QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
REVIEW REPORT FOR
OAKLEY SCHOOL

Name of School:	Oakley School
Headteacher/Principal:	Sam Perryman
Hub:	London Special and AP
School phase:	All through
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable (N/A)

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Leading
Date of this Review:	12/02/2025
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Leading
Date of last QA Review:	08/11/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Remains good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	22/10/2024

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Quality Assurance Review

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

Leadership at all levels	Leading
Quality of provision and outcomes	Leading
AND	
Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs	
Area of excellence	N/A
Previously accredited valid areas of excellence	N/A
Overall peer evaluation estimate	Leading

Important information

- The QA Review provides a peer evaluation of a school's practice in curriculum, teaching and learning, and leadership. It is a voluntary and developmental process, and the peer review team can evaluate and offer 'peer evaluation estimates' based only on what the school chooses to share with them.

- The QA Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.

- The QA Review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. If you choose to share this report, or extracts thereof, externally (e.g. on your website or with parents), please ensure that it is accompanied with the following text:

  Challenge Partners is a charity working to advance education for the public benefit. We are not a statutory accountability body. The QA Review does not audit schools' safeguarding or behaviour policies and practices. However, Lead Reviewers and visiting reviewers are expected to follow Challenge Partners' safeguarding policy and report any concerns as set out in the procedures

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1. Context and character of the school

Oakley is a special school serving the Tunbridge Wells district. It is situated across two sites, for pupils from the ages of 4-19 with profound, severe and complex needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). There are currently 223 pupils on roll. There is a Specialist Nursery Intervention on the Tunbridge Wells site. Phases 1, 2 and 3 are located on the Tunbridge Wells site. The Phase 4 provision, for 15-19 year olds, is on the Tonbridge site. Over one-third of pupils are socially disadvantaged.

Oakley is an innovative and ambitious school where pupils thrive. There is a commitment to improve outcomes for all pupils in the locality. Numerous initiatives include being an active contributor in the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT) of 26 special schools in Kent, local inclusion work with mainstream schools, and university partnerships with Canterbury Christchurch and Buckingham Universities. Oakley was the first special school to achieve the SMSC Gold Award in 2018 and maintains this status as well as being a beacon school. Oakley is an accredited school for the Leading Parent Partnership award.

At Oakley, pupils are at the heart of everything. Pupils learn to work hard, be kind, have fun and stay safe.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- There is an ambitious CPD programme in place for all staff. Briefings are used to provide staff with regular training and updates, including safeguarding and trauma informed practice. There is also one hour set aside for weekly training which means there is a continuous approach to supporting all professional development. This keeps staff up to date and informed of latest developments across both sites.
- There is a focus on talent management across all areas of the school. For example, a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) is training to be an occupational therapist and LSAs can and have trained to be teachers while still working at the school. This means the school is able to recruit within their own staff and develop their expertise to meet the needs of the pupils.
- All learning is seen as important whether in or out of classroom. Staff support pupils at lunchtime (and receive a free meal) so that learning opportunities are extended. Playtime is used to emphasise interaction and modelling best practice. Leaders use the mantra that ‘every moment matters’.
- The leadership team provides a plethora of skills to meet the needs of both sites. They understand their role within Kent and work with trainee teachers through KsENT and Canterbury University. Staff are offered opportunities to lead training across Kent and share best practice for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Oakley staff also work with the NHS staff to further their knowledge and skills to support young people with SEND.
- Middle leaders work across phases and pathways, so they have the breadth of experience across the curriculum for all pupils. A phase leader has a

mainstream early years foundation stage (EYFS) background and has been able to use this expertise for training and outreach work with primaries in the local area. Middle leaders have links with a special school partnership which has developed an EYFS programme to address gaps in learning due to the impact of Covid. Another phase leader is a play therapist and has developed the interoception programme which supports the Thrive and Trauma Informed approach in the school.

- There is a coaching model in place for all leaders which has been impactful on reflective practice and introducing new initiatives, for example becoming a trauma informed school. Leaders have completed the NPQML, NPSQL, NPQH and other training courses to improve outcomes for pupils at Oakley.
- The school vision is embedded throughout the school. Staff are happy to talk about 'every moment matters' and the teaching strategies that are used to get the best from their pupils. Leadership team members all have the same passion and vision for the school and the improvement journey they are on. They go over and above to provide the best outcomes for all, for example doorstep calling for the most vulnerable pupils. This means attendance is strong.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if…

