



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR OAKTREE SCHOOL

Name of School:	Oaktree School
Headteacher/Principal:	Russell Davey
Hub:	London AP and Special
School phase:	Special
MAT (if applicable):	N/A

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	09/02/2022
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	N/A
Date of last QA Review	N/A
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	30/01/2018



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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 Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

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

Area of excellence Not offered at this review

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

***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.***

1. Context and character of the school

Oaktree is a special school for students aged 7-19 who have a range of learning difficulties. The school is situated in Cockfosters and has students from all over Enfield and other neighbouring local authorities. Although formally designated for 95 students, there are currently 132 on roll with 52 staff overall. All students have education, health and care plan (EHCP). 67% of the student population are male and 54% of the students also attract additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, which is significantly above the average for the special schools and mainstream schools in Enfield.

The school values, expressed as 'BEAR' (B-Be brave in all you do, E-Everyone is treated the same, A-Aim high in all you do -Respect and care for each other) underpin the school's aim to provide the best possible education and care in order for students to live happy and fulfilling lives, be as independent as possible and make a contribution to society.

The school benefits from support from a range of multi-agency professionals and employs its own child psychotherapist and music/play therapist to support the specific individual needs of the students.

The school plays a significant role in providing advice, training and support through the specialist outreach service for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream and other special schools in the local authority.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months and has worked tirelessly with his leadership team, governors, staff and parents to ensure that 'Preparation for Adulthood' is at the centre of all the school offers. This has led to a seven vocational pathway curriculum. This is structured around meeting the individual EHCP targets that enable students to develop and build on relevant and meaningful life skills that are tailored to their own aspirations.
- Governors are very conscious of their responsibilities to steer the strategic direction of the school. They are actively involved in both challenging and supporting the work of leaders in order to secure the best possible outcomes for the students. All governors have a specific role and carry out focused visits half-termly and report back to the board so that every governor has a clear oversight of every aspect of the work of the school.
- The headteacher has invested heavily in the continuous professional development (CPD) of all staff. As part of succession planning, two of the senior leaders have recently completed the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and other members of the team are part of a leadership

coaching programme to support reflective leadership practice. In addition, there is a structured in-house training programme, partly based around the Sutton Trust 'What Makes Good Teaching?' report for both teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs). This is linked to targets both in the school development plan and within individual professional development. This has led to teachers and LSAs being more confident in implementing new strategies and students being more enthused and engaged in their learning. Students told us that they liked Tuesday and Thursday afternoons best because they learnt about 'looking after animals and how to grow different things in the garden'.

- Leaders continue to embed a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach across the school and four staff are currently being trained as trainers. This approach, which focuses on all staff using proactive strategies for supporting behaviour, has led to calmer focused learning behaviours being apparent across the school.
- Senior leaders have now clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. As well as having responsibility for their subject areas, middle leaders have been encouraged, through their participation in national professional qualifications, to take a more strategic lead on implementing school wide initiatives.
- Leaders identified mental health and well - being as significant issues for both staff and students during the pandemic. As a result, the school now has a wider offer for counselling and general therapeutic support for students, a well- being programme for staff with access, for those who want it, to free trained counsellors.
- All students have access to breakfast whilst completing their 'reading half hour' first thing in the morning. This has improved engagement with reading and has seen students enthusiastically choosing their reading books. The Harry Potter books were very popular with a Year 8 student!
- While vocational learning is at the heart of the curriculum, the school continues to offer a broad curriculum and has an excellent arts, music and drama offer. Last year the drama group filmed two separate hour-long performances of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time.

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

- ... all staff fully embedded recently introduced initiatives into their everyday practice and leaders evaluated the impact of these on student outcomes, so that they can be refined and developed further.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- There is a very calm, purposeful atmosphere in school and in lessons. The trusting relationships that students have with staff are evident in the way that students respond to the high expectations for both learning and behaviour that staff have of them. Lessons are well planned and resourced and take place in a

rich learning environment. Teachers and LSAs have a very well developed understanding of the learning needs of individual students. This means that students are supported well and make good progress. Teachers and LSAs use signing and symbols to augment communication where appropriate.

- Student engagement and enthusiasm for learning was evident in all classes visited. Routines are well established and, as a result, students move smoothly between the different activities. Learning has a strong functional focus, for example students grow their own vegetables which they later use to prepare dishes in the school café.
- Leaders have thought very carefully about, and planned for, the skills, knowledge and understanding that students need to move on to the next stage in their education. In particular, the vocational pathways have been crafted not only to teach these skills, but to also promote independence and provide meaningful work experience opportunities. An example of how successful this focus on skills for adult life has been is the number of students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form who can now travel confidently to school independently on public transport.
- The sixth form leader has recently trained as a careers adviser and is developing the careers programme across all pathways that meet the GATSBY benchmarks. This will help the students to make informed choices about their future. All students leave the school with relevant accredited qualifications and leaders track their progress for up to three years once they have left the school.
- The school now offers a variety of routes into reading, which is underpinned by research, and recognises that a variety of other approaches to teaching reading have to be used in addition to phonics if reading is to be enjoyable, meaningful and purposeful for every individual. Every student reads every day, one-to-one with staff members, and the functional reading folders demonstrate students' progress and how they use their skills in everyday life.
- Leaders have recently brought in a new assessment system which complements the 'Curriculum Ladders' used to track progress in all subject areas, Staff have been trained to use this system and so, on a weekly basis, collate and annotate evidence of students' achievement towards meeting their EHCP targets. Staff share this information, including visual images, with parents. A pilot programme with a group of parents has been operating since January 2022 so that parents can share how their child applies the skills that they have learned in school both within the home and a range of different contexts. This has enabled the staff to have a more holistic view of what students know, can do and understand. All parents will soon have access to this application.

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

- ... total communication strategies were understood and used by all staff to support learning.

... the skills of the LSA team were maximised more fully through clearer direction and more attention being paid to how they can support and enhance learning at each stage of the lesson.

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

- Although there are no noticeable differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers, leaders have a bespoke pupil premium plan that focuses on improving teaching and learning at all levels for all individuals across the school.
- Leaders recognised that many students struggled with learning over the period of the pandemic and so have instigated a 'catch up' and recovery programme with over 500 hours of one-to-one support being provided since September 2021. To date, 106 students have benefitted from reading and mathematics 'catch up' interventions and three post-16 students are now reading complete books for the first time!
- Mental health and well-being are seen by leaders to be central to academic and emotional development. To support this the school employs its own child psychotherapist and a music/play therapist. Students are offered open ended therapy sessions which are reviewed and progress reported on half termly. A mentor also works with students from across the school, providing planned emotional assistance to support their progress and engagement with learning.
- A family support worker has developed trusting relationships with families and supports parents in a variety of ways, including help to understand and obtain resources and benefits if required.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

... leaders were able to assess the baseline for student well-being in order to plan more personalised effective interventions.

5. Area of Excellence None submitted.

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

Leaders are happy with the support they currently access.

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.