



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BRENT KNOLL SCHOOL

Name of School:	Brent Knoll School
Headteacher/Principal:	Andy Taylor
Hub:	South East London
School phase:	Maintained Special
MAT (if applicable):	Not Applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	EFFECTIVE
Date of this Review:	14/10/2019
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	GOOD
Date of last QA Review	05/11/2018
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	GOOD
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	05/06/2019



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BRENT KNOLL SCHOOL

Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all Levels	LEADING
Quality of Provision and Outcomes	EFFECTIVE

AND

Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of Excellence	Not submitted for this review
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Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate	EFFECTIVE
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Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed peer evaluation estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.

1. Context and character of the school

Brent Knoll is a special school for pupils aged 4 to 16 with complex social, communication and interaction difficulties, including autism. All pupils have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). There are currently 148 pupils on roll with significantly more boys than girls in the school. There is a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school, many of whom have challenging backgrounds. The school has employed a Safeguarding Lead and Pastoral Manager' who works to engage and support families.

The headteacher was appointed to his post in January 2019, having previously been the deputy headteacher. Prior to his substantive appointment, he had been the acting headteacher. The senior leadership team has been consolidated more recently and consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers.

The school prides itself on its core offer of therapies and interventions, its work on a bespoke personal development tracking system and its wide variety of extra-curricular activities. The values of the school are responsibility, respect, kindness, fairness and honesty. The school has gained the Autism Accreditation from the National Autistic Society and is part of the Lewisham Special School Network and the Specialist Learning Partnership.

2.1 Leadership at all Levels - What went well

- The ethos of the headteacher underpins and drives the vision of the school. He, together with his deputy headteacher, set high expectations for all. Their commitment to distributed leadership ensures that school improvement reflects the thoughts of many experienced practitioners who are part of the senior and middle leadership team (SLT and MLT).
- The SLT ensures that the curriculum is relevant and appropriate for the needs of the pupils in the school. They are looking to make further developments in line with the changing needs of the pupils.
- Senior leaders work hard to develop the skills of the MLT. These middle leaders appreciate the continuing professional development (CPD) they receive and feel empowered to support the school in its development. An example of this is their training on appraisal and their opportunity to work alongside senior leaders to observe and give feedback to their colleagues.
- Middle leaders work closely with each other and with the Specialist Learning Partnership. Because of this, they have a strong overview of the whole school curriculum and are well placed to work on improvements. For example, the recording and feedback policy developed by middle leaders has had a positive impact on pupil progress across the school.
- Teachers' classroom practice has improved through peer to peer observations, in

addition to observations and feedback from leaders. Middle leaders use their advanced experience to coach and support colleagues. Senior leaders are quick to ensure that middle leaders address relatively weaker teaching through modelling, coaching and support. Required improvements are articulated and expectations made clear.

- The headteacher supports the wellbeing of all staff and all senior and middle leaders access an external coach. This has a positive impact on all teams which has enabled them to reflect on their leadership practice and their management of workload.
- The regular meetings between the headteacher and middle leaders are task focussed. These develop leadership skills and contribute to whole school improvement projects. Middle leaders use their classroom perspective to influence change initiatives.
- The leadership team work well with external agencies to promote inclusion both at Brent Knoll and the wider community.
- The governing body provides an excellent balance of support and challenge. The newly assigned committees take a strand of the school improvement plan and monitor the aspects rigorously through visits and information requests.
- Former pupils are invited to talk to current pupils about their post school experiences. They act as inspirational role models and help leaders to learn from their experiences.
- There is a strong sense of belonging in the school. The supportive systems in place ensure that pupils are happy, settled and focussed on their learning.

2.2 Leadership at all Levels - Even better if...

...middle leaders completed additional work to further meet the varying needs of each individual learner through strengthening of the curriculum.

3.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - What went well

- Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) have a strong knowledge and understanding of all pupils. This, coupled with very positive relationships, helps promote a high level of engagement in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers and LSAs work in synthesis to ensure activities and resources are implemented effectively. LSAs have knowledge of communication aids and most use them well to enhance learning and develop independence.
- All staff ensure that pupil behaviour is positive, socially appropriate and empowers learning. The bespoke assessment system measures pupils' achievement in personal development. This facilitates targeted learning activities that meet pupils' needs well.
- School staff work with the local authority on a programme of independent travel

for pupils. This results in many pupils having the ability to travel alone to their new destinations after leaving school.