… none identified.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Pupils' voices are well represented at the school with regular meetings scheduled for the school council which pupils enjoy being involved in, including organising the agenda. During a school council meeting observed, pupils understood how to vote and how to keep safe. Pupils share their concerns and their ideas for Red Nose Day. These were discussed in a respectful manner and everyone listened to each other. A podcast is produced by pupils, and this is made available to all staff, pupils and parents. One pupil said that the school was 'perfect' and another wanted to thank all the staff for the learning which he said would help him to gain employment.
- The wider curriculum is impressive and offers all pupils the opportunity to access experiences that they would not normally be able to do. The curriculum is fully inclusive, with all residential visits and trips being open to all phases and pathways. Trips abroad happen every year and local residential visits give pupils the ability to gain independence skills. For many this would be the first time they have spent time away from home. Skiing trips and sailing trips are scheduled for this year. Class Dojo is used to communicate with families to provide updates and celebrate and share progress both in school or on trips. This provides families with reassurance about their child's wellbeing and safety. Pupils access Forest School, work experience in the community and in school with community partners, such as art, dance and theatre. The wider curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural capital.

- There is a personalised, therapeutic approach to support pupils at the school. The use of play, music therapy and Thrive supports pupils to regulate their behaviour. Two trained Thrive practitioners support the delivery of the universal offer, including training staff in the school and providing targeted support for individual pupils. An occupational therapist (OT) and speech and language therapist (SALT) support classroom practice to embed a therapeutic universal offer so that pupils can achieve their EHCP targets. This results in a personalised and targeted approach for those that are in need of specialist intervention. Interoception supports the trauma informed approach, where pupils are encouraged to understand their emotions and how to respond to, and manage appropriately, situations. This is reviewed regularly through the update of class profiles and multi-disciplinary meetings. Supervision is available across the school due to the nature of the work. All Thrive practitioners have access to supervision due to the nature of their work. Staff can access therapeutic services through the school well-being strategy and have recently engaged in Solution Circles with the Educational Psychology Team.
- There is a culture of respect throughout the school. Relationships are strong between staff and pupils. Staff are confident in regulation techniques and there is an environment of positivity and fun. As a result, learning takes place in calm and purposeful classrooms where all pupils are engaged with their learning. Pupils are given sufficient time to learn.
- Communication and social skills are a strength, with the consistent use of Makaton, core boards and Voca, evident in all classrooms. LSAs are proficient in their use of all communication aids and are sensitive to the learning and emotional needs of pupils. Staff know pupils well.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if…

… the Oakley Learning Journey (Curriculum Framework) was further reviewed and refined to support preparation for adulthood.

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

- Groups identified as most disadvantaged are those with safeguarding concerns or are socially deprived. These groups are monitored closely by the Family Support Worker, safeguarding leads and senior leaders. Doorstep visits are made for these pupils if there are concerns or absence. The Family Support Worker helps families to access support, including workshops, wellbeing walks and removing barriers.
- Pupils can access all trips and residential visits. Pupil premium funding is used so that all day and residential trips are fully inclusive. Communication with families is a high priority and this ensures that pupils' and parents' experiences are positive.
- Pupils' welfare is central to all school decisions and a social worker consultant has been commissioned termly to offer supervision to DSLs and complete safeguarding audits. This support provides the school with

additional information in order to effectively support pupils and keep them safe.

- Attendance is good at 91% (year to date from September 2024) and above the DfE average for special schools. These pupils attend well due to efforts of staff and support for parents.
- The approach to physical restraint has changed and is rarely used. There is an emphasis on de-escalation and building relationships. Thrive supports this culture change in the school. Pupils' feelings are validated by staff and pupils are encouraged to be curious about their emotions. The understanding of what is causing the dysregulation, with the help of the OT and SALT, is key. All pupils are supported with challenges and traumas they have experienced.
- The school uses Rocket Phonics for the teaching of phonics and pre phonics. Blanks Level Questioning supports pupils' comprehension. Pupils use a variety of communication aids including VOCAs to help them to communicate. The school has introduced Gestalt Language Processing as an intervention to develop pupils' communication skills and language development. Reading is well taught in all classrooms across the range of abilities.

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

… none identified.

5. Area of Excellence

N/A

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse content reports from across the hub networks including using AI tools to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector (sharing these with the partnership) each year. The QA Review reports remain confidential to Challenge Partners and the host school. This ensures that schools embrace the review as a development process, acting as a catalyst for their ongoing improvement. This is the primary purpose of the QA review. However, our aim is that the thematic analysis will demonstrate the additional value of a sector wide overview, illustrated with real-life examples.

For further support following your QA Review, 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. The School Support Directory can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (https://www.challengepartners.org/)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit)