



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

Swiss Cottage School,
Development and Research
Centre

Name of School:	Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre
Principal:	Vijita Patel
Hub:	London Special and AP Hub
School type:	Special

Estimate at this QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of this Review:	04/03/2019
Estimate at last QA Review:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last QA Review:	21/02/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	OUTSTANDING
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	03/05/2017



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Quality Assurance Review

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

School Improvement Strategies	OUTSTANDING
Outcomes for Pupils	OUTSTANDING
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	OUTSTANDING
Area of Excellence	ACCREDITED
Previously accredited valid Areas of Excellence	Complex needs curricula 2017 Professional development 2018
Overall Estimate	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. Context and character of the school

Swiss Cottage School, Development and Research Centre (SCSDRC) educates pupils aged 2 to 19. All pupils have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) relating to a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils have conditions that relate to the autistic spectrum. The range of learning difficulties they have varies from moderate to severe, to profound and multiple. Medical conditions also affect the learning of many pupils. Pupils follow one of three different curriculum pathways according to the level of their needs.

The school moved into a new building in 2012. Leaders designed facilities that extended their links with therapists and social and health service staff and provided training facilities.

Pupils travel to the school from a wide geographical area covering several local authority districts. Although pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well-above average, compared with the national average.

SCSDRC is a Teaching School. It has developed many networks that link it with other special and mainstream schools, with higher education institutions, with the Department for Education (DfE), with private enterprise and with the local community.

The principal has developed a senior leadership team (SLT) that includes a head of school. They carry out the extensive internal and external roles that the school's dynamic approach demands.

The school's involvement in Schools Direct training has led to many teaching assistants (TAs) training and qualifying as teachers, some of whom have gone on developing professionally to hold leadership posts.

The school holds many awards and accreditations.

2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs

The school presents documentation that explains the wide range of its work with pupils, with agencies and the many networks it is involved in.

SCSDRC leaders engage in Challenge Partner reviews. They prefer widening their experience through peer review, rather than training as Ofsted inspectors.

2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well

- SCSDRC believes in innovation that supports its core principles and ethos. Leaders and staff want to make life fulfilling for their pupils and they are on a constant quest to find better ways of doing that.
- Leaders promote a culture of research and enterprise. They ask staff at all levels to be 'curious practitioners' who will engage in action research into areas of interest. They do not put a limit on what people get involved in, as long as it is relevant and they are willing to share it. For example, an experienced teacher is developing expertise in training staff how to gather evidence of pupils' progress. A

recently arrived TA is interesting colleagues in adopting British Sign Language as another way of supporting understanding.

- This approach has created professional learning communities with shared interest. The communities sometimes cross the boundaries between the agencies that share the building.
- Much of the research that staff engage in has strong links with higher education (HE). As with other links that SCSDRC makes, HE academics are often interested in collaborating to develop research projects.
- The area of excellence has drawn much external attention as exemplary practice in collaboration between education, health and care services.
- As a Teaching School, SCSDRC has a very successful policy of 'grow your own'. Many TAs go on to become teachers. Many teachers go on to become leaders. The great advantage is that right from the start they are immersed in the values and culture of the school.
- The school makes links with commercial companies who trial and improve their products. For instance, a film-maker is working on a project to bring the real world into the classroom for pupils who may not easily be able to access different locations. By embracing the idea, teachers can modify the product, for instance suggesting new locations that suit the curriculum.
- This climate of innovation, research and enterprise means that SCSDRC never stands still. Creative energy keeps the school at the top of its game.
- The school's outward-looking attitude has made it regarded as a field-leader. The school hosts the national meetings of special schools that are teaching schools (Special Teaching Schools Network). The DfE uphold the school's assessment systems as a model of good practice.
- However, though initiatives are multiple, everything is conducted under the umbrella of leadership mentors who ensure that activity is directly contributing to the core values and forward movement of SCSDRC.

2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...

...the school continued to develop in its quite unique way to benefit pupils through its innovative approaches.

3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs

Leaders focus on how teaching provides challenge when observing and feeding back on lessons.

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

- Teachers plan different activities in lessons that fit in with pupils' different PLIMs (personal learning intentions map). As a result, in every lesson, pupils make progress with personalised targets.

- A wide range of resources is used which enables pupils to participate as actively as possible.
- The whole teaching team (teachers, TAs and therapists) know the class PLIMs thoroughly, so the support they provide has a clear focus. They form a strong bond as a united team.
- The pace of learning is full-on once the class has settled in. Those pupils whose concentration is more limited resettle quickly thanks to encouragement and praise from staff.
- Topics and resources relate to learning about real life. Staff expect every learner to be engaged in communicating about their understanding, whatever pathway they are on. This might be about making choices, such as which button to press to make the noise of an animal in the story being read to them. Or it might be to discuss the social interactions between a family filmed having dinner.
- The focus on real life permeates pupils' experiences. Sometimes the youngest pupils arrive not having moved on from a baby diet. Therapists have recommended foods that will encourage the formation of the muscles in the mouth that are essential for speech. A pupil arrived in the sixth form from a very sheltered educational environment. SCSDRC was for her a socialising environment. She now regularly relates to her clientele at the breakfast bar where she serves bagels.
- A way of preparing pupils for real-life relationships is for staff to exchange roles in the course of a lesson, or over a longer period. Pupils get used to interacting with different people rather than becoming heavily dependent on one. This is another feature that shared knowledge about pupils facilitates.
- Staff use signs and symbols during learning activities as appropriate to learners' needs. However, there is an expectation that, whenever possible, pupils will respond by pointing, nodding or speaking to indicate their understanding and engagement in the learning. Some pre-verbal pupils become adept at using symbols in communication books to convey ideas and requests.
- It is a noticeable feature that the ethos of warm relationships between teachers and pupils extends to relationships between pupils. They do not interfere with each other's learning. They take an interest and offer praise and encouragement.
- Teachers challenge pupils to extend their potential as learners. They give them time to think and wait patiently to gain the right response. When learning is not secure, they go over it again until the pupil clearly can do what is being asked.

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

...when appropriate, teachers challenged pupils to extend the learning by applying it in different ways once the pupil has demonstrated sufficient grasp of a task.

4. Outcomes for Pupils

- The school analysis of data shows almost all pupils make at least expected progress from low baselines of development and achievement on entry.

Substantial proportions – varying between about a quarter and a half – of pupils in all key stages make above expected progress. Differences between the stages are attributable to the varying extent of needs as different cohorts progress through the school.

- A few pupils are at the 'emerging' stage of progress when their progress towards personal targets has not been as rapid as their peers. Leaders and teachers pick this up quickly and make suitable adjustments to supporting the PLIM.
- Pupils achieve within three different pathways, selected according to starting points and needs. Each pathway – informal, semi-formal and formal – leads to progress through a combination of cognition and communication. Cognition develops through communication ranging from signs and gestures to speaking and writing. Once a pupil knows something, communication builds on that to extend cognition in new learning. Well-judged PLIMs in each of the pathways support pupils' rapid development.
- In the informal pathway outcomes relate to developing recognition of objects, experiences and responses and in communicating and exercising choice. The semi-formal pathway extends to creativity and understanding the external world on a wider basis and communicating in greater depth. In the formal pathway communication develops skills in English and mathematics and understanding living in the community.
- By the end of Year 11, many pupils on the formal pathway have made enough progress to transfer to vocational courses and qualifications in colleges. Some, especially pupils on the semi-formal pathway, need time in the sixth form to be ready for college courses and make the transfer at 19. Pupils on the informal pathway continue to make as much progress as possible towards supported independent living. SCSDRC has many connections with potential future placements for them.
- Thorough checks moderate progress made. Teachers capture 'Evidence for Learning' electronically. With leadership mentors, they check against four aspects of learning using a 10 point scale to calculate progress. The system has been commended as good practice by the DfE.
- Several other measures of progress are in use. Recent developments include Secondary Independent Lifestyles Framework used to assess Key Stage 4 and sixth form pupils' ability to cope in the community. Some pupils participate in a 'books beyond words' project in which they create narratives about their experiences in the community.
- The multiple systems in use capture different pupil outcomes. This provides ample evidence of how much progress they are making in an impressively wide range of learning.

5. Area of Excellence

Integrated Therapeutic Provision

Accredited

5.1 Why has this area been identified as a strength?

Integrated provision is highly successful because it is firmly founded on shared values and determination to address pupils' needs in a holistic way. The three services that contribute to EHCPs derive reciprocal effectiveness from working as closely together as they do at SCSDRC. All services add value to each other through sharing an understanding of pupils' development and needs. For example, education professionals receive training in supplying health care needs.

The benefit of mutuality transfers to working with parents because it is more like working with one agency rather than three. Indeed, some health service doctors are holding clinics on site so that parents do not have to take children away from school for appointments.

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

Co-location in the well-designed building facilitates integration exceptionally well and this has a further benefit in sharing expenses to reduce costs.

This is a 'win, win' arrangement. Not all schools can aspire to shared accommodation for services. Nevertheless, visiting SCSDRC would be inspiring for schools seeking to deepen their partnership working with other agencies in the best interests of pupils.

There would be much to gain from understanding how different services can increase their complementary contributions to the well-being of the child.

Even if other schools cannot match what is happening now at SCSDRC, they will be interested to learn that the whole scheme had its origins in a shed converted to a shared office. What happens at SCSDRC has already persuaded the local authority to develop more school-site locations for therapeutic staff.

The school has already responded to requests from schools and heads of therapeutic services to explore the model in operation.

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

All services share pupils' educational goals and jointly plan how to assist pupils to achieve goals.

Classroom practice is better informed about how to develop the best response, taking into account all aspects of pupils' needs.

Pupils' learning journals and case studies of pupils' progress provide ample evidence that pupils are making better than expected progress and overcoming barriers to learning.

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

Name: Vijita Patel, Monika Gaweda, Lucy Hall



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Title: Principal, Head of School, Leader of Inclusion

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

The school does not require additional help at this time.

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.