- The curriculum is taught in a thematic way designed to develop subject knowledge, independence and life skills. The Key Stage 4 pathways reflect the changing needs of the pupils. Further development of the curriculum is planned to encompass personal development targets.
- Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. They also appreciate the very wide range of extra-curricular clubs available to them. The school provides a plethora of enrichment opportunities. The three minibuses and public transport are well used and enable regular school trips to the science museum, the Victoria and Albert museum, the Royal Opera House and many other places of cultural interest. Pupils are given forest school opportunities at the local Sydenham Gardens.
- All pupils from Key Stages 1 to 3 have home school reading journals. Senior leaders take a termly overview of the selected texts to ensure that pupils are accessing a variety of literature. Work scrutiny shows that a wide range is used at Key Stage 4 where high-level texts such as Shakespeare are presented in an accessible way.
- Where lesson planning is strongest, teacher confidence is increased. This enables creative, flexible pedagogy which facilitates and promotes responsive teaching.
- The learning environment has been thoughtfully created and arranged. It supports the needs of pupils through its specific 'low arousal' design.
- There is a consistent approach to the use of the recording and feedback policy. In books, the next steps in learning are clearly identified and the comprehensive coding system indicates the support required.
- The curriculum reflects the local community and pupils are enabled to be active citizens. An example of this is the taking part in the voting for the young mayor. Brent Knoll school has a self-nominated candidate for this position.
- The school is embarking on a social enterprise called BK-Bucha. Plans involve a cross-curricular approach to designing, marketing and brewing the product. Pupils are likely to gain vital life and employability skills and possible future employment opportunities.
- The school employs a former student as a midday supervisor. She is an inspirational role model for the pupils. Brent Knoll also facilitates work placements for past pupils.
- Key Stage 4 pupils access a wide range of work experience which provides them with the skills needed for their future employment. Each student is given the amount of support they require and every pupil participates in work experience.
- Progress data was strong across the school. In 2018, comparative information showed Brent Knoll to be in the top quintile for Key Stage 2 and Progress 8.
- The wide range of qualifications the school offers reflects the needs of the pupils they serve. The Duke of Edinburgh award (DoE) runs alongside these qualifications.

3.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes - Even better if...

- ...reading books in the classroom were rich, varied and reflected a diverse culture.
- ...staff used communication aids to support pupils' communication during unstructured times in the school day.
- ...all staff worked together to plan and explore ways to strengthen the consistency of the curriculum offer across the school.

4.1 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- All disadvantaged pupils have free access to a large variety of school clubs. Residential trips are offered free to all disadvantaged pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Over the last two years, all pupils took up this offer. These trips support the development of life skills.
- A significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils take up the DoE award. By completing this award, pupils gain self-confidence, raise their aspirations, develop resilience and enhance their ability to work as a team.
- Highly individualised information, from academic and personal achievement data, is used to identify where different therapeutic approaches are helpful to disadvantaged pupils. An example of this is the delivery of emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs) where staff are trained by an educational psychologist to deliver short term interventions. These interventions have measurably high impact. Further interventions are offered where appropriate, including autism movement, art, meditation and counselling.
- The school forges positive relationships with families from the start of their learning journey. The highly skilled safeguarding lead and pastoral manager (SLPM) works to create a culture of trust and influence with families. She identifies where the school can be of most assistance to disadvantaged pupils by removing barriers that could potentially prevent full inclusion in the school.
- Joint visits by the SLPM and the class teacher to the homes of all new pupils support the beginning of each positive relationship. Where pupils are disadvantaged, plans are put in place to ensure any gaps are bridged. A budget is allocated to ensure all children feel fully included in the school community, by providing funds for the purchase of school uniform for example.
- The MLT plans curriculum enrichment opportunities with disadvantaged pupils in mind. This includes visitors to the school and special curriculum weeks which give focussed, hands-on experiences.
- There is no difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and the other pupils in the school.

4.2 Quality of Provision and Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...leaders consolidated and refined the way the impact of provision for disadvantaged pupils is measured. the middle leader, newly responsible for the provision of disadvantaged pupils, worked closely with the link governor and explored best practice in other settings.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted for this review.

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

The school wishes to explore best practice in other settings.

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.