



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR BRENT KNOLL SCHOOL

Name of School:	Brent Knoll School
Headteacher/Principal:	Andy Taylor
Hub:	London Special School and AP Hub
School phase:	Special 4-16 Years
MAT (if applicable):	Not Applicable - Foundation Special School

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	25/01/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	03/10/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	15/06/2019



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Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels	Leading
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Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
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AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence	Not applicable
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Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	Not Applicable
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Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading
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*The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.*

**REVIEW REPORT FOR
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SCHOOL****1. Context and character of the school**

The original Brent Knoll School was built in Lewisham in the 1960s as a school for 'delicate children'. Since that time, it has flourished to become a specialist school for pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

As the school pupil numbers grew, due to its success and standing in the community, it became time to redevelop. The newly built Brent Knoll School opened in 2015. The school has continued to grow. This academic year the school launched its new post-16 provision for seven pupils with the support of the local authority.

Pupils come to the school from the Lewisham and its surrounding boroughs. A majority of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium. Girls make up a fifth of the cohort.

A large proportion of the 162 pupils come into school having made their way across London in private taxis and on community buses. Coming from their transport, pupils flow into individually planned routines to ground them after some long journeys. This could be time in the low arousal green room, riding scooters in the playground, or coming to class to review their Widgit timetables for the day.

Once these individualised routines are complete, pupils are ready to start their day's learning within this highly specialist school.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The senior leadership team has an incredible wealth of experience. All joined the school before the new build became operational in 2015. They have a joint understanding of the strategic direction and the aims of the school, in relation to each pupil's curricula diet and their potential outcomes. As one leader explained, 'We know the pupils inside out. Some of the timetables look very structured, but in reality, every pupil's timetable is bespoke to their needs'.
- Leaders understand that the school needs to evolve. Year-in and year-out, the pupils attending the school are becoming more complex. The curricula offer therefore is being frequently refined. This means that changes and improvements

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happen across the school at multiple levels and often within the same time frame. For example, the school is currently developing the new post-16 provision; has taken 'Attention Autism' beyond the early years foundation stage (EYFS) into other key stages; extended the EYFS curriculum into Key Stage 1 and developed a new Key Stage 3 high sensory needs class.

- Leaders devote time to planning, launching and quality assuring strategic changes. Where improvements are anecdotal, leaders search for information, so these improvements become evidence based. For example, within the first term and a half of this academic year a group of Year 12 students have graduated to becoming able to travel in the community, unsupported.
- Senior leaders were all involved in the architect's designs for the new school building. The deep thought and care taken to ensure the school environment supports pupils' needs, alongside carefully chosen pedagogy, is second to none. Walking through the school one can see the consistency of approach - from low arousal colour schemes to limited displays and diffused lighting and sound boards. Glass corridors enable pupils to have a sense of space and openness and provide staff with the opportunity to undertake 'passive supervision'.
- When it comes to developing the skill sets of staff, leaders have engineered the timetable so that all staff have weekly training. This training addresses the best way to support a continual response to the changing needs of the cohort. Recently this has included; creating and maintaining a low arousal environment, use of Widgit and Communication and Print, understanding and being part of 'The Brent Knoll Way' and medication training.
- Leaders are highly visible across the school and celebrate the joy of being in school each day with the pupils. For example, when walking through the school with the headteacher, all the pupils saying hello are met with an individualised 'fist bump'. The pupils buzz with excitement at this individualised recognition.

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

...leaders reviewed how they explained the exceptional context of their school and their evolving curricula offer.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well...

- The curriculum offer at Brent Knoll is bespoke to each pupil's needs. Teachers are encouraged to be the lead professional. They are trusted to ensure that they deliver the skills and knowledge that each pupil needs to be successful at the next stage of their education.

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- Across the school serious thought has been given to the layering of communication for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in a primary assembly the layering of communication involved; pictorial examples, audible examples, concrete objects, speech, Makaton and modelling and 'light touch' support from learning support assistants. In addition to the layering of communication, in the same assembly, there is a layering of support including; ear defenders, white boards, fiddle toys, weighted blankets, augmentative and alternative communication devices and Makaton.
- The same level of intellectual thought has gone into the pedagogical set-up of each classroom. Moving from class to class, pupils are met by a consistent approach that includes a low arousal environment where the information displayed is distinct to pupils' needs. This includes Widgit timetables, seating plans, a welcoming book corner, visual blockers that can be moved as needed, rewards points and 'Zones of Regulation'. In each class, pupils have their own lockers and access to Widgit Personal Development Plan (PDP) targets.
- Trusting relationships and a consistency of approach supports pupils within their learning. The individual confidence pupils have developed from these relationships shines through. For example, over a lunch break a non-verbal pupil took visitors on a tour of the play activities on offer, while a Makaton user explained how he had achieved the headteacher's award for his improving sign supported communication.
- The behaviour of pupils is exceptional. In this calm and caring environment, pupils develop transferable skills that they can take into wider society. For example, in a Key Stage 4 lesson, movement breaks were incorporated at different points to ensure all pupils stayed on track with their learning.
- In the primary playground, staff facilitate structured play activities with a 'Playground Games Choosing Board' with options for 'tag', 'duck, duck, goose' or 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'. The facilitator then showed who was choosing the game, who was playing the game (with pupil pictures on a velcro board), and then took an active role within it to develop pupils' play skills.
- The range of highly specialised classes within the school supports the pupils as they grow. These include two redeveloped libraries, two food technology rooms, soft play spaces, sensory rooms, a music room, an art room and a science laboratory.
- Where pupils find the transition into these spaces more challenging, specialist teachers are able to support. They bring this learning into the pupils' classes, or can be available to advise class teachers on the best way to deliver this content in the form classrooms.
- The pupils' PDPs link directly to the long-term outcomes in each pupil's EHCP Section F outcomes. This 'back chaining' means that the Section F outcomes can be revised when taking into account the spikey learning profile that most pupils have.

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- Class folders have a series of information including the pupils' PDP targets, communication passports, positive handling plans, individual support plans and allergy action plans. These detailed folders provide classroom staff and cover staff with a detailed picture of the best ways to support each pupil.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

None identified.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well...

- The new Brent Knoll School building makes sense. Pupils' background stress is reduced. This, combined with a consistent drive to improve pedagogy, has brought down incidents of dysregulation and physical interventions. For example since moving to the new build, physical interventions have diminished to less than a fifth of numbers previously recorded.
- The new post-16 provision has been developed as a response to the need to build transferable skills for this small cohort to make sure the next stage of their education, employment or training is a success.
- The aspiration for all pupils is not limited to the learning challenges they have when joining the school. This is because of the varied rates of progress pupils can make once their background stress comes down and their communication opens up. For example, one pupil who attended the school from Reception, graduated to college achieving a level one Information Technology course. He then gained an apprenticeship at Millwall Football Club before applying and obtaining a job at the school as a full-time learning support assistant. As he explained, 'my work is very rewarding and I'm giving back my understanding to the community who helped me'.
- Brent Knoll's parents and carers also benefit from extended support from the school to meet their children's needs. Recent examples have included Makaton coffee mornings, a family mathematics afternoon and a session planned and led by speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.



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

...leaders had an even clearer articulation for the use of extra funding (for example, sports premium and pupil premium), and its evidenced impact on pupils' outcomes.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable on this visit.

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

To use the knowledge of other Challenge Partner special schools experience to further promote students' success within the new Post-16 provision.

To work with other Challenge Partner special schools, locally and nationally, to share how adapting the curricula offers can be achieved consistently with the rising complexity of pupils.

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.

Schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.