning for different groups or individuals.

### **3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well**

- Relationships across the school are warm and productive and the welfare of the pupils is paramount. All staff have very high expectations for pupils' social and educational development. They model these expectations for pupils and encourage participation. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy their work, are fully engaged and take pride in their achievements.
- A comprehensive transition process into the school, which includes at least three visits into the school by the child and staff visits to the home, ensures that pupils settle quickly into school routines and are enabled to make progress.
- Behaviour management is excellent. Teachers know their pupils so well and this enables them to have an overview of their situation and capture when they are ready for learning and defuse confrontations before they occur.
- Well-deployed and highly skilled additional adults and teaching assistants support behaviour and learning effectively, often leading the work of small groups. They work together seamlessly as a team (NESTS), led by teachers.
- Staff have established clear routines which create a safe ethos and consistent environment for learning. Lessons are well planned with clear structures and examples of application to real life, such as sorting different materials for recycling. Learning objectives are personalised for each pupil and include practical tasks that match the capabilities and interests of the pupils.
- Lessons have good pace and are creative and fun with singing, movement and sensory stories. Activities and groupings are based very much on the needs of the pupils. For example, in a physical education session for a mixed group of younger pupils, they were given many open choices and learning was built into the activities with skilful use of questioning such as 'how many skittles have you knocked down?'
- Teachers use skilful questioning to deepen and extend pupils' thinking and learning. They give pupils thinking time in which to respond and they question pupils individually so that all are engaged.

- Pupils are helped to develop independence and begin to manage their own learning. This is shown by their self-motivation when working in small groups.
- Rigorous internal moderation systems ensure that learning intentions are appropriate and challenging and that reliable evidence is collated about individual progress. The moderation schedule ensures that early interventions are quickly in place and promote progress when factors pose 'potential barriers' to learning and development.
- The school effectively uses a range of communication techniques to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum. For example, in an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) lesson children were using a variety of signing, switches and symbols to communicate and the teacher was encouraging verbal communication based on this.

### **3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...**

...specific pupils were moved on quickly to more demanding tasks, when appropriate.

## **4. Outcomes for Pupils**

- Pupil assessment is continuous and holistic, capturing progress in a variety of ways both formative and summative. The approach taken by the school is innovative and, as a consequence, progress is described within a different framework to many other settings. The school uses a wide variety of systems and indicators to describe pupil progress, determined by the individual pupil's needs within key stages and curriculum pathways.
- Overall progress is rapid as all pupils in 2016-17 made or exceeded expected progress within the core subjects. All pupils in Key Stage 4 met their accreditation expectation based on starting points.
- Current progress tracking for 2017-18 also demonstrates that virtually all pupils are meeting their short term individualised learning intentions. Individual achievements are recognised and celebrated whether it is the successful completion of an accredited course, learning to walk unaided, being 'heard' within the local youth forum or selected for para-Olympic training.
- The school has developed a multi-agency approach to providing a personal learning intention map (PLIM) for each pupil based upon knowledge of the

strengths and needs of the child as identified in the EHCP. As a consequence, progress is tracked and moderated over shorter time periods than is conventional. The system is flexible and can adapt if circumstances change allowing for progress to continue to be assessed, even if a pupil requires a new baseline or more flexible curriculum pathway.

- The school makes good use of systems to collate data in the form of individual learning journals using 'Evidence for Learning' to collate, track and document progress over time. The journals effectively provide individual case studies of holistic progress which can be easily shared with and understood by parents. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the process to promote learning within the home.
- The school is using a management information system (SIMS) to draw together the highly personalised elements of assessment. This enables leaders to be able to reflect on the progress made within different groups.
- Well-planned systems are in place to ensure smooth transitions of pupils both in and out of school. School leavers are carefully prepared for the next phase and their progress tracked within the new setting. The school ensures that leavers EHCPs are aspirational and the family/carers and new setting have a shared understanding of the next steps for the pupil. There were no pupils without education, employment or training (NEETs) within the 2016-17 cohort.
- The higher than average level of attendance illustrates the strength of multidisciplinary working. Attendance is monitored carefully to ensure interventions are in place. Medical appointments have been reduced by clinics being held in school, with the bonus of increasing parental engagement in school. The school offers a wide variety of support to parents and this partnership working has ensured that attendance figures are above the national average.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

### **5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?**

Swiss Cottage has established a national reputation for excellence in special school education. It has embedded a Professional Learning Community (PLC) model to drive

school improvement which is anchored in evidence-informed research and reflective practice. The school achieved Teaching School status in 2012. It has built up a comprehensive study programme from apprenticeship to Masters level and has set up the Swiss Cottage Teaching School Alliance (SCTSA). There are approximately 20 initial teacher training places and, since 2012, 2300 teachers have attended various training courses at the Centre. The training, research and development directly affect and enhance the achievement of pupils and ensure rapid progress for all.

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

The school is fully engaged with the training of new teachers through its partnerships locally and through the SCTSA. It influences teacher training policy at national level. For example, involvement with the Rocheford review and writing special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) policy for the department of education. From the school, 15 middle leaders have completed the middle leader training programme and are moving towards senior leadership roles. In addition, seven teachers have completed the Aspiring Head Teacher programme, with 60% of the school's cohort securing a next step promotion within a year of completing the course. The teaching assistants are fully engaged in training through the PLCs, known as NESTS. This encourages many to develop career paths, including teacher training and different aspects of therapy. The school recognises that there is a national shortage of teaching staff at all levels and is fully committed to training at all levels.

The training centre has international connections through the Erasmus programme with partnerships linked to Lithuania and Sweden. The centre also worked with higher education partners to create a specialist Master's degree, MTeach SEND, programme. A graduate of the SCTSA has participated in an All Party Autism Parliamentary Group, influencing national policy and contributing to improving outcomes for pupils nationally.

At classroom level, the teaching teams identify their individual CPD needs which the school nurtures. The school is a central part of the Camden Hub and works in partnerships with other providers in the local area. Currently, the school is increasing pathways for school leavers in the area by strengthening programmes provided by further education and other providers.

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

The SCTSA being onsite enables all staff at every level to engage with high level training very easily and to develop their expertise. Middle leaders have grown in confidence in the potential and strategic approaches to enhancing provision through organisational change. The governing body has recognised the long-term benefits of a school culture embedded in a PLC model.

The comprehensive CPD programme creates a culture of dynamism and continuous enquiry into cutting edge classroom practice. The PLC NESTs have become the hub for all aspects of school provision. The school has produced 245 individual case studies reflecting the impact of the NESTs on pupil progress and achievement at every key stage. As a result, pupils achieve their targets, are actively engaged in their learning and all progress to positive destinations.

The school is forward thinking and innovative; a member of staff went to Peru on sabbatical to investigate a post-16 student support programme. This research has been integrated to enhance their post 16 provision. The other schools receiving support from Swiss Cottage have responded to changing populations and reduced funding by successfully exploring the PLC model for building capacity. Ofsted and local authority monitoring have confirmed the positive impact of this.

### **5.4 What is the name, job title and email address of the staff lead in this area?**

Rebecca Shaw (external NHS Therapy)

Vice Principal

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Monika Gaweda (classroom research and NESTs)

Head of School

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Margaret Mullholland (teacher training and NESTs)

Director of Teaching School

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Lucy Hall (external social services and NESTs)

Leader of Inclusion and Safeguarding

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

The school would like to use the Challenge Partners network to extend its external moderation group of schools.

**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.**



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

